



## **Position on Rehabilitation of People with Cancer**

### **An ARN Position Statement**

Cancer is a chronic disease with concurrent physical, functional, psychological, social, and spiritual sequelae. Rehabilitation services play a very important role at every stage of the disease process. Recent trends show an increase in the number of people diagnosed with cancer as well as an increased survival rate. People with cancer are living longer with cancer-related impairments and a comprehensive rehabilitation program can assist people with cancer achieve maximal functional ability and adapt to their disabilities (Beck, 2003). The focus of the rehabilitation program must be collaborative and interdisciplinary, whether based in acute, subacute, or home care.

The Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN) and the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) believe the oncology rehabilitation registered nurse's role in the interdisciplinary team is pivotal in creating an environment conducive to quality patient care. "The goal of rehabilitation nursing is to assist the individual with disability and chronic illness in the restoration and maintenance of maximal health" (ARN, 1998, p. 5). It is imperative that ongoing research and education in rehabilitation be funded to find ways to improve care. With ongoing collaboration and interdisciplinary efforts, cancer rehabilitation will maximize both the quantity and quality of each individual's life for the present and in the future (ARN, 2000a, 2000b; ONS, 2005).

#### **It is the Position of ARN and ONS that:**

- Oncology rehabilitation care is part of quality cancer care, which is a right for all citizens.
- Oncology rehabilitation is an option for all patients at any stage of cancer.
- Oncology rehabilitation incorporates the individual with cancer and the family as fully informed partners and decision makers.
- Oncology rehabilitation includes timely access to and reimbursement for a coordinated, comprehensive interdisciplinary approach.
- Oncology rehabilitation is coordinated and delivered by competent rehabilitative cancer-care providers.
- Accountability and coordination of culturally-competent quality oncology rehabilitation care is best accomplished by registered nurses who have been educated and certified in oncology or rehabilitation specialties.

#### **References**

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