

Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund (NRRF) Progress Report

March 31, 2005

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Executive Summary

The Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund (NRRF) was established in 1999 to help recruit and retain registered nurses (RNs), registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs) in Manitoba. The main goal of the NRRF is to improve the delivery of health services in the province by addressing nursing supply issues. Strategies include aggressive recruitment, direct incentives and increased access to educational programs. Since its inception, the NRRF has spent more than \$13.9 million on strategic approaches to increase the number of nurses in the Manitoba workforce.

The NRRF committee's main functions include fund allocation, policy development and the ongoing evaluation of key initiatives. The success of NRRF is a result of continuing collaboration among key stakeholders—Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU), Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) and Manitoba Health.

Recruitment

Relocation Assistance

Nurses relocating to Manitoba are eligible for financial compensation up to \$5,000 to offset costs of moving. Recipients must meet predefined criteria that include working in a direct care, permanent or term nursing position of 0.6 equivalent full-time (EFT) status or higher, for one year. The NRRF has assisted 824 individuals who moved to Manitoba to practise nursing in the province.

Financial Assistance for Return to Practice

In exchange for one-year service commitments, individuals needing to upgrade their nursing education can receive financial assistance for 80 per cent of course costs, up to \$2,000. The NRRF has provided financial support for 444 nurses to complete refresher courses.

Conditional Grant Program for New Grads

Since July 2004, RN and RPN graduates within six months of initial registration, have been able to access grants of \$4,000. These nurses must be willing to work in rural or northern Manitoba, in a position of 0.6 or higher, for a minimum of 12 months. Through this program, the NRRF has provided financial support to 64 nurses, therefore, assisting in the recruitment of nurses to rural and northern regional health authorities (RHAs) and in the retention of Manitoba's nursing graduates.

Advertising/Marketing

The NRRF web site (www.gov.mb.ca/health/nurses) provides links to:

- information on NRRF initiatives and application forms, where appropriate;
- nursing education programs, scholarships, bursaries and student loan programs;
- NRRF annual reports and updates;
- nursing employment opportunities throughout the province; and
- the Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba (RHAM).

Representatives of the NRRF visit local and national nursing fairs to assist with the recruitment of nurses to Manitoba for employment opportunities. The NRRF also advertises in nursing and recruitment magazines.

Retention

Continuing Education

The NRRF has allocated more than \$5.8 million to continuing education committees in the RHAs, to support the ongoing education of Manitoba nurses. This funding is offered in addition to educational dollars provided within the collective agreement. Nurses may access these funds by contacting their regional continuing education committees. Examples of educational initiatives include specialty certifications, conferences, workshops and university courses.

Specialty Programs/Projects

The NRRF has contributed more than \$3.1 million to support a variety of specialty nursing education programs and projects within the province. Some examples are:

- intensive care unit courses
- perioperative programs
- emergency room programs

The Future

To find out more about policies, applications and information on nursing initiatives, visit our website at www.gov.mb.ca/health/nurses/, e-mail to nrrf@gov.mb.ca or call the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund Line at 786-7393 in Winnipeg, or toll free 1-877-681-4983 outside Winnipeg.

The Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund is continuing to explore innovative and exciting strategies to address nursing supply issues in the province. The input and ideas of all Manitobans is valuable to this process. We welcome your feedback.

Current Committee Membership

The continuing success of the NRRF's strategies and initiatives is a direct result of the ongoing collaboration among key nursing stakeholders. The NRRF core committee is made up of two representatives from each of these: Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU), the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) and Manitoba Health.

The NRRF committee meets monthly to review minutes, financial reports, statistics on NRRF strategies and all proposals for funding. The committee also evaluates the effectiveness of existing strategies and develops new initiatives to meet current needs.

Current Membership

Liz Ambrose

Manitoba Health, Workforce Policy & Planning
Senior Nursing Policy Analyst

Jan Currie

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)
Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer

Terry Goertzen

Manitoba Health (Chair of Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund)
Executive Director, Workforce Policy & Planning

Irene Giesbrecht

Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU)
Director of Negotiations, MNU

Maureen Hancharyk

Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU)
President, MNU

Randy Lock

Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba (RHAM)
Executive Director

Support Staff

Cheryl Cusack

Manitoba Health, Workforce Policy & Planning
Nursing Policy Analyst

Rhonda Hogg

Manitoba Health, Financial Services
Senior Financial Analyst

Helen Konrad

Manitoba Health
Acting Facilitator of the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund

History

In 1999, the Minister of Health established the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund (NRRF) to respond to a growing number of unfilled nurse vacancies in the public sector, and reports of increasing amounts of overtime being worked by nurses. A one-time grant of \$7 million was allocated to target the recruitment and retention of nurses in Manitoba.

