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Oncology Nurse Navigation and Patient Navigation Defined

ROCKVILLE, MD, August 30, 2010— Although many institutions and organizations have recognized the value of patient navigation and nurse navigation, until now there has been no definition of the Oncology Nurse Navigator or Patient Navigator.

NCONN, The National Coalition of Oncology Nurse Navigators, was the first professional association dedicated to the support of the Oncology Nurse Navigator (ONN). Giving the Oncology Nurse Navigator tools and support and giving patient's access to an Oncology Nurse Navigator is the quintessence of NCONN. Oncology Nurse Navigators are changing the face of cancer care in our lifetime by advocating for and providing ongoing guidance and support to cancer patients, their families and significant others. By accompanying the patient through every aspect of their cancer journey, the ONN is able to ensure access to the information necessary to make the best possible decision about treatment choices, secure the best therapies and provide counsel and advice to improve the patient's quality of life.

NCONN recognizes the significance of the clinical professional nurse and the lay/patient navigator as an instrumental part of the multidisciplinary cancer team. In recognition of the importance of both the nurse navigator and the patient navigator, NCONN has defined the role of both.

Oncology Nurse Navigator (ONN)

The Oncology Nurse Navigator is a professional whose clinical nursing expertise guides patients, families and their caregivers to informed decision-making; collaborating with a multi-disciplinary team to allow for timely cancer screening, diagnosis, treatment, and increased supportive care across the cancer continuum.

Patient Navigator (PN)

The Patient Navigator can be a layperson, a social worker or nurse who is dedicated to the individualized assistance to patients, families, and caregivers to help overcome health care system barriers and facilitate timely access to quality medical and psychosocial care from pre-diagnosis through all phases of the cancer experience.