

# OPTAReview

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ONCOLOGY PHARMACY TECHNICIAN ASSOCIATION | WINTER 2022



**OPTA CERTIFICATION:** PROGRAM STARTED TO SUPPORT & ENCOURAGE THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PHARMACY TECHNICIANS

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**2022 NCODA FALL SUMMIT RECAP:** PHOTOS FROM OPTA'S MEET & GREET AND RECEPTION

Ashley Kohler-Gerber, CPhT, Ericka, Valdez, CPhT, Caitlyn Boltik, CPhT and Allison Dillehay, CPhT at the 2022 NCODA Fall Summit



## WELCOME

# NEW CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: STRENGTHENING & EMPOWERING PHARM TECHS

BY TARYN NEWSOME, CPhT  
NCODA

We are in exciting times for OPTA and oncology pharmacy technicians! OPTA has officially launched the Oncology Pharmacy Technician Certification Program! The purpose of the certification program is advance the professional development of oncology pharmacy technicians and to ensure a consistent standard of quality care in oncology. This certification will primarily focus on oral oncologic medication. OPTA has recently created an Active Learner Study Guide to help aid in studying for the exam. The guide includes a description of each section of the content outline along with key concepts to study in that section. For more information on the certification program and to access the study material please visit the new OPTA tab on the NCODA website and on NCODA Connect.



### Program overview:

#### Qualifications for Enrollment

- CPhT & practicing in oncology pharmacy setting for a minimum of 12 months
- If not CPhT, practicing in oncology pharmacy setting for a minimum of 24 months

#### Application Requirements

- Current license
- Letter from employer that must contain the following:
  - Company letterhead
  - Employment dates
  - Physical signature
  - Contact information

#### Total Program Cost

- Initial Certification
- Application Fee: \$25 (non-refundable)
- Exam Fee: \$125 (no refunds if exam has been started)

#### The Exam

- 100 questions/120 minutes (2 hours)
- Passing score 750

## NOVEMBER MEETING RECAP

**HOT TOPIC:** The Founder and CEO of OncoBitez, Butch Hunter shared with OPTA his nutritional snacks that are made to support patients undergoing chemotherapy as well as to help with possible side effects from therapy. OncoBitez has many key ingredients and comes in three different targeted taste sensitivities to help support patient side effects such as spicy, sweet, and tart. OncoBitez has recently changed package sizing to coordinate with patients' post treatment care and to go along with antiemetic medication. The new packaging in comes in a pack of 3 bites for 3 days after the patient has received therapy. Butch is passionate about helping cancer patients manage their therapy and encourages pharmacy technicians educate their patients about the benefits of trying Oncobitez. For more information, please visit Oncobitez.com

## TECHNICIAN IN FOCUS: PAGE 3 & 4



2022 NCODA Living Mission Award  
Congratualtions!!!

Linda Grimsley, CPhT | VCS

## OPTAReview

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## OPTA Opportunities

### MEETING PRESENTATIONS

OPTA members are invited to participate in monthly meetings by providing:

- Drug Updates/New Indication and Combination Therapy Overview
- Peer Presentations
- Technician in Focus

### OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- NCODA International Monthly Webinar
- NCODA Conferences/Meetings

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact:

- Taryn.Newsome@ncoda.org
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## OPTA Resources

### NCODA CONNECT

<https://www.ncoda.org/discussion/pharm-tech/>

### NCODA & OPTA RESOURCES

<https://www.ncoda.org/resources/>

### NCODA/OPTA WEBSITE

<https://www.ncoda.org/oncology-pharmacy-technician-association-opta/>

### NEXT OPTA MEETING:

3 p.m. EST, Wednesday,  
January 11th, 2023

Members will receive  
a calendar invitation

## TECHNICIAN IN FOCUS

# JACQUELYN LOGAN: SHARES HER ROLE IN PROVIDING QUALITY CARE TO CANCER PATIENTS AT MAYO

**Name:** Jacquelyn Logan, CPhT

**Practice:** Mayo Clinic, Florida

**How can OPTA or NCODA help you and your practice?** Learning all the available resources that NCODA and OPTA have to offer for cancer patients, (support groups, education, publications, and financial and co-payment assistance) is beneficial to our practice.

We may be able to share this information with our patients or family members who need extra support. It also keeps us up to date on all the latest information within our specialty.

**Explain your current role at your practice:** My current role is to provide quality care to cancer care patients. Details include:

- Performing sterile compounding, including high volume chemotherapy and investigational drug preparations
- Optimizing the compassionate care medication drug program
- Receiving and restocking drug orders from the procurement team using BD Logistics Software
- Performing weekly cycle counts for inventory management of drugs
- Packaging and labeling prescribed medications
- Delivering medications to the nursing units
- Perform daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning per USP 800

**What do you enjoy most about your current position?** I enjoy teaching, training, sharing my expertise, and imparting knowledge and wisdom.

**What do your day-to-day responsibilities include?**

- Reviewing the time and attendance log for call outs and if necessary, making changes to the workflow
- Checking and responding to emails



JACQUELYN LOGAN

- Using PAMS software to document daily checklists for temperatures for the refrigerators, incubators, and workroom, negative and positive pressure readings of the clean rooms, and daily cleaning
- Coordinating lunch breaks
- Preparing IVs, chemotherapy, and investigational drugs using aseptic technique

- Batching premeds for non-hazardous drugs and preparing kits for those requiring a Non-DEHP inline filter
- Monitoring Epic, printing labels, gathering medications and supplies needed for drug prep

**Do you assume any specialized duties/responsibilities from time-to-time?**

- Assembling and administering media fill testing for employees annually
- Monthly surface sampling
- Technician schedule
- Assisting manager with interviews for new candidates

- Training new hires

- Implementing workflow changes

**Do you have any "best-practices" that you use at your practice that you would like to share with OPTA members?**

Technicians batch premeds and some extended stability chemotherapy to allow patients to begin treatment without delay. In addition, our pharmacists review and prioritize medications based on administration sequencing before compounding is completed to provide seamless care for our patients and avoid costly errors.

