The ONS Chapters Virtual Community has been developed to improve communication among individual chapter members, communication between leaders of an individual chapter, and improve communication between the individual chapter and the ONS national office. It also facilitates networking and communication among all ONS chapters and provides easy access to ONS resources and reliable cancer information for all chapter members. On the Virtual Community Web Site you will find general information pertinent to all 228 ONS Chapters and view a myriad of Chapter resources.

The ONS Chapter Virtual Community (VC), in an effort to improve communication, is designed to be user-friendly and highly functional. Your VC is not a website. It is integrated into ONS Online and can only be accessed through it. Anyone can view the VC from ONS Online. There are several tutorials posted on the main Virtual Communities Page at http://chapter.vc.ons.org/. To access your particular Chapter or one that you are interested in learning about:

1. Select “Find A Chapter”
2. Select “Click Here”
3. Select State where your chapter is located
4. Select “Chapter Virtual Community” under your chapter name
5. Select “Log In”
6. Enter Username and Password

Please log into our Chapter’s Virtual Community – another way to view future NEPA-ONS Newsletters.

*It all begins here at the ONS Chapters Virtual Community.*

The Next NEPA-ONS Chapter Meeting.....

The NEPA-ONS Chapter September Meeting will be held Sept. 12, 2007 at the Best Western East Mountain Inn. “Current Concepts in the diagnosis and Treatment of Neoplastic Meningitis” will be presented by Tracy T. Batchelor, MD, MPH, from Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center.

Please call or e-mail Rita Ives, NEPA-ONS Program Chair to secure your reservation. (570)408-4084 or rita.ives@wilkes.edu
Lana Banko, NEPA-ONS Website Manager, juggles with aplomb and grace, her new role as Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP), her volunteer time dedicated to our NEPA-ONS chapter, as well as a busy personal life. Lana grew up in Simpson, PA, and currently lives in Peckville. Her formal education began at the University of Scranton where she graduated with a BSN in 1990. From the same institution, Lana graduated in 2007 with her MSN, while earning the University of Scranton’s award for Outstanding Graduate in Nursing. She has been published in the SCI Nursing Journal and is a member of both Sigma Theta Tau (National Nursing Honor Society) and Alpha Sigma Nu (Jesuit Honor Society).

A fifteen year veteran of Allied Rehab, Lana recently accepted a CRNP position with Great Valley Cardiology. During her tenure with Allied, she became involved with NEPA-ONS through Beth Taylor, the president at that time. In the late 1990s, Lana worked in Allied’s newly established Oncology Rehab. From 2002 to 2006, she was our local ONS chapter co-president with Bonnie Valenzano. When talking to Lana, it becomes quickly apparent that she has many fond and funny memories related to her oncology patients. She recounts how, in rehab, nurses were hesitant to press oncology patients to go to therapy, but in the end, found it unnecessary because these special individuals pushed themselves. In one case, Lana worked with a nurse in her late 40’s or early 50’s, diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. Even while waging her own battle with cancer, this woman found time to ask Lana about her nursing career and day to day life. “I have a feeling it was her compassion as a nurse that made her so special. Although her cancer won - Her hope, courage and strength never died. She was a true inspiration.”

NEPA-ONS and Susan G. Komen For The Cure

Nancy Brinker promised her dying sister, Susan G. Komen, she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer forever. In 1982 that promise became Susan G. Komen for the Cure and launched the global breast cancer movement. Today, Komen for the Cure is the world’s largest grass roots network of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and energize science to find the cures. Thanks to events like the Komen Race for the Cure Series, we have invested $1 billion to fulfill our promise, becoming the largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to the fight against breast cancer in the world. For more information about Susan G. Komen for the Cure, breast health or breast cancer, visit www.komen.org or call 1-800-I’M-AWARE. This year’s Komen NEPA Race for the Cure will be on Saturday, September 8, 2007 in downtown Scranton, PA. Our NEPA-ONS Chapter has entered the port-o-potty decorating contest! If you are interested in participating or plan on entering the race call Bonnie (570) 815-9435 or myself (570) 362-0988 and we will meet there.