Following the organization of a NRRF committee in 1999, a number of strategies were immediately developed and put into practice. To respond to the inquiries of nurses and employers about committee activities, the “Fund Line” was established. Another phone line was set up for nurses seeking information about employment opportunities in the province. The NRRF committee developed the first policies on nurses’ relocation to Manitoba and on the provision of funding for refresher courses in exchange for service commitments. Funding was also allocated towards specialty programs that prepare nurses to enter or remain within Manitoba’s workforce.

At the same time, NRRF initiated an aggressive marketing and advertising campaign. Ads featuring the “Come Home to Manitoba” endorsement were printed in local, national and international newspapers and journals. Information and relocation packages were mailed to nurses previously registered with the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses (MARN) to notify them about this initiative. As well, representatives from the NRRF committee began attending local, national and international job fairs to actively recruit nurses, as well as promoting the profession within Manitoba.

Since 1999, the Minister of Health has continued to support nursing in Manitoba through ongoing funding. To date, more than \$13.9 million has been used for activities focusing on the recruitment and retention of nurses in the Manitoba workforce. This report provides a summary of those strategies, allocations of funding and subsequent results. The information in this report was collected and is current to the end of the fiscal year, March 31, 2005.

Strategies

Relocation Assistance

Strategy: To respond to significant nursing shortages by recruiting nurses to Manitoba through the funding of relocation costs. The NRRF allocates funds for specified moving expenses to reimburse direct-care nurses who relocate to Manitoba and work in permanent or term nursing positions of 0.6 EFT or higher for one year.

Total Expenditures: \$3,786,598

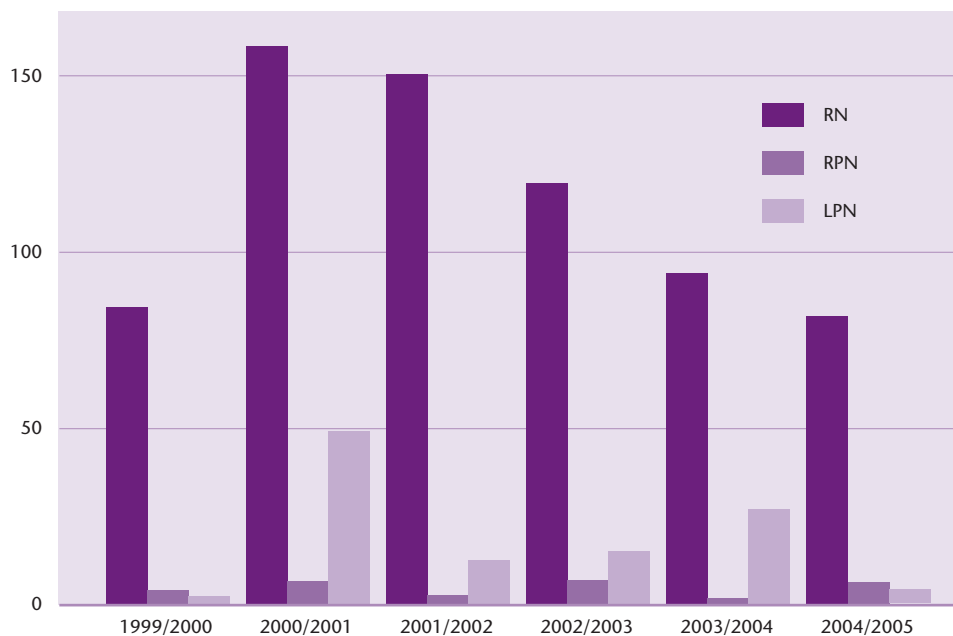
Outcomes: A total of 824 nursing positions (RNs, RPNs, LPNs) across Manitoba have been filled with help from NRRF relocation funding.

What classification of nurses have received relocation funding and when?

Since 1999, relocation assistance has been provided to 692 RNs, 23 RPNs and 109 LPNs. That means 84.0 per cent of the recipients have been RNs, 2.8 per cent were RPNs and 13.2 per cent were LPNs. While the proportion of RNs is greater than the other nursing classifications, it is representative of the Manitoba nursing workforce. Based on data supplied to Manitoba Health by the regulatory colleges in 2004, the practising nursing workforce consisted of 76.0 per cent RNs, 6.4 per cent RPNs and 17.6 per cent LPNs.

