

# 2020: A Time for Contemplation and Action

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**D**epending on which interpretation of the Gregorian and other calendars that you may believe to be the most accurate, the new decade either began on January 1, 2020, or will begin January 1, 2021. In any case, the contemplation of decades and time passing offers a time for appraisal and reflection, a chance to step outside of the day-to-day routines to consider less urgent, and perhaps more important issues that we will face in the near future.

Notwithstanding whether 2020 is the beginning of a new decade, there are two intersecting initiatives that make 2020 a critically important year for nursing. From a global perspective, the World Health Organization (WHO) has designated 2020 as the “Year of the Nurse and Midwife” to honor the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. This initiative contains a focus on the essential contributions of nursing to health outcomes across this world. From a national perspective, the Committee on the Future of Nursing 2020–2030, by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the National Academy of Medicine, will extend the 2010–2020 original vision for the nursing profession in the United States in creating a culture of health, reducing health disparities, and improving health and well-being. Although the 2020–2030 report is not released yet, the new report will have an additional focus on nurses addressing

social determinants and health inequities (National Academy of Medicine, 2020).

What do these initiatives mean for oncology nursing? First, I think that there will be an opportunity to not only increase the number of individuals in the nursing workforce, but also to strengthen the work environment for nurses across caregiving and academic environments, so that nurses stay in nursing and thrive across settings. With a predicted shortfall of more than 9 million nurses and midwives by 2030, there must be a renewed focus on increasing the pipeline and improving the environment so that nurses build careers over time. As part of the WHO initiative, the WHO’s first State of the World’s Nursing will be published in April 2020 (Howard, 2019). This must be essential reading for nurses across all healthcare settings. Secondly, I think that the intensive national and international focus will renew the obligation for oncology nursing to address macro-level issues that affect health in both high- and low-resourced countries in concert with and addition to the priorities identified in the Oncology Nursing Society Research Agenda for 2019–2022 (Von Ah et al., 2019). Consequently, we are beginning a new feature, Critical Perspectives, developed under the guidance of editor emerita Anne Katz, PhD, RN, FAAN, and editorial board member Rachel K. Walker, PhD, RN. This addition to the *Oncology Nursing Forum (ONF)* will give a space for recognizing the relevance of macro trends to oncology nursing. In this issue, Walker et al. (2020) discuss implications of climate change for oncology nursing.

Another macro trend facing oncology nursing practice and research is one of demographic transitions.

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For academic nursing, retirement trends predict that one-third of the current university-based nursing faculty will retire by 2025. This challenges us to figure out how to build on the work of the greatest generation of oncology nursing scientists who are retired or will soon be retiring by integrating our newer nurse scientists (both research- and clinical-focused), continuing to keep and develop our mid-career scientists, and developing transitional pathways for those who are retiring so that the brain trust may be sustained. With decreasing PhD program enrollments, a highly competitive research funding environment, and projected retirements of faculty by 2025, we will need a new model that leverages the partnerships of nurse researchers at all levels of training to work together to develop, implement, and disseminate research and scholarship that promotes optimal care of patients and families affected by cancer. Therefore, attending to oncology researchers in addition to research should be a high-priority focus.

The current issue of *ONF* contains multiple articles that address high-impact issues in oncology nursing practice. An example of an innovative workforce model is detailed by Ferrell et al. (2020), who describe a practice model for preparing oncology advanced practice nurses as generalists in palliative care. Another article, by Jernigan et al. (2020), focuses on a novel nurse-driven intervention for telephone triage. In addition, an article by Blackburn et al. (2020) focuses on clinical scholarship, closely linked to oncology nursing practice, regarding microbial growth on fingernails of direct patient care nurses who are wearing nail polish. Finally, an article by Huhmann (2020) focuses on the barriers to breast and cervical cancer screening in an immigrant population. These articles show that *ONF* continues to publish research that addresses practice-related issues for oncology nursing.

2020 brings a convergence of attention and, consequently, opportunities for nursing. In the words of Harriet Tubman, a nurse best known for guiding slaves to freedom through the Underground Railroad, “Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world” (Perez, 2018, p. 1). Let’s think about how to use our strength and passion to leverage the national and international focus on nursing in 2020. We must continue focusing on research to promote optimal health outcomes for patients and

families affected by cancer while continuing to grow and nurture our clinical and research workforce in oncology nursing.



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