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# Past, present and future: From vision to action: A strategic roadmap for empowering nurses

**A**s president, vice president, and past-president of the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO/ACIO), and on behalf of the Board of Directors, we are pleased to share the progress our organization has made over the past year.

The CANO/ACIO Strategic Plan outlines our organization's goals and the necessary actions to achieve them. It serves as a guiding framework, helping us fulfill our mission and vision while ensuring that efforts and resources are allocated efficiently. Through this plan, we have remained focused on advancing oncology nursing in Canada through advocacy, collaboration, the provision of practice resources, education, research, and leadership.

As we begin the process of developing a new strategic plan for 2026–2030, given we are nearing the end of our current plan (2021–2025), it is important to reflect on its successful implementation. The 2021–2025 strategic plan has enabled CANO/ACIO to anticipate and adapt to challenges within the health-care and nursing landscapes, while maintaining our leadership position as a trusted professional organization. By setting measurable goals and clear actions, the plan became our anchor, providing us with a structured approach to tracking our progress and evaluating our outcomes. As global leaders in oncology nursing, we have strengthened our ability to drive innovation, advocate for change, and continue advancing cancer care through education, research, and collaborative partnerships, both in Canada and internationally.

Further information on the CANO/ACIO strategic plan can be found at <http://canadianoncologynursingjournal.com/index.php/conj/article/view/1265/1048>.

CANO/ACIO's mission is to advance cancer care nursing through advocacy, collaboration, the provision of practice

resources, education, research and leadership for the benefit of all people living in Canada. Our vision is that CANO/ACIO is a recognized leader in pursuing cancer care nursing excellence and improving access and equity, nationally and internationally.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY A: CANO/ACIO IS THE SOURCE FOR VALUED AND PRACTICAL RESOURCES**

Within Canada and internationally, CANO/ACIO continues to be a trusted source of resources surrounding oncology nursing (i.e., standards, position statements, and toolkits). Extensive work is underway to develop and update of our Practice Standards and Competencies for the Specialized Oncology Nurse. These central documents will require engagement of our members to ensure they are representing the critical and diverse practice of oncology nurses throughout the country and across the continuum of cancer care. This intensive process is already underway and will continue over the course of the year, with the final documents slated for presentation at the annual CANO/ACIO conference in 2025. There will be many opportunities for input, and we hope you engage with us in this process. In addition, CANO/ACIO continues its development of new position statements on critical topics of relevance to oncology nurses. In 2024, we saw the release of the **Fertility Preservation Position statement**, a collaboration with the **Oncology Nursing Society** and the **Association of Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurses**. Finally, this year CANO/ACIO will be developing position statements in radiation oncology nursing, virtual care oncology nursing and Oncology genomics.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY B: CANO/ACIO IS AN ADVOCATE IN SUPPORT OF ONCOLOGY NURSES AND PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CANCER**

The expansion of the CANO/ACIO Board of Directors in 2023 to include a new position of Director-at-Large (DAL), Advocacy and Policy, has enabled us to continue to work toward our advocacy goals for both nurses and the Canadians in our care. There is strong synergy among the DAL portfolios for Advocacy and Policy, External Relations, and Communications, particularly in the development of a national engagement strategy and identifying how we work with external partners. In the post-pandemic world, it has become increasingly clear that CANO/ACIO is receiving numerous requests for collaboration, engagement, and input. However, we must focus our efforts on supporting our broader membership, enhancing our resources, and advocating for oncology nursing; after all, we are the only national group representing oncology nurses and oncology nursing practice. Several members of the CANO/ACIO Board of Directors are collaborating closely to develop key messages that will guide our advocacy efforts nationally and internationally.

Additionally, the dissemination and analysis of the Rural and Remote Survey is underway—stay tuned for the results in the new year. We anticipate that this will lead to further collaboration through our Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Association for Rural and Remote Nursing. We also continue to advocate for Radiation Oncology Nursing, building on insights from the Pan-Canadian Multidisciplinary Radiation Oncology Workforce Survey, which included nursing respondents for the first time. We

are excited about the forthcoming joint publications on the findings of this crucial project. This work also has led to CANO/ACIO being recognized as a key partner with the Canadian Association of Provincial Cancer Agencies and gaining representation at the Canadian Partnership for Quality Radiation Committee. Furthermore, under the leadership of our DAL for Advocacy and Policy, CANO's engagement with the Cancer Action Now Alliance (CANA) has proven valuable in advancing advocacy efforts in partnership with patient-led groups.

Finally, we are pleased to report that in 2024, a new special interest group (SIG), the Oncology Genomics SIG, was established which will provide support to oncology nurses who are working in and have interests in this specialized field. Plans to also develop other relevant SIGs, such as a Cancer Prevention and Health Promotion SIG, as well as an Oncology Nursing Informatics SIG, are also underway.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITY C: CANO/ACIO IS PROACTIVE IN ENGAGING EXTERNAL PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

Building on our continued momentum, CANO/ACIO has had a dynamic year fostering connections with multiple external partners across the country. This includes collaborations with the Canadian Cancer Society and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada in joint presentations at our CANO/ACIO conferences (St. John's, NFLD, 2024). We were privileged to engage with the Canadian Cancer Society for a successful Oncology Nurse's Day in April 2024. This was very well received by the community at large and a wonderful showcase of the spirit of oncology nursing practice. We continue to strive to work closely with our trusted Canadian partners to build lasting and meaningful collaborations. In the upcoming year, we look forward to our continued engagement with Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology (CAPO) supporting a symposium at their conference in

Toronto in April 2025. More recently, CANO/ACIO has engaged in memorandum of understandings with the Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment (CANE) and the Canadian Association of Rural and Remote Nursing (CARRN). We look forward to the great work ahead, as we continue to progress through this newly formed partnership.