As shown in Figure 1, the largest proportion of individuals relocated in the introductory years of the strategy and the number of relocation recipients is declining. In fact, 74.6 per cent (N=615) of the nurses who moved to Manitoba to work, relocated by the year 2002/2003 or earlier.

Figure 1: Counts of RNs, RPNs, and LPNs Receiving Relocation Assistance

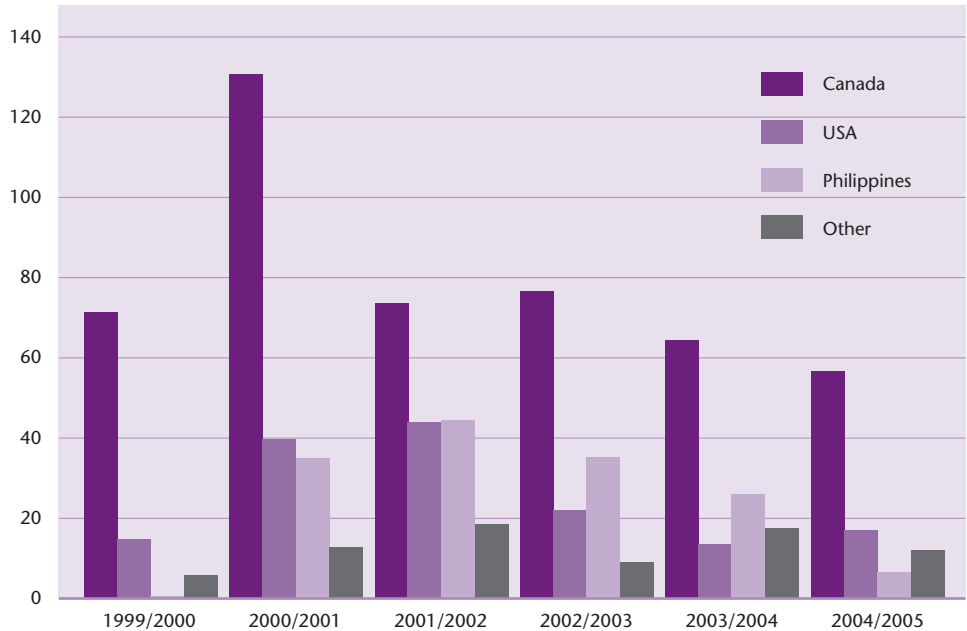


Where did nurses relocate from?

The greatest proportion of nurses (N=451) relocated from other provinces or territories within Canada, accounting for 54.7 per cent of all relocation recipients. Of those nurses who relocated from elsewhere in Canada, the most came from Ontario (131 nurses), British Columbia (103 nurses) and Alberta (85 nurses).

A large percentage of nurses also came from locations outside Canada. Although nurses moved to Manitoba from 27 countries worldwide, the majority came from the United States (136 nurses) and the Philippines (145 nurses). There were, however, nurses who moved here from England, Australia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and Korea—these are only a few examples of the distances nurses travelled.

Figure 2: Where Nurses Relocated From



Where did nurses relocate to?

As indicated in Table 1, nurses receiving relocation assistance filled a number of vacancies across the province. The majority—613 nurses or 74.4 per cent—relocated within Winnipeg. This number is consistent with the increased proportion of positions in Winnipeg. According to 2004 nursing vacancy data submitted to Manitoba Health, there were a total of 7,448 permanent positions for RNs, RPNs and LPNs in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA), compared to a total of 11,146 positions provincially. Therefore, approximately 66.8 per cent of nursing positions in Manitoba are within the city of Winnipeg.

Table 1: Number of Relocation Recipients Employed by RHA.

Regional Health Authority (RHA)	Counts of RNs	Counts of RPNs	Counts of LPNs	Total
Assiniboine RHA	14	0	1	15
Brandon RHA	43	1	3	47
Burntwood RHA	34	0	1	35
Central RHA	11	1	4	16
Churchill RHA	6	0	3	9
Interlake RHA	11	0	0	11
NorMan RHA	10	0	0	10
North Eastman RHA	7	1	0	8
Parkland RHA	23	2	0	25
South Eastman RHA	14	1	5	20
Winnipeg RHA	510	11	92	613
Provincial Government	9	6	0	15
Total	692	23	109	824

In Winnipeg, nurses filled positions in tertiary and community hospitals, public health, Cancer Care Manitoba, the WRHA, and a large number of personal care homes. The greatest proportion of positions filled were in Winnipeg's tertiary care facilities. For instance, 178 positions were filled at Health Sciences Centre (HSC), accounting for 21.6 per cent of relocation recipients; and 124 were filled at the St. Boniface General Hospital (SBGH), accounting for 15.0 per cent of recipients.

