



Leadership (September 2016)

CANO/ACIO Position

- Oncology nurses should possess leadership skills as a core competency.
- Oncology nursing leadership is essential to promote high quality, equitable, safe and accessible cancer care and to meet health care challenges of the future.
- Cancer care organizations, academic institutions, provincial and national professional nursing associations and individual practitioners/mentors/leaders should play a fundamental part in supporting oncology nurses with leadership development.

Rationale

Nursing leadership is fundamental within our profession. According to the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) position statement, nursing leadership is about critical thinking, action and advocacy in all roles and domains of nursing practice (2009). Nurses are positioned at all levels of the healthcare system, from clinical practice to senior executive. As well, the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO/ACIO) recognizes and supports the responsibilities and mandate of all nurses to promote and provide high quality cancer care (CANO/ACIO 2001; Scott & Miles, 2013). It is critically important to develop strategies to elevate the leadership potential of every nurse to enhance the delivery of excellent care and in optimizing and transforming patient, team, organizational and system outcomes (CNA, 2009; Huston, 2008; Institutes of Medicine, 2011; National Health Services, 2013).

Responding to and transforming the rapidly changing health care system requires nursing leadership development across all roles (CNA, 2009; Huston, 2008; Institutes of Medicine, 2011; National Expert Commission, 2012; McTeer, 2005). The development of nursing leadership begins in basic nursing education programs and continues throughout the career of every nurse (CNA, 2009). The responsibility for leadership development resides not only with schools of nursing, but also with individual practitioners, institutions, and professional associations with the aim to cultivate leadership skills.

Leadership development is an expectation for every nurse (CNA, 2009). Mentorship and coaching, as well as other forms of support are required to enable leadership development along career pathways. There is no common career pathway that health professionals follow to achieve leadership competence and ability; this pathway will vary according to the career trajectory and nurses' level of experience and training (National Health Services, 2013).

CANO/ACIO is informed by the LEADS framework to guide leadership development (Canadian College of Health Leaders, 2016). LEADS in a Caring Environment framework is a leadership capabilities framework that provides a comprehensive approach to leadership



development for the Canadian health sector, including leadership within the whole-system, within the health organizations, and within individual leaders. The underlying assumption of this framework is that effective personal leadership is associated with a set of definable skill sets or capabilities that can be learned and, at the core of LEADS is the fundamental value of caring. There are a variety of educational and professional development resources available nationally and internationally to support oncology nurses to enhance their leadership capacity depending on their career interests and level of experience and training.

To further CANO/ACIO's mission of advancing oncology nursing excellence, CANO/ACIO develops standards and competencies, position statements, educational tools, and creates platforms for oncology nurses to lead and engage. For specific leadership skill development, there are opportunities for CANO/ACIO members to meet and engage leaders locally, nationally and globally. In addition, CANO/ACIO has progressive leadership role opportunities available through local council of chapters, special interest groups, board of director membership, participating as a key opinion leader and engaging in policy influence strategies on behalf of the Association.

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