

The Nursing Secretariat News

Office of the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer

A forum for Ontario's nursing community, the Joint Provincial Nursing Committee and the Nursing Secretariat.

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A Message from the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer

Nursing Week is a time to celebrate our profession, and to reflect on our role in the health system. As a nurse, I am committed to making a difference in people's lives; that's what nurses do. Whether they work at the point of care, in administration, education, research or policy, nurses make a difference.

Nursing is a profession where we touch people's lives in many ways. I recently had an experience from the other side of health care, where my family was touched in a profound way by the nurses who cared for my father. He had surgery and subsequently passed away after spending six days in the cardiac ICU. Although the circumstances were tragic, my family has described the experience as one of the most "meaningful" they have ever had.

Each nurse who cared for my Dad showed extreme compassion and understanding. The nurses were always available to answer our questions, and yet gave us the space we needed to absorb what had happened, and to grieve when it became obvious he would not survive. They kept us well informed at all times, and ensured my mother and I were comfortable at his bedside. They never made us feel we

were intruding on their work. Nurses pulled chairs around the bed so my family could be near, and didn't say a word about having to work around so many people. Not once did anyone say there were too many people in the room, or make us feel unwelcome.

When the time came for us to decide to take Dad off life support, the nurses went quietly into the background, while continuing to keep Dad comfortable. I know December 4th was another working day for the nurses, but it was the last day of Dad's life, and we spent much of it with them. We never once felt it was "just another shift" for them. In fact, we felt like we were their only priority, and we were the most important people they had ever cared for. They ensured my Dad's death was peaceful and – most importantly – that it was comfortable. Dad died in our arms, surrounded by the love of his family because the nurses understood the true core and essence of the nursing profession: human caring.

I would like to remind you that each little thing you do and say really does make a difference. The work you do matters. I ask you never to lose sight of that. The smallest words and gestures

made by the nurses who cared for Dad, likely long forgotten by them, are part of our family's history, ingrained in our memories forever. I have relived those six days, moment by moment, a thousand times, and reflected on the reason I went into nursing.

You, as nurses in Ontario, are the face of caring and the essence of compassion. You make a difference in lives each and every day. As a nurse, I am proud to belong to a profession that makes that difference, and I thank you for your commitment to the people you care for. Celebrate yourselves this Nursing Week and always.



Sue Matthews
Provincial Chief Nursing Officer



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A Message from the Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

I am extremely happy to take this occasion to mark Nursing Week in the Province of Ontario, and to salute the thousands of nurses in this province who do such an exceptional job, day in and day out.

The theme of Nursing Week could not be more appropriate – Patients first; Safety always; Quality care in the public interest. I am happy to say that our government shares nurses' commitment to these things, and our health care plan is designed around them.

Our government has made significant investments in better working conditions for nurses, including safety equipment like patient lifts, electric beds and safety alarms. We know that quality work environments are needed to support nurses to provide quality patient care in the public's interest.

This Spring has seen an extremely exciting development in health care in Ontario, for patients and I believe also for nurses. The announcement of the first 55 Family Health Teams signals a commitment to a model of care that is designed to better utilize the skills of nurses and nurse practitioners.

These multi-disciplinary teams of nurses, nurse practitioners, doctors and other health care professionals will provide the very best in primary health care. They are critical to our plan for health care in Ontario, and they depend on the skills and commitment of nurses for their success.

I believe that in Family Health Teams, nurses and nurse practitioners will really come into their own, assuming the well deserved mantle – not always accorded to them – of critical, invaluable, irreplaceable members of the health care delivery system.

This is a good time for health care in Ontario. We have a vision of a health care system that helps people stay healthy, delivers good care to them when they get sick, and will be there for their children and grandchildren.

I believe we share that vision with our nurses, and I know that we depend on them to help us make that vision a reality.



George Smitherman
Minister

Team to Integrate Nurse Practitioners into Primary Health Care

Since our last newsletter, the Nursing Secretariat has established the Nurse Practitioner Integration Task Team, a small but impressive group whose mandate is to promote the full integration of Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioners (PHCNPs) into Ontario's health system.