Reimbursement for Refresher Courses

Strategy: To recruit experienced individuals no longer maintaining active nursing registration back into the Manitoba workforce, by reimbursing costs for refresher education courses. Individuals who fulfill one-year service requirements in Manitoba can receive financial assistance for 80 per cent of course costs (to a maximum of \$2,000), to complete nursing refresher programs. Refresher education programs can be accessed at Red River College, Assiniboine Community College, Douglas College and Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science & Technology (SIAST).

Total Expenditures: \$647,011

Outcomes: A total of 444 nurses throughout Manitoba have received funding to complete refresher education and return to the workforce as nurses.

What classification of nurses received refresher funding and when?

Since 1999, most of the individuals accessing refresher funds—73.2 per cent—were taking courses to become RNs. LPNs made up 23.0 per cent of refresher recipients, while 3.8 per cent were RPNs. As was the case with relocation recipients, the classification of nurses receiving refresher funding closely resembles the composition of Manitoba’s nursing workforce—76.0 per cent are RNs, 17.6 per cent are LPNs and 6.4 per cent are RPNs.

As shown in Table 2, below, the number of people accessing refresher funding has declined in recent years. Like relocation assistance, most of these recipients acquired funding in the introductory years of the strategy. In fact, those receiving funding from 1999 to 2002/2003, accounted for 86.5 per cent of the total funds provided for refresher courses.

Table 2: Number of Recipients Funded for Refresher Education Programs

Year	Counts of RNs	Counts of RPNs	Counts of LPNs	Total	Cumulative Proportion of Total
1999/2000	57	3	22	82	18.5%
2000/2001	73	5	24	102	41.4%
2001/2002	93	8	19	120	68.5%
2002/2003	64	1	15	80	86.5%
2003/2004	21	0	10	31	93.5%
2004/2005	17	0	12	29	100.0%
Total	325	17	102	444	

Conditional Grant

Strategy: To encourage new RNs and RPNs, within six months of initial registration, to consider employment opportunities with rural and northern regional health authorities. New graduates with permanent or term positions of 0.6 EFT or greater, who are willing to work for a minimum of one year in rural or northern Manitoba (outside of Winnipeg or Brandon), can access a grant of \$4,000.

Total Expenditures: \$244,000

*Note: Expenditures to March 31, 2005 are lower than expenditures for 64 recipients due to timing of payments.

Outcomes: The Conditional Grant program helps rural and northern employers and communities address their health human resource challenges and retains Manitoba's nursing graduates. Since this program was introduced in July 2004, 64 vacancies in rural and remote Manitoba have been filled.

Where have conditional grant recipients obtained employment?

Although conditional grant recipients are dispersed throughout the province, almost half of the newly graduated RNs are working in the northern RHAs of Burntwood, Churchill and Norman, as well as the most southern RHA of Central. To date, all RPN conditional grant recipients have taken positions with the provincial government at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

Table 3: RHAs Employing Conditional Grant Recipients

Regional Health Authority	Counts of RNs	Counts of RPNs	Total
Assiniboine RHA	6	0	6
Burntwood RHA	11	0	11
Central RHA	11	0	11
Churchill RHA	1	0	1
Interlake RHA	8	0	8
NorMan RHA	8	0	8
North Eastman RHA	3	0	3
Parkland RHA	4	0	4
South Eastman RHA	3	0	3
Provincial Government	3	6	9
Total	58	6	64

Continuing Education

Strategy: In 2001, to retain nurses in the Manitoba workforce, the NRRF began allocating Continuing Education funding to the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs). Continuing education funds contribute to the ongoing personal and professional development of RNs, RPNs and LPNs.

Total Expenditures: \$5,862,070

Outcomes: Nursing stakeholders maintain that education is important to nurses and contributes to retention, morale and improving the quality of patient care.

How has continuing education funding been allocated?

Based on the nursing population within each RHA, funding is allocated to Regional Continuing Education Committees (RCECs) annually, to support the continuing education of RNs, RPNs and LPNs.

