

Introducing the DNP Projects Department

In 2004, to advance the credibility and education of the advanced practice nurse, member schools affiliated with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) began a process to endorse a position statement on the practice doctorate in nursing. With this endorsement of advanced clinical practice nursing education at the doctoral level—an alternative to research-focused doctoral programs—the credential of doctor of nursing practice (DNP) began (AACN, 2020).

Development of the DNP credential was prompted by foundational documents from the Institute of Medicine (2001) and the National Academy of Sciences (2005). In these documents, the DNP was cited as contributing to a clinical, evidence-based foundation that can transform practice and care delivery. In particular, the DNP would address clinical quality and health issues, such as chronic disease, health disparities, aging, and prevention. In addition, DNP curricula have expanded to include leadership, strategy, advocacy, and interprofessional collaboration (AACN, 2020).

As we start 2022, the DNP credential has been around for more than 15 years. In the United States, 36,069 individuals have earned the DNP credential as of 2019, and there are 357 accredited DNP programs (AACN, 2020). During the past decade, the Oncology Nursing Foundation has steadily supported more scholarships for oncology nurses seeking the DNP credential; in 2021, 16 recipients received a DNP or clinical award (Oncology Nursing Foundation, 2021).

Recognizing the foresight, leadership, and clinical competencies of DNPs, this issue of the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing* (CJON) introduces the DNP Projects department. DNP Projects joins the other eight CJON departments in going beyond practice overviews, comprehensive clinical literature reviews, and/or study manuscripts and providing an additional, shorter forum to advance clinical oncology nursing practice. In general, CJON department articles focus on distinct clinical processes, pilot clinical quality improvement projects, and/or content that supports clinical oncology nursing practice.

The primary purpose of DNP Projects is to share results from evidence-based DNP capstone projects, which address the clinical needs of patients with cancer or solve a problem in a clinical oncology nursing practice setting (McCauley et al., 2020). When published in CJON, these clinical, data-driven, evidence-based outcomes projects will advance quality clinical oncology patient care as shown in a particular clinical oncology setting. By pub-

lishing these articles, CJON will showcase how these clinical projects can be replicated in other oncology settings, such as yours (Carpenter et al., 2021).

In this issue of CJON, the inaugural DNP Projects article is “Examining the Effects of a Structured Mentorship Program on the Nurse Mentor: A Pilot Study Engaging Oncology Nurses” (Drury et al., 2022). As was envisioned when establishing CJON’s DNP Projects department, this article is an example of transforming clinical oncology practice and care delivery.

DNP projects have shown broad applicability in advancing clinical oncology practice. According to Susan M. Schneider,

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PhD, RN, AOCN®, FAAN, associate professor emerita at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, and past president of the Oncology Nursing Society in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:

As more oncology nurses complete their DNP degree, they are using their advanced practice knowledge and evidence to improve how care is delivered. . . . I have seen projects that improve the utilization of screening for lung cancer, implement supportive programs for breast cancer survivors, improve tracking and support for individuals on oral cancer treatments, and implement standard order sets to improve symptom management. One early model project demonstrated that patients and providers were satisfied with the direct release of [laboratory] results. Now, it’s standard practice!

For more information on the DNP Projects department or to get started developing an article, contact Associate Editor Celeste M. Baldwin, PhD, APRN, CNS, at celbald@gmail.com.



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