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Kathleen E Houlahan

Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center, USA

Cancer nursing

Nursing is the largest healthcare occupation in the United States and was recognized as a profession in the mid-1800s with recognition of oncology nursing as a profession in the 1940s. Nursing plays a vital role using their knowledge base and nursing process to provide exceptional care of the oncology patient. Although diagnosis and treatment may differ between pediatric and adult patients, in the United States oncology nurses receive advanced training in areas that include diagnosis, treatment options, chemotherapy/agents administration, symptom management and care at the end of life. There are numerous specialties within the oncology nursing field that includes the staff nurse, clinical nurse specialist, nursing leaders, research nursing, community outreach nurse, palliative care provider, informatics, integrative therapy and the advanced practice nurses. In addition, the oncology patient and their family/caregivers play an integral part of their health care management and are included as part of the team. Oncology nurses provide family centered care as part of their everyday practice. Over the last few years, global health nursing has evolved to include collaborations with nursing and medical colleagues with the goal of increasing training and education worldwide. Global health initiatives include using state of the art technology, observerships to centers within the United States and in-country visits and nursing fellowships. Cancer Nursing is a challenging and rewarding profession that involves highly specialized nurses charged with providing expert care to oncology patients and families.

Biography

Kathleen E Houlahan has completed her MSN from St. Joseph's College and MHA from Simmons College. She is the Nurse Director of the Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center. She instituted an outreach program to aid in the transition of the patient to the home environment. She is active in global health and has led the development of nursing models (DFCI in-country fellowship program/Rwanda and BCH/DFCC nursing exchange model instituted in Mexico) with the goal of providing safe nursing care to oncology patients. She has published several articles and presents nationally and internationally on educating nurses to care for oncology patients.

kathleen.houlahan@childrens.harvard.edu