Table 4: Annual Continuing Education Allocations

RHA	2001/2002 Approved	2002/2003 Approved	2003/2004 Approved	2004/2005 Approved	Total Approved
Assiniboine	\$188,430	\$47,040	\$90,572	\$55,251	\$381,293
Brandon	\$190,512	\$47,628	\$91,704	\$55,941	\$385,785
Burntwood	\$61,446	\$15,361	\$29,577	\$18,043	\$124,427
Central	\$257,544	\$64,386	\$123,970	\$75,624	\$521,524
Churchill	\$10,000	\$2,500	\$4,814	\$2,937	\$20,251
Interlake	\$215,796	\$53,949	\$103,874	\$63,365	\$436,984
North Eastman	\$75,852	\$18,963	\$36,512	\$22,273	\$153,600
NorMan	\$59,388	\$14,847	\$28,587	\$17,439	\$120,261
Parkland	\$117,306	\$29,326	\$56,466	\$34,446	\$237,544
South Eastman	\$99,078	\$24,769	\$47,692	\$29,093	\$200,632
Winnipeg	\$1,619,646	\$404,911	\$779,624	\$475,588	\$3,279,769
Total	\$2,894,998	\$723,680	\$1,393,392	\$850,000	\$5,862,070

How has continuing education funding been used?

Nurses have used continuing education funding to enhance their practices in many ways. The diversity of nurses, and nursing practices, reflect the range of educational activities pursued. For example, nurses have taken continuing education courses on breastfeeding, catheterization, physical assessment and wound care to improve their clinical practices. Some have developed skills to work with specific client populations by taking courses geared to geriatrics, youth and people with mental illness. Nurses have also participated in courses to improve communication and leadership skills, and build stronger working relationships.

With the assistance of NRRF funding, nurses across Manitoba have participated in the following types of continuing education opportunities:

- Acquired Brain Injury
- Advanced Cardiac Life Support
- After Effects of Chronic Childhood Sexual Abuse
- Alzheimer's Behaviour Management
- Anatomy & Physiology Conference
- Applied Suicide Intervention
- Boundaries & Self-Care Issues In Palliative Care
- Breastfeeding Nature's Way
- Building Moral Intelligence
- Bullying
- Cardiac Update
- Cardio-Pulmonary Recertification
- Catheterization
- Communication
- Crisis on the Medical Surgical Unit
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Deficit Hyperactivity
- Elder Abuse
- Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course
- Fetal Monitoring & Vaginal Exam Workshop
- Financial Health Conference
- Gerontology
- Health Services Management
- Healthy Choices/Healthy Women
- Human Milk Cutting Edge Research Conference
- Immunization
- Knowledge Development
- Labour & Delivery Update
- Leadership Development
- Learning to Live on Higher Ground
- Legal Realities and the Nurse
- Managing Disruptive Behaviour in Long Term Care
- Mental Health Issues
- Mood, Mind & Appetite
- New Development in Child Abuse Treatment
- Newborn Assessment
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention
- Ostomy Education
- Pediatric Advanced Life Support
- Physical Assessment Skills
- PICC Certification
- Preventing Aggression in Dementia Clients
- Provincial Health Conference
- Provincial Palliative Care Conference
- Psycho-Geriatric Issues
- Regional Excellence/Wellness
- Rehabilitation Issues
- Respect in the Workplace
- Rural Nursing
- Sex Education in the City
- Sex Matters
- Sharing Knowledge in Best Practices
- Stress & Disease
- Surgical Updates
- The Brain and Behaviour
- Tools for Success
- Trauma Nursing
- Understanding Attention Disorder
- Vulnerable Persons Living with Mental Illness
- Women in Midlife
- Worldwide Lessons in Leadership
- Wound Care
- Youth Violence: Role of Mental Health

How can I find out more about continuing education funding in my region?

For more information on regional distribution and specific programs, contact the chairperson of the continuing education committee in your region. Table 5 contains contact information for the regional continuing education committees—current as of June 2005.

Table 5: Regional Continuing Education Committee Contact Information

Regional Health Authority	Chair/Co-Chair	E-Mail	Phone #	Fax #
Assiniboine	Shelley Dickson	sdickson@arha.ca	834-2144 ext.118	834-3333
Brandon	Leah Link	linkl@brandonrha.mb.ca	571-8433	726-5720
	Cathy Morgan	morganc@brandonrha.mb.ca	726-2146	727-9006
Burntwood	Noreen Wallwin	nwallwin@brha.mb.ca	677-5352	778-1412
	Carolyn McCusker	cmccusker@brha.mb.ca	677-5350	
Central	Kim Dyck	kimdyck@rha2.rha-central.mb.ca	822-7339	822-7334
Churchill	Derry Martens	dmartens@churchillrha.mb.ca	675-8389	675-2243
Interlake	Sharon Edmundson	sedmundson@irha.mb.ca	785-4877	785-7749
Nor-Man	Lois Moberly	lmoberly@normanrha.mb.ca	687-9637 687-0772	687-9328
North Eastman	Bonnie Frith	bfrith@neha.mb.ca	753-3104	753-2015
	Elaine Heintz	eheintz@neha.mb.ca	753-3104	753-2015
Parkland	Kirk Nyquist	knyquist@prha.mb.ca	629-3307	638-2199
	Penny Beasse	N/A	447-2847	447-2230
South Eastman	David Driedger	ddriedger@sehealth.mb.ca	424-6023	424-5888
	Barb Beaudry	N/A	326-6411	326-6931
Winnipeg	Marg Synyshyn	coned@matc.ca	334-3433	958-9618
	Debbie Mintz	coned@matc.ca	334-3433	958-9618

