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## **SAVE THIS DATE!!!**

Please join us on **Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup>** for the first GKCCONS meeting of 2018!

Alec Stone, MA, MPA, ONS Health Policy Director, will be discussing the latest ONS health policy initiatives. Alec has been a leader in healthcare legislative and regulatory affairs for more than two decades. You won't want to miss this meeting!

The exact time and location is TBD, but details will be coming soon.

# ONS Capital Hill Days

by Melody Alexander



In September, I was given the opportunity to join over 100 other oncology nursing professionals in Washington DC to learn more about advocacy and spend time with elected officials talking about the impact of current legislation on our patients and us as nursing professionals. This is the second year for the ONS Capitol Hill Days, sponsored by the society and member participation was even more than the year before. As someone unsure of how to share my experiences in healthcare with elected officials, this weekend was well worth the time.

Prior to our visit we were asked to complete the online Advocacy 101 course, which helped us better understand the legislative process and the impact of our testimonies when we choose to share our experiences. During the week we also sat in education sessions learning more about the specific legislative issues we would be discussing with our Representatives and Senators. This year, legislation included the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA) (HR 1676/S 693), the Drug Parity Act (HR 1409), and funding for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) and Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development.

One of the points stressed was the importance of us going in as nursing advocates, not lobbyists, to share how these pieces of legislation relate to our patients and our roles as healthcare professionals. It is not important that we know the deep down details, but rather bring the stories and show how the words on paper might shape the real life experiences in our day to day work. We were reminded multiple times during those days that the legislators work for us as constituents and it is important we put into action our civic rights as voting citizens. My experience walking around the Capitol and visiting with the various office staff is one that will always be in my mind. At times it was almost surreal watching the day to day activity of staffers and legislators doing their work.

There are so many ways to advocate, both locally and nationally. After all, advocacy is one of key roles as nurses. I think the first step, for those unsure of where to start, is to consider taking the ONS Advocacy 101 course online. You can also visit the ONS Policy & Advocacy page for more details on the national issues related to our profession. Finally, get to know your elected officials, both national and local. Reach out to them and read about the state legislation that may affect your patients. In many cases, change happens at the state level then trickles up to the national level.

## Looking for a way to keep up with the ever-changing oncology landscape??

Whether you are NEW to oncology or are.....more “experienced”, new therapies and new indications are gaining FDA approval on a regular basis. As you are well-aware, there is always something new you can learn! It may have been some time since you checked out the ONS website at [www.ons.org](http://www.ons.org), so you can make that one of your New Year’s resolutions!

For instance, you most likely have heard “buzz” about CAR T-cell therapy, but may not know what that process entails. Click on this link (or copy and paste) to watch a very informative 12 minute Q&A with a nurse who has worked with CAR T-cell therapies. This is just one of the educational videos on the ONS site. Check it out!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScurKojCJUg&feature=youtu.be>.

While we are on the topic of education, the OCN Review and Oncology Education hosted by the GKCCONS in October was an enormous success! Thanks to Diann Godbey, Traci McCarty and MCA for all your support! There were over 50 attendees in-person/via Zoom from MO, KS, FL, ME and ND!!!



# The Best Pimento Cheese recipe

Take this to work with crackers – you will definitely impress your boss/co-workers!

This recipe is courtesy of Dr. Susanne Arnold (one of my favorite medical oncologists in Kentucky).

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large block (16 oz) of Sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 small block (8 oz) of Marble Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1 small block (8 oz) of Swiss cheese, shredded
- 1 softened container Boursin cheese spread (herbal flavor)
- 1-2 garlic cloves finely chopped
- 1-2 (4 oz) jars of drained pimentos
- Mayo (1 or 1 ½ cups)
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste.

Mix all ingredients together and serve with crackers or on bread. You can even serve a vegetable tray with it to add some health value to the dish (if it makes you feel better).

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**Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Newsletter point for the chapter for the past two years.**

**I hope you and your family enjoy your holiday break and have a great start to your New Year!**

**Sincerely,  
Jeanni Thompson**