

# The Oncology Nursing Society Leadership Competency Project: Developing a Road Map to Professional Excellence

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Combining the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine's report on the future of nursing, an Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) leadership think tank, and current evidence, the ONS Leadership Competencies were developed to provide all nurses with a pathway to advance their leadership skills and abilities. Generated through a systematic approach of literature review, data synthesis, and peer and expert review, the ONS Leadership Competencies are divided into five domains: vision, knowledge, interpersonal effectiveness, systems thinking, and personal mastery. Each of the competencies can be measured at the individual, group, and governance levels. They serve as a means of self-assessment, growth, future planning, and professional development. This article describes the process used to develop the ONS Leadership Competencies and offers examples of how they may be used in practice.

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**A** long-held stance of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) is that every nurse is a leader. Whether the nurse is working at the bedside, as an administrator, or serving on the board of directors for a national organization, leadership skills are integral in the work of the oncology nurse. In addition to the role of direct care provider, the nurse routinely serves in the roles of advocate, change agent, and fiduciary steward. Effective nurse leaders are needed to help the system cope with the continual changes facing health care and cancer care, and to build a solid future for the nursing profession.

In 2010, the Institute of Medicine's ([IOM's], 2010) report brief, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, addressed the need to develop nurses. As the largest profession of healthcare workers in the United States and at the forefront of patient care, nurses must be leaders and ad-

vocates for high-quality health care and serve as full partners with other health professionals. The responsibility for leadership development lies not only with schools of nursing and individual healthcare institutions, but also with professional associations that can research strategies, develop programs that address the need, and integrate it into clinical education (IOM, 2010).

As a professional organization, ONS has a vested interest in developing individual leaders to prepare for future changes in cancer nursing care, nursing education, and research. Members have participated in educational offerings in leadership, as well as taken the opportunity to grow professionally through publication, research, and clinical and organizational leadership. Educational programs include the Leadership Development Institute (offered from 1998–2011), the leadership development online course (which began in 2012), and the Leadership Workshop,