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‘Supporting cancer nurses in caring for themselves and their patients’ European Cancer Nursing Day (ECND22) – Wednesday 18 May

This year’s European Cancer Nursing Day (ECND22) takes place today - 18 May. It is organised by the European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS). This year, EONS has chosen the theme: **‘Supporting cancer nurses in caring for themselves and their patients’**.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, existing issues related to burnout, stress and resilience increased, resulting in many either leaving the profession or expressing an intention to do so. It is for this reason that ECND22 focuses on the importance of self-care and well-being for cancer nurses, on occupational health, and on retention and recruitment – all of which, in turn, impact on the overall quality of patient care.

On 18 May, a powerful social media campaign – #ECND22Go4SelfCare – will bring Europe-wide attention to these major issues. Nurses will share key messages and pictures related to well-being and safety in their workplaces all over Europe, from Sweden to Spain, Estonia to Ireland.

Burnout and stress is a danger both to the health of nurses and to the safety of their patients – errors occur more frequently when people are tired – and nurses must be supported to take care of themselves so that they can take care of others.

Many nurses – by some estimates as many as 66% – say the pandemic has made them consider leaving the profession. High-quality cancer care depends on retaining and supporting a high-quality workforce; recognition of cancer nursing as a specialism, better levels of reward and appropriate rest and leisure time, are key to addressing the shortage of cancer nurses and avoiding stress and burnout.

Resilience in cancer nursing is essential for the management of psychosocial distress among patients and their families; but work-life balance is also important for the caregiver to be able provide compassion and empathy, thus improving cancer care.

EONS President Johan de Munter said:

“Cancer nurses must be supported to maintain their physical and mental health and safety in the workplace by an appreciative management culture that values them as individuals and promotes a supportive culture that also encourages learning, personal, and career development.

“These should not be seen as ‘add-ons’ – they are essential elements that will strengthen cancer nurses' capacity to provide high-quality and safe evidence-based cancer care for all affected by cancer.”

To mark ECND22 the EONS Board and Working Groups will gather in Zagreb, Croatia, for a series of special events.

A Roundtable Discussion, including representatives from the Croatian Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, and the Nursing Council President, with the theme: “Challenges in Cancer Care and Cancer Nursing during and beyond the pandemic” will consider the uptake of EONS Cancer Nursing Education Framework and cancer nursing recognition in Croatia. The aim of the roundtable is to emphasise the importance of educating specialised oncology nurses, which directly impacts quality of patient care.

Find out more about ECND22 and EONS at <https://cancernurse.eu/ecnd2022/>

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