Specialty Programs/Projects

Strategy: Targeting both the recruitment and retention of nurses, the NRRF has allocated “one-time” funding for a range of specialty programs and projects that help nurses enter, or remain in, Manitoba’s nursing workforce.

Total Expenditures: \$3,146,750

Outcomes: In partnership with a wide variety of nursing stakeholders, the NRRF has provided funding for numerous specialty nursing education programs and projects throughout the province. NRRF-allocated funds have gone to RHAs and educational institutes to develop programs, assisted with books and tuition costs, and provided stipends for nurses. A key way to retain nurses was through return of service commitments agreed to by the nurses. While all projects were integral to improving nursing resources throughout the province, NRRF funding varied based on the specific program, RHA and educational institute.

What specialty programs/projects has the NRRF funded?

2004-2005: Assiniboine Regional Health Authority Operating Room Program

The Assiniboine Regional Health Authority (ARHA) received funding for the education of six operating room nurses, addressing an anticipated critical shortage of nurses in this area. The ARHA identified lack of funds as a barrier, and without adequately trained staff, the authority would be unable to maintain existing surgical services.

2004-2005: Brandon Regional Health Authority (BRHA) Intensive Care Unit Course

To address a shortage of nurses in the BRHA’s adult critical-care unit, the NRRF approved funding for five students to enrol in the course.

2003-2004: Brandon Regional Health Authority Peri-Operative Nursing Program

The NRRF provided funding for eight students to enrol in the Peri-operative Nursing Program. Peri-operative nursing is a specialty that prepares RNs to work in an operating room, as well as providing care to patients before, during and immediately following surgery. All eight students signed two-year returns of service commitments in Brandon, indicating they wouldn’t have been able to participate in the peri-operative program without NRRF funding.

2003-2004: Brandon Regional Health Authority Critical Care Nursing Program (CCNP)

The BRHA had reached a critical point in their ability to staff the ICUs with qualified nursing personnel. Without additional funds, the health authority was concerned an inadequate supply of skilled nurses would affect its ability to provide service to Westmen residents, as well as hasten bed closures. Funding from the NRRF enabled five nurses to complete the CCNP.

2003: Safety & Security Fund

In response to findings of the Work Life Task Force, the NRRF allocated funding to the Manitoba Nursing Strategy to address nurses’ concerns about workplace safety and security. The task force was established by the Minister of Health in March 2000 and the Work Life Task Force Report was released in June 2001. The funding helped with a wide variety of regional purchases identified by front-line nurses as necessary in improving working conditions.

2003: Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) Adult Emergency Course

The NRRF approved funding for the development of a 32-week course in Adult Emergency. The pilot project ended in December 2004, with seven students successfully completing the program. An evaluation of the program is currently taking place.

2001: Winnipeg Hospital Authority Neonatal and Pediatric Critical Care Course

Vacancies existed in the Pediatric (PICU) and Neonatal (NICU) Intensive Care Units. The NRRF agreed to a second request for funding, to support the operating costs of the Neonatal/Pediatric Critical Care Course, which enabled 10 nurses to complete the course. Graduates from this program filled vacancies in NICU, PICU and children's ER.

2001: Red River College (RRC) Emergency Nursing Certification Program

RRC developed a distance Emergency Nursing Certification Program (ENCP) with help from NRRF funds. The ENCP was initially developed and delivered at the RRC campus, but the development of a "distance" format now allows rural nurses to access the program. The program is available on an open-entry basis—students may register at any time and complete the course at their own pace. The program takes approximately two years of combined full and part-time study.