**What advice do you have for technicians who are new to oncology/hematology field?** Embrace change. Oncology is a very dynamic field. Don't be intimidated. We all start from ground zero.





## TECHNICIAN IN FOCUS

# MARSHA SNELLER: PROVIDES ADVICE ON HOW TO SUCCEED AS AN ONCOLOGY PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

**Name:** Marsha Sneller, CPhT-Adv

**Practice:** June E. Nylen Cancer Center

**How can OPTA or NCODA help you and your practice?** OPTA and NCODA do a wonderful job at allowing us to network with other practices at the Fall Summit and Spring Forum conferences and being able to have access to all the resources including the Oral Chemotherapy Education (OCE) sheets.

### **Explain your current role at your practice:**

As the staff would say that work with me, I wear many hats if necessary. My current role is the Lead Advanced Certified Pharmacy Technician in our MID. I manage the PBM contracts, payment reconciliation, drug returns/credits, optimizing our MID reports monthly, meet with drug reps and pharmacy reps outside of work to build relationships for our patients' needs, updating any policies and procedures for our department, and making sure there is open communication with MID team and MD/RN staff. I am also a current member of three different committees within the clinic to help our patients, employees, and organization move towards our vision and mission.

**What do you enjoy most about your current position?** I have to say being a friend to all of our patients. Being able to help them with anything they need really makes me feel like I make a difference in their lives, big or small.

### **What do your day-to-day responsibilities include?**

Each day is different in the oncology clinic. Our daily workflow includes:

- Listening to voicemails left after hours
- Printing any faxes that came in after hours
- Processing refills that are on the medsync calendar for the day
- Order medications if not in stock
- Check in IKnowMed insurance queue for any new patient regimens that need to be worked on
- Renew any prior authorizations
- Check to see if any grants are open for any patients that are pending more funds
- Post any payments
- Unpack drugs that come in and have the physician verify drug label to start filling process
- Fill medications (once verified by physician)
- Pack up the mailer patients and ship out
- File e-scripts in LOT/EXP book
- Mail any birthday cards and mail any sympathy cards.

In between the listed above, we help the new patients with prior authorizations, grant assistance, making sure they have an education session for any new oral medication, answer incoming phone calls, and at the end of the day, we wipe everything down, take out the trash, empty the HIPAA bins and get ready for the next day.

### **Do you assume any specialized duties/responsibilities from time-to-time?**

Yes, from time to time, I am asked from upper management if I can assist with a specific task.

### **Do you have any "best-practices" that you use at your practice that you would like to share with OPTA members?**

- When you introduce yourself to a new patient, let them know that you will be their advocate through their treatment and for anything else that they need assistance with.
- Assure the patient that you have all financial assistance resources available to help put their minds at ease regarding the cost of their medication.
- Go above and beyond for your patient like you would do for your own family member.
- If you are having a rough day, make sure you're that you are empathetic with patients.

### **What advice do you have for technicians who are new to oncology/hematology field?**

- I took the top 50-75 oncolytic medications (brand and generic) and studied the indications of each on flash cards for 2 months. I was determined to learn what drugs was being prescribed. Knowing the correct indication has helped me to make sure that I have all the correct information for obtaining patient assistance and making sure I had the correct starter kits for the patient.
- If you are new, don't be afraid to say that you are still learning processes and workflows of the clinic and to ask for patience during this new learning curve
- Introduce yourself to the nursing staff and the physicians.
- If you have drug reps that visit or have lunch provided to your clinic, share with them your role within the MID and ways that they may be able to help you assist you with your patients
- Join on any committee that you think will help your role at the clinic!



MARSHA SNELLER

June E. Nylen  
CANCER CENTER



# COLLABORATION: CONTINUING EDUCATION & NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

BY ANDREA NELSON, CPhT  
NEBRASKA CANCER CENTER

This was my second time attending the NCODA Fall Summit. I learned even more this year than I did at my first. I enjoy getting to put faces and names together. This conference gave me the opportunity to network and meet new people each day. My favorite parts of the NCODA Fall Summit were the breakout sessions and networking opportunities. I remember my first time attending a meeting, I felt like a fish out of water. Now, after a few years in my position, I get it. Things make sense and I look forward to attending each year.

Learning how other Medically Integrated Pharmacies (MIP) operate intrigues me. I am always looking for ways to improve our workflow. Anything I can take back to my practice to improve patient care is great. I specifically remember listening to a group speak about their process for new patients and new treatments. I wrote it all down. It was like they were speaking

directly to me or knew my thoughts on things I would be interested in learning.

The technician breakout sessions were great! I really enjoyed learning about different leadership roles for pharmacy technicians. We are not limited to counting pills. You have to work hard and grow in your career. Being a NCODA and OPTA member gives you the tools you need to help you succeed. I appreciate having pharmacy technician focused Continuing Education (CE). It is hard to find oncology CE specifically for technicians – what a great bonus!

I am incredibly passionate about my patients, and I believe financial assistance is key. I appreciate having representatives from different pharmaceutical companies and patient assistance organization as speakers. It gives me the opportunity to listen, learn and ask an abundance of questions.





2022 NCODA FALL SUMMIT OPTA MEET & GREET