Finally, CANO/ACIO continues its work as a knowledge user for two large projects (supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research): 1) Designing Engagement Strategies for Genomics-Informed Oncology Nursing: Comparative Prospective Cross Jurisdictional Policy Analysis (funded), and 2) Examining the Implementation and Impact of a Novel Portfolio-Based Approach to Specialty Nursing Certification: A Multi-Method Study (in submission). As a result of these collaborations, CANO/ACIO has seen much growth, for example, within the oncology genomics space with the development of the genomics special interest group and the anticipated oncology genomics position statement.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITY D: CANO/ACIO IS A NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LEADER**

There continues to be board representation at national forums and symposia regarding cancer care and advocacy. In the post-pandemic era, there has been much work to re-establish relationships with our national partners. Most notable of these is the pan-Canadian HHR Oncology Workforce Planning through the Canadian Association of Provincial Cancer Agencies (CAPCA) and Canadian Partnership for Quality Radiotherapy Committee. The involvement of oncology nurses in these discussions is essential for influencing policy and enhancing understanding of the critical role nurses play in cancer care.

Internationally, we continue our partnership with the European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS) and are collaborating on a virtual position statement

on oncology nursing care. Under the leadership of the DAL for External Relations, CANO/ACIO is becoming a strong voice among global oncology nursing leaders. We are working with key organizations, such as the European Nursing Society, the International Society of Cancer Care Nursing, the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), and the Global Power of Oncology Nursing on advocacy efforts related to nursing practices in supportive care.

In 2024, we proudly released the joint Fertility Preservation Position Statement, developed in collaboration with ONS and the Association for Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nursing. This statement was published across all three organizations and led to joint fertility preservation symposia at the CANO/ACIO conference in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Late in 2023, CANO/ACIO expanded its membership categories to include oncology nursing colleagues from lower- and middle-income countries (LMICs). We are now poised to assess the success of this new program. This initiative is part of our ongoing partnership with the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care (ISNCC), where we support oncology nurses from LMICs through two key efforts:

1. **Participation at the International Cancer Nursing Conference (ICCN):** We provide scholarships for oncology nurses from LMICs to attend the ICCN conference, enhancing their professional development and providing networking opportunities within the global oncology community and,
2. **Oncology Research Grant:** In alternate years, we fund a research grant for a nurse from an LMIC, who is conducting oncology-related research. This initiative helps foster research and innovation in oncology nursing in resource-constrained settings.

Finally, CANO/ACIO has had the privilege of connecting with the newly launched Oncology Nurses Society – Kenyan Chapter. We welcomed their first president to our CANO/ACIO conference in St. John's, Newfoundland.

We hope a few members of our board will be able to attend the chapter's annual scientific conference in Kenya in September 2025.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITY E: CANO/ACIO LEADS THE APPRECIATION FOR ONCOLOGY NURSES**

The Oncology Nursing Day Committee has continued to thrive with great success. Last year, we saw a positive collaboration with the Canadian Cancer Society, and we are committed to nurturing these partnerships to elevate further the recognition of oncology nurses. Our efforts through the communications portfolio remain strong, as we work to increase our visibility and expand our reach to both members and the broader community via various platforms, including newsletters and social media. Notable initiatives, such as the student takeover of the student engagement event at our annual conference and the upcoming 2025 launch of the 'Did You Know?' campaign, highlight our ongoing engagement. With the first round of increased funding—comprising travel support and research grants—now complete, we will assess the impact of this financial support for our members.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITY F: CANO/ACIO AIMS TO AMPLIFY CANADIAN ONCOLOGY NURSES' WORK FROM COAST TO COAST**

As we move forward, we will focus our efforts on actively engaging in succession planning for Board of Director roles. As a member-led organization, it is essential to engage and involve membership at all levels of our activities, with particular emphasis on the board level. Future efforts will focus on exploring sustainable models for leadership development and succession planning.

In addition, there are numerous other activities both ongoing and planned. A critical initiative that must be brought to the attention of our membership is the development of a new strategic plan (2026–2030). This work is underway. Our strategic plan is a crucial document that will shape direction, resources, action, and initiatives of the organization. There will be many ways in which feedback of our membership will be sought for its development. Please consider engaging and participating in this process. We deeply value, and depend on, the input of our members now more than ever to ensure that CANO/ACIO is progressing in ways that align with the voices and goals of our community.

CANO/ACIO is a member-driven organization, and we are stronger together. We are grateful for the ongoing work and commitment of our board members, and we have achieved so much over the past year. We also are grateful to our CANO/ACIO members, including our chapter and SIG leaders, for your continued engagement, advice, and feedback.

We have more work ahead of us at the national and international levels to continue to advance our mission, vision, and strategic work in oncology nursing, and we need your ongoing support and active engagement. There are numerous ways to get involved: through your local chapter, by joining a national committee or a Special Interest Group (SIG) focused on an area you're passionate about, or by being part of the Board of Directors. Be sure to watch for announcements through our social media outlets, newsletters and emails.

**Catriona J. Buick, RN, PhD,  
President CANO/ACIO**

**Charissa Cordon, RN, PhD,  
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