2001: Red River College (RRC) Registered Nurse Refresher Program

The NRRF provided funds to support the development of new curriculum and program co-ordination, to accommodate the rapid increase in refresher program enrollments. As a result of the funding, Red River College (RRC) was able to complete all aspects of curriculum development for the RN refresher program, including learning guides, examinations and tests. RRC was also able to begin revisions to the Health Care Aide program curriculum a year earlier than anticipated, because of the NRRF assistance.

2000: Brandon Regional Health Authority (BRHA) Critical Care Nursing Program (CCNP)

The BRHA identified a need for nurses to work in various specialty areas, including operating rooms, recovery rooms, in-patient surgical units, float pools, emergency haemodialysis and intensive care. With NRRF financial support, six nurses completed the CCNP.

2000: Red River College (RRC) Registered Nurse Refresher Program – Option B

Option B offers more instructor support than the regular refresher program. This program is useful for individuals who graduated more than 10 years ago, or graduates of programs from outside Canada. The NRRF provided funding to support 20 students enrolled in the Option B program.

1999-2004: University of Manitoba and Health Sciences Centre (HSC)/St. Boniface General Hospital (SBGH) Adult Intensive Care Nursing Program (AICNP)

In 1999, nursing vacancy rates were high at both tertiary care hospitals, resulting in intermittent bed closures. Vacancy rates were greatest in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit at HSC, compromising its ability to uphold its mandate as the provincial trauma and neurosurgery centre. NRRF funding was used to improve recruitment into the AICNP, by reinstating the student stipend and supporting additional AICN programs to prepare more nurses for work in critical care areas.

1999-2003: University of Manitoba and Brandon University Forgivable Loans Program

As a recruitment strategy, the NRRF funded the Forgivable Loans Program to support baccalaureate nursing students and psychiatric nursing students willing to accelerate through their education and enter the nursing workforce more quickly. These students received financial assistance, in the form of the forgivable loans, to allow them to attend summer sessions and graduate earlier.

1999-2000: Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Peri-operative Nursing Program

Funding was provided by the NRRF to support a provincial peri-operative nursing program. Peri-operative nursing is a specialty that prepares RNs to practise in the operating room and provide care to patients before, during and immediately after surgery. The program was offered one time, successfully addressing needs.

1999: Brandon Regional Health Authority Peri-operative Nursing Course

BRHA identified a need for nurses to work in various specialty areas such as operating rooms, recovery rooms, in-patient surgical units, float pools, emergency haemodialysis and intensive care. With NRRF financial support, eight nurses completed the peri-operative program.

1999: Neonatal Pediatric Critical Care Course

This course prepares staff to work in the Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) at St. Boniface General Hospital (SBGH) and Health Sciences Centre (HSC), as well as in Pediatric Intensive Care (PICU), Children's Emergency and Intermediate Care Nursery. The one-time funding helped five students complete the course, all of whom returned service commitments in the PICU.

Advertising/Marketing

Strategy: To increase the supply of nurses in Manitoba, the NRRF has carried out a broad, multi-faceted advertising and marketing campaign. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to attract and retain nurses in the province, and to promote nursing as a profession.

Total Expenditures: \$270,511

Outcomes: The prioritization of nursing resources has been successful, as demonstrated by the increasing supply of nurses and continued enthusiasm for NRRF initiatives and nursing in Manitoba.

How has NRRF engaged in marketing?

- Representatives of the NRRF committee began active recruitment by attending local and national job fairs to promote nursing in Manitoba.
- From 1999 to 2002, they attended nursing fairs across Canada, including Toronto, Kingston, St. John, Windsor, Vancouver and Calgary.
- In addition to recruiting across Canada, representatives attended an international nursing fair in Houston, Texas. In Texas, a meeting was planned with nurses previously registered in Manitoba.
- In recent years, marketing has been targeted more locally. For example, representatives of the NRRF have attended the University of Manitoba's annual nursing fair and accepted invitations to speak at Manitoba's institutes of nursing education.

Where does NRRF advertise?

- In 1999, advertisements featuring the "Come Home to Manitoba" campaign were printed in local, national and international newspapers and journals. These included the Winnipeg Free Press, Brandon Sun, National Post, Globe & Mail, Canadian Nurse and U.S. nursing journals.
- Current advertising is targeting Canadian Nurse and Marskel Magazine quarterly.

How else might NRRF help me?

Manitoba Health Website: The NRRF website at www.gov.mb.ca/health/nurses provides links to a variety of information useful to nurses and students of nursing education programs. Following are examples of what you'll find on our website.

