

Joanne Vanak, MSN, BSN



Joanne Vanak has over 44 years of oncology nursing experience with a focus on research, treatment modalities, patient care, and education. Joanne is recently retired after a 22-year career with Janssen Pharmaceuticals, a Johnson and Johnson (JNJ) family company.

Joanne spent the last years of her career at JNJ, leading a team of nurses and pharmacists within the Oncology Early Development Research and Development department. Prior to this role, Joanne spent 9 years as a Senior Director in Scientific Advocacy, creating the position after recognizing an unmet need. She developed the role, establishing key strategies to enhance relationships with over 30 oncology advocacy groups; working to identify patient needs, challenges, and create ideal methods of promoting patient advocacy. She is credited with development of the Advocacy Connector, a web-based resource that identifies and promotes the advocacy groups and resources for patients, caregivers, and families, in a user-friendly fashion.

Joanne built an Oncology Medical Science Liaison (MSL) group; starting with 3 core members and eventually hiring, developing, and managing over 30+ people in the role of MSL. She developed a Nursing Innovation Council of Excellence Employee Resource Group (NICE ERG) within JNJ; gathering over 340 nurses and health care providers to share expertise and insights to multi-disciplinary functions, including sales and marketing teams in preparation for drug launches and new FDA approved indications.

Prior to joining industry in 1998, Joanne worked as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) for over 25 years at a number of institutions including 3 large comprehensive cancer centers. She has experience as an in-patient and out-patient registered nurse, and hospice nurse, focusing on patient care, nursing care, and education. Among her accolades, Joanne was a finalist as “Nurse of Year” while practicing as a staff nurse at Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, D.C. in 1991.

Joanne is dedicated to the quality of care for cancer patients, caregivers, and families, as well as to the growth and expansion of oncology nursing as a profession. She is a member of Advanced Practitioner Society for Hematology and Oncology (APSHO), a member of the DEI committee, and the SHAPE Partner organization. Joanne is an active member of the Coast Guard Spouse Club as well.

Joanne holds a Master of Science in Nursing from Georgetown University as well as a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from George Mason University.