www.komenepa.org
ONS Member-Bring-A-Member Campaign

Get involved in the ONS Member-Bring-A-Member Campaign (MBAM) and become eligible for valuable rewards. Participating is easy. Just tell your colleagues about the many benefits of ONS membership and invite them to join the Society. You only need to recruit one member to earn your initial reward. From there, the more members you recruit the more rewards you earn! In addition, if you recruit a new member, your efforts will be recognized in a special MBAM section of the ONS website. Bring a new member to our next meeting!

Cancer Survivors Celebration

Each year in June, thousands of cancer survivors, family members and friends, and health care professionals gather at the top of Sno Mountain in Moosic, Pennsylvania, for the Northeast Regional Cancer Institute’s Survivors Celebration. Begun in 1992, the event has grown to be one of the nation’s largest celebrations to honor cancer survivors. The 15th annual Cancer Survivors Celebration featured entertainment for the entire family including guest speakers, informational display booths, interactive projects, musical entertainment, children’s games, sing-a-longs, pie throwing contests, an array of food, and more. Our board members along with our honorary board member, Marlene De Fazio, staffed an Ovarian Cancer information table. Much of the resource material was provided by Gilda’s Club.

A Survivors Celebration offers survivors the opportunity to reunite and to reach out to others who understand firsthand what it means to live...and to celebrate life! The theme of the Cancer Survivors Celebration this year was Mardi Gras, Don’t Mask Cancer...Celebrate Survivorship!

NEPA-ONS Board Members lower left: Beth Taylor, Treasurer; Lana Banks, Board Member at Large; Angela Luongo, Co-president. In the back row, Bonnie Valanzano, Co-president, Cindy Scott, Editor and Marlene De Fazio, President Consagra Foundation of Hope

Connect to Awards, Grants, and Scholarships

The Oncology Nursing Society each year bestows awards that celebrate and honor best practices and excellence in the oncology nursing field. These awards recognize the differences you make in the lives of your patients every day – while focusing attention on exemplary practice and acts of service. The nomination process is simple and convenient. For more details on these awards and many others, and to access the simplified application, simply visit www.nursingawards.org. Presently, there are 58 opportunities to recognize the important contributions of oncology nurses. Make a nomination today!
Pharmacy Corner

In March, 2007, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Tykerb (lapatinib), a new targeted anti-cancer treatment, to be used in combination with Xeloda (capecitabine), another cancer drug, for patients with advanced, metastatic breast cancer that is HER2 positive (tumors that exhibit HER2 protein). The combination treatment is indicated for women who have received prior treatment with other cancer drugs, including an anthracycline, a taxane, and Herceptin (trastuzumab). According to the American Cancer Society, about 180,000 new cases of breast cancer are diagnosed each year. Approximately 8,000 to 10,000 women die from metastatic HER2 positive breast cancer each year.

Tykerb, a new molecular entity, (NME), is a kinase inhibitor working through multiple pathways (targets) to deprive cancer cells of signals needed to grow. Unlike, for example, Herceptin – a monoclonal antibody, which is a large protein molecule that targets the part of the HER2 protein on the outside of the cell – Tykerb is a small molecule that enters the cell and blocks the function of this and other proteins. Because of the difference in mechanism of action, Tykerb works in some HER2 positive breast cancers that have been treated with Herceptin and are no longer benefiting.

The most common reported Tykerb-related side effects included diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, rash and hand-foot syndrome which may include numbness, tingling, redness, swelling and discomfort of hands and feet. Generally reversible decreases in heart function (that can lead to shortness of breath) have also been reported in a small percentage of patients. Patients should talk to their doctor about potential side effects.