- Information on NRRF initiatives includes the Conditional Grant, Refresher Courses, Continuing Education and Relocation Assistance. Interested individuals may access detailed information, as well as download application forms where applicable. NRRF activities and annual reports are also available on the website.
- Links to the Health Careers website help nurses seeking employment, by allowing keyword searches of positions, locations, RHAs and employment status (full-time, part-time, casual, permanent, temporary).
- Some documents that can be accessed and freely downloaded are the Manitoba Nursing Strategy Five-Year Progress Report (June 2005), Nursing Acts & Regulations and the Work Life Task Force Report.

- Individuals enrolled in nursing education programs can access a wide range of funding sources. This information has been sub-divided into the following categories: Health Care Aide; Licensed Practical Nurse; Registered Nurse (English); Registered Nurse (French); Bachelor of Nursing; and Bachelor of Science Psychiatric Nursing. Each category provides links to a long list of loans, scholarships, bursaries, awards and other assistance available to students.
- The NRRF website features funding sources for basic nursing education, from which individuals can link directly to all the education institutes delivering nursing programs in Manitoba.
- The NRRF website provides links to other important nursing sites. These include the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM), the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses (CRPNM), the College of Licensed Practical Nurses (CLPNM), the Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU) and the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs).
- The NRRF website includes links to websites that may be of interest to individuals relocating from outside Manitoba or Canada. These include the provincial government, Travel Manitoba, Human Resources Development Canada, Manitoba Labour and Immigration, and Citizen and Immigration Canada.
- Links to the Office of Nursing Policy (ONP) provide individuals with access to detailed information on nursing issues across Canada. The ONP was established in 1999 to give nursing issues more prominence within Health Canada, and to bring the perspectives of nurses to the department's policy work and decision-making. The ONP works closely with the provinces and nursing communities to develop advice for the Federal Health Minister and department.

Future Directions

Improvements in nursing numbers are the direct result of many NRRF initiatives, as well as the collaborative efforts of other nursing stakeholders. Since 1999, there are 1,204 more practising nurses in Manitoba; the number of graduates of nursing education programs have tripled; and the proportion of vacant, permanent and term positions have declined (Manitoba Nursing Strategy, June 2005). Table 6 outlines the NRRF strategies to date.

Table 6: Summary of NRRF Strategies and Expenditures

Strategy	Date Initiated	Total Expenditures	Impact/Target	Percentage of Total NRRF Allocations
Relocation	1999	\$3,786,598	824 nurses relocated to Manitoba	27.1%
Refresher	1999	\$647,011	444 individuals returned to nursing in Manitoba	4.6%
Specialty Programs/ Projects	1999	\$3,146,750	16 projects funded throughout Manitoba	22.5%
Advertising/ Marketing	1999	\$270,511	Increased public awareness	1.9%
Continuing Education	2001	\$5,862,070	All nurses in Manitoba have access	42.0%
Conditional Grant	2004	\$244,000	64 nurses recruited to rural and northern Manitoba	1.7%
Administrative/ Office Expenses	1999 -2005	\$20,557	Day to day NRRF functioning	0.2%
Total	1999 -2005	\$13, 977,497	Increased recruitment and retention of nurses throughout the province	100%

Overview

- Relocation assistance and refresher reimbursement were the first strategies implemented by the NRRF. Both were highly successful in the introductory years. For instance, of all the nurses who accessed relocation assistance, 74.6 per cent did so from 1999 to 2003. As well, 86.5 per cent of refresher program funding was allocated during this time.
- The NRRF allocates funding for Specialty Programs/Projects based on proposals it receives that identify specific needs. A variety of diverse projects and education programs have been approved.
- Advertising and marketing have been targeted more locally in recent years.
- Continuing education receives the largest portion of NRRF allocations, accounting for just less than half of NRRF funds.
- The Conditional Grant is the most recent strategy implemented by the NRRF. There has been positive response to the conditional grant program and the impact of the program will continue to be monitored.

Next Steps

The Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund (NRRF) strategies and policies have evolved over time to respond to changes in the workforce and the needs of nurses. Being responsive to needs identified by nurses, and within work environments, remains a key goal. The NRRF is continuing to explore innovative and exciting strategies to address nursing issues in the province.

Questions for Reflection

- Should NRRF continue with the strategies outlined above?
- Should there be any shifts in emphasis regarding the strategies?
- What strategies are important for the NRRF to consider funding in the future?
- What are current recruitment and retention issues in Manitoba?
- What are potential strategies to address these issues?

The NRRF committee values the input and ideas of Manitobans regarding future directions and strategies for consideration. Please submit ideas and proposals to:

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Email: nrrf@gov.mb.ca

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