



BC Cancer Agency

CARE + RESEARCH

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Supporting Continuing Competency in Chemotherapy Care for British Columbia Registered Nurses

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Identifying Opportunities

Since 2003, the British Columbia Cancer Agency (BCCA) Chemotherapy Education Program has specified that Registered Nurses (RN) who have completed the course requirements will maintain competency in this specialized area of nursing practice.

This expectation reflects the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC) Quality Assurance Standards which specify that each year an RN will create and implement a professional development plan. In 2011, the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO) published national standards for chemotherapy, including *Standard D*, which states that an annual process for ensuring continuing competency is included in the chemotherapy education program, as follows:

CANO specifies that:

Registered Nurses are required to demonstrate annually, the ongoing ability to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, judgment, and personal attributes (attitudes, values, and beliefs) required to practice cancer chemotherapy administration safely and ethically in their designated roles and settings. Maintaining this ongoing ability involves a continual process linking the Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (CNA, 1997), the CANO/ACIO Standards of Care and lifelong learning.

1. RNs shall demonstrate continuing competence in cancer chemotherapy annually.
2. A cancer chemotherapy continuing competency program shall support RNs to acquire, maintain, and advance knowledge, skills, critical thinking and clinical judgment related to:
 - a. Cancer chemotherapy agents and protocols
 - b. Equipment
 - c. Policies and procedures
 - d. Symptom management
 - e. Monitoring parameters
 - f. Adverse event monitoring
 - g. Safe handling and administration
3. A cancer chemotherapy continuing competence program shall support RNs to:
 - a. Assess their learning needs related to care of the patient receiving cancer chemotherapy in their designated role and setting, using identified tools and agreed upon subjective and objective measures. These tools may be derived from the CANO/ACIO Competencies for Cancer Chemotherapy Practice in Canada and provincial requirements.

The BCCA has operationalised these standards by specifying that chemotherapy certified RNs will maintain competency in chemotherapy care by administering at least 50 chemotherapy drugs annually and completing learning activities that relate to supporting and advancing knowledge development for RNs providing chemotherapy care. CANO/ACIO 's Self-Assessment Tool provides the RN with a systematic process for assessing practice needs, for reflecting on personal practice and for obtaining peer assessment in chemotherapy care.

CANO/ACIO acknowledges that an RN educational resource list is needed to support the use of the Standards and Competencies. The National Strategy for Chemotherapy Administration volunteer group is currently working towards creating this list. In the meantime, questions have arisen in BC about local and existing processes and resources to support further learning in the area and also about how to address the shortfall of not being able to administer 50 chemotherapy drugs per year.

This document aims to:

1. Promote the use of a self-assessment process annually using the CANO Self-Assessment Tool.
2. Propose strategies to support meeting the requirement of administering 50 chemotherapy drugs per year.
3. Inform BC RNs of learning opportunities to meet continuing competency requirements for chemotherapy care, including:
 - Learning opportunities and events listed on the BCCA website and available through the Provincial Health Services Authority Learning Hub
 - Promotion of existing opportunities as much as possible
 - Utilizing resources that have an evaluative component

The Self Assessment Process:

The CANO self assessment tool can be utilized by a chemotherapy certified nurse annually to recognize strengths and identify learning needs in the area of chemo care. http://www.cano-acio.ca/national_chemotherapy_administration_standards

Strategies to Support the Annual Administration of 50 Chemotherapy Drugs:

This expectation reflects the understanding that maintaining competency in care is contingent on having enough opportunities to apply that knowledge in practice. Where a nurse is challenged to find opportunities to administer 50 drugs per year, contributing factors should first be reassessed and resolved.

Possible strategies for supporting RNs to administer 50 chemotherapy drugs per year include:

- Negotiating a change in assignment that supports the nurse to work in the chemotherapy unit to increase opportunities to provide care and treatment
- Negotiating with another chemotherapy unit in the health authority for a short-term clinical placement
- Inpatient Units: Developing work schedules which enable a core group of RNs to have exposure to sufficient levels of chemotherapy patient care activities

Available Learning Opportunities:

Participation in Conferences

BCCA Annual Cancer Conference

Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology Annual Conference

Oncology Nursing Society Annual Congress

Attendance at BCCA Medical Oncology Rounds

These rounds, held each Tuesday from 1215 to 1315 are accessible to Communities Oncology Network sites via videoconference. Topics may be relevant to RNs. (Contact BCCA Systemic Therapy secretary).

Completion of practice-based opportunities related to new equipment, procedures and related skills to improve patient safety

Organized locally in response to new materials and equipment.

Completion of the de Souza Institutes “British Columbia Chemotherapy Competency Maintenance Course”

Designed specifically for nurses who have completed the BC Cancer Agency’s Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Education Program, the course is guided by clear standards developed by the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO/ACIO) and other agencies. The cost of this self-directed, online course is \$50. To register or to learn more about the course, visit:

<https://portfolio.desouzainstitute.com/courses/viewCourse/414>.

Completion of simulation activities in the home setting

Includes opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of drugs; their administration and side effects; patient assessment; care planning; critical thinking and problem solving.

Participation in on-line learning opportunities

There are numerous e learning opportunities which can be accessed by Communities Oncology RNs via the PHSA Learning Hub

Note: Any health professional involved in cancer care in BC may follow the steps below to access the PHSA Learning Hub:

Visit: <https://learninghub.phsa.ca>

Select “Sign Up for an Account”

Read agreement and select “I Agree”

Select appropriate account type (i.e., affiliate account)

Follow the step- by- step account creation process

Once you have access, more detailed information can be found on the “User Help” page <http://lms.phsa.ca/help/userhelp.htm> to assist you in navigating within the Learning Hub.

Reading articles in oncology nursing journals

Canadian Oncology Nursing Journal
Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing
Oncology Nursing Forum
ONS Connect

Review of BCCA Systemic Therapy Update

A monthly newsletter produced by the Systemic Therapy Program that informs and updates health care professionals of changes in systemic therapy practice. New resources and clinical supports for chemotherapy RNs are announced in this newsletter.

Webinars

Scheduled webinars are stored and catalogued on the CANO website.

For consultation about other strategies to meet this requirement, please contact the Administrative Coordinator for Professional Practice, Nursing at ilundie@bccancer.bc.ca.