Reported Costs of New Therapies

Lapatinib (Tykerb®, GlaxoSmithKline): $35,000 per year
Trastuzumab (Herceptin®, Genentech): $20,000 per year
Cetuximab (Erbitux®, ImClone Systems): $10,000 per month
Panitumumab (Vectibix™, Amgen): $8,000 per month
Bevacizumab (Avastin®, Genentech): 100,000 per year

Information about patient assistance programs for each of these therapies can be found at www.rxassist.org/pap-info

Note. Based on information from “Setting a Price for Putting Off Death” (p.C1), by D. Costello, LA Times March 18, 2007.

Saving Our Environment

As of this newsletter, NEPA ONS will start using 100% recycled paper for all future newsletters, letterheads, and mailing envelopes. To further help our efforts, you can opt-in for e-newsletters. Please contact Cindy Scott with your email address to have the newsletters e-mailed to you in a PDF format. This will also remove you from the hardcopy newsletter mailing list and reduce the amount of paper used. And remember, you can always see the current newsletter online at the ONS Virtual Community.
We Listened to You to Make IOL Even Better

ONS National has heard your call. Based on your feedback, the Institute of Learning (IOL) conference format now features half-day, interactive mini institutes so that you can pick the two that interest you most.

The mini institutes, as well as 90-minute open sessions, give you in-depth information on the issues affecting your everyday practice.

This year’s mini institutes focus on the topics that interest you:

• Symptom Management
• Breast Cancer
• Pancytopenia
• Skin Problems

• Private Practice
• Clinical Trials
• Skin Problems
• Lung Metastases

• Ostomy Care
• Sexuality and Fertility
• Chemotherapy and Biotherapy
• Bringing Evidence to Clinical Practice

ONS President Addresses Workforce Shortage

Pittsburgh, PA – June 22, 2007 – Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) President Georgia M. Decker recently addressed the Institute of Medicine (IOM) National Cancer Policy Forum in Washington, D.C. on the topic of Who will be there to take care of us? It is a grim fact that the nursing shortage crisis will have a dramatic impact on all areas of patient care in the coming years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that by 2010 1.2 million nursing positions will go unfilled as nurses of the baby boom generation begin to retire.

“The challenge facing our nation is that we have an increasing number of people needing nursing care at the same time we have a decreasing number of nurses available to care for them,” said Decker. “There also are not enough nurses to help conduct the research necessary to find better treatments and cures for millions of people in need.”

Decker assured the National Cancer Policy Forum members that ONS stands ready to work with them and other policymakers to address the major challenges to solving this problem. The House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education (LHHS) Appropriations Subcommittee has approved $165.6 million for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Nursing Workforce Development Programs. ONS and other nursing organizations have urged Congress to provide at least $200 million in FY 2008 to address this critical problem.

8th Annual Institutes of Learning

November 9-11, Chicago, IL

Head to the Windy City, Where ONS Educational Offerings Will Blow You Away!

The ONS 8th Annual Institutes of Learning is a one-of-a-kind educational experience that provides you with practical, hands-on knowledge that you can take home and use in your practice—the kind of knowledge you can’t get anywhere else.
An article, “Building Comfort With Ambiguity in Nursing Practice”, caught my eye in the April 2007 issue of Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing. Stilos, Moura, and Flint, authors of this Feature Article, advocate that oncology nurses (and I would expand that to include all nurses in general) aim to build comfort with present day role ambiguity as compared to traditional models of nursing care. I thought, “Hmmm, this is a rather intellectual concept to get my head around”. But once it made sense, I thought I should share it. Ambiguity in nursing can lead to professional freedom and supports nursing knowledge and skill development. Critical thinking and complex decision making are part of everyday nursing care. Comfort with “not knowing” allows a nurse to perhaps challenge the status quo and then solve a problem - thus improving patient safety and/or effective health care delivery.

How do you deal with uncertainty in your current practice? Please send your thoughts or feedback to cindy.nepa.ons@hotmail.com

“Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what’s going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity.” -gilda radner