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Terry Watkins named 2010 Polk County RN Nurse of Hope

LAKELAND, FLA. – The Imperial Polk Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) has named Good Shepherd Hospice Case Manager Terry Watkins, RN, as its 2010 RN Nurse of Hope.

Watkins has been a nurse for 32 years and has been with Good Shepherd Hospice since 2003, where she has held a variety of positions. Currently, as hospice case manager, she coordinates the admission of hospitalized patients who enroll with Good Shepherd Hospice. Watkins works in the Davenport and Haines City communities.

The RN Nurse of Hope award goes to a nurse who practices in Polk County who excels in the field of oncology nursing.

Watkins was recognized for her dedicated compassion to oncology patients who are referred to Good Shepherd Hospice. Her anonymous nominator wrote, "As a Good Shepherd Hospice liaison, Terry is often the first contact patients and families have with hospice. While many are angry or frightened, Terry has the ability to offer them empathy and compassion in this difficult time. She does not take away anyone's hope – hope for a cure, hope for more time, but gives them the assurance of quality and support during their journey with the cancer diagnosis. Terry is the epitome of a nurse of hope."

Watkins has personal hospice experiences when her father and grandmother received end-of-life care from Good Shepherd Hospice prior to their deaths. But Watkins' decision to work for a hospice goes back to her past jobs at hospitals. "I observed hospice nurses who came into the facilities," she recalled. "They always seemed happy."

She was humbled by the ONS recognition. "I am completely surprised but very grateful for the honor," Watkins said.

Watkins resides in Winter Haven with her husband, Neil, a nurse with Winter Haven Hospital, and her daughter, Logan, 11. She also has two stepchildren, Morgan and Jake.

To commemorate her recognition as the 2010 RN Nurse of Hope, Watkins received an engraved plaque and flowers as the guest of honor at the ONS May 19 dinner. In addition, Watkins will be honored at the National Cancer Survivor's Day celebration on June 6 at the Lakeland Regional Cancer Center.

The ONS is a professional organization of more than 37,000 registered nurses and other healthcare providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research and administration in oncology nursing. The ONS Imperial Polk Chapter has approximately 40 members and meets monthly.

About Good Shepherd Hospice

Good Shepherd Hospice is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that supports and serves approximately 750 patients each day in Polk, Highlands and Hardee counties as they face the challenges of life-limiting illnesses. Healthcare professionals and trained volunteers embrace the Good Shepherd Hospice mission to make the most of life by relieving the suffering of patients and their families affected by end-of-life issues. The organization has been a part of the community since 1979 and is a 2008 recipient of a Circle of Life Citation of Honor Award. Good Shepherd Hospice programs are accredited by the Joint Commission, the nation's premier healthcare accrediting body. The United Way of Central Florida partially funds the community programs offered by Good Shepherd Hospice. For more information, please visit the website at www.goodshepherdhospice.org

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**Terry Watkins, Good Shepherd Hospice Case Manager,
Oncology Nursing Society, Imperial Polk County Chapter 2010 RN Nurse of Hope**