The Task Team is co-chaired by Sue Matthews, Provincial Chief Nursing Officer, and Dr. Alba DiCenso who holds the CHSRF / CIHR Nursing Chair in Advanced Practice Nursing and is Professor of Nursing and Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at McMaster University. Other members include: Theresa Agnew, Past Chair of the Nurse Practitioners' Association

of Ontario; Anne Coghlan, Executive Director of the College of Nurses of Ontario; Dr. Ken Hook, a Past President of the Ontario College of Family Physicians; and Chris Edwards and Robert Watson, community members who will bring the public's perspective to the table.

Terms of reference and priorities have been set. The Task Team will focus on the 29 recommendations in the *Report on the Integration of Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioners into the Province of Ontario*. The Team has met twice and is scheduled to meet a few more times this year. It will also establish a number of working groups to address specific issues.

The government's commitment to increase access to and improve delivery of primary health care is a motivating factor for the Task Team's work. The substantial interest in a more team-based approach to delivering care is creating new and exciting opportunities for nurse practitioners. Over the next few years, not only will we see the supply of nurse practitioners increase, but we will see them working in new practice settings, such as Family Health Teams. The health system in Ontario is changing and the Nursing Secretariat is excited to see that nurse practitioners will play a key role in that change.

New Initiatives Help Ontario Attract and Keep Nurses

Nurses are the heart of the health care system. They provide high quality, skilled care, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And the competition among jurisdictions for nurses continues to be strong. If Ontario is going to be the province of choice for its nurses, it must provide quality work environments and take steps to support nurses at each stage of their careers.

What does Ontario need to do to attract new nurses and keep experienced ones? According to Sue Matthews, the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer, the best solutions come from the people doing the work. The Nursing Secretariat has consulted with nurses across the province, and identified a number of strategies that will help stabilize the province's nursing workforce. The Ontario government is committed to working closely with stakeholders – nurses and employers – to implement these strategies and strengthen the workforce. The goal is to use a series of different strategies to support nurses and help them do their jobs.

Ontario has now funded and implemented four nursing strategy initiatives.

New Graduate Initiative: According to a comprehensive survey of nurses who graduated between December 2003 and July 2004, 79.3 per cent of graduates would prefer to work full-time, but only 36.5 per cent were able to find full-time jobs (see figure on page 4). The New Graduate Initiative is designed to close the gap between the number of nurses who want full-time work and the employment opportunities available to them. It helps create temporary full-time work for new graduates so they have the opportunity to consolidate their skills and gain valuable experience that will enhance their marketability in seeking full-time employment.

Mentorship/Preceptorship Initiative: When new nurses first enter the workforce, they need some on-the-job practice and guidance to refine their skills. In addition, experienced nurses benefit from support as they advance through their careers to new roles. Under this initiative, long-term care, home health and public health agencies can receive funding to develop nurse mentorship and preceptorship programs to meet the needs of nurses in those sectors.

Clinical Simulation Initiative: To help students develop their clinical skills, the government has provided funding for college and university nursing programs to purchase simulation equipment that can recreate the different clinical situations nurses will encounter in practice. For Generation Y nursing students, who are comfortable with “virtual” learning, clinical simulations are a highly effective way to help them develop their clinical and decision making skills.

The opportunity to master the technical and clinical skills of providing nursing care in a simulated environment will allow students to focus their attention and learning on the art of nursing care, putting the patient at the centre of their clinical learning experience. The clinical simulation initiative will help to ensure student nurses are prepared to meet the challenges of today's rapidly changing health care system.

Late Career Initiative: Ontario wants to attract new nurses; it also wants to keep its experienced nurses. Right now, many front-line nurses are leaving the profession for early retirement because of the physical demands of the job. According to a recent study, many experienced nurses would work longer if they could just get some relief from the heavy physical demands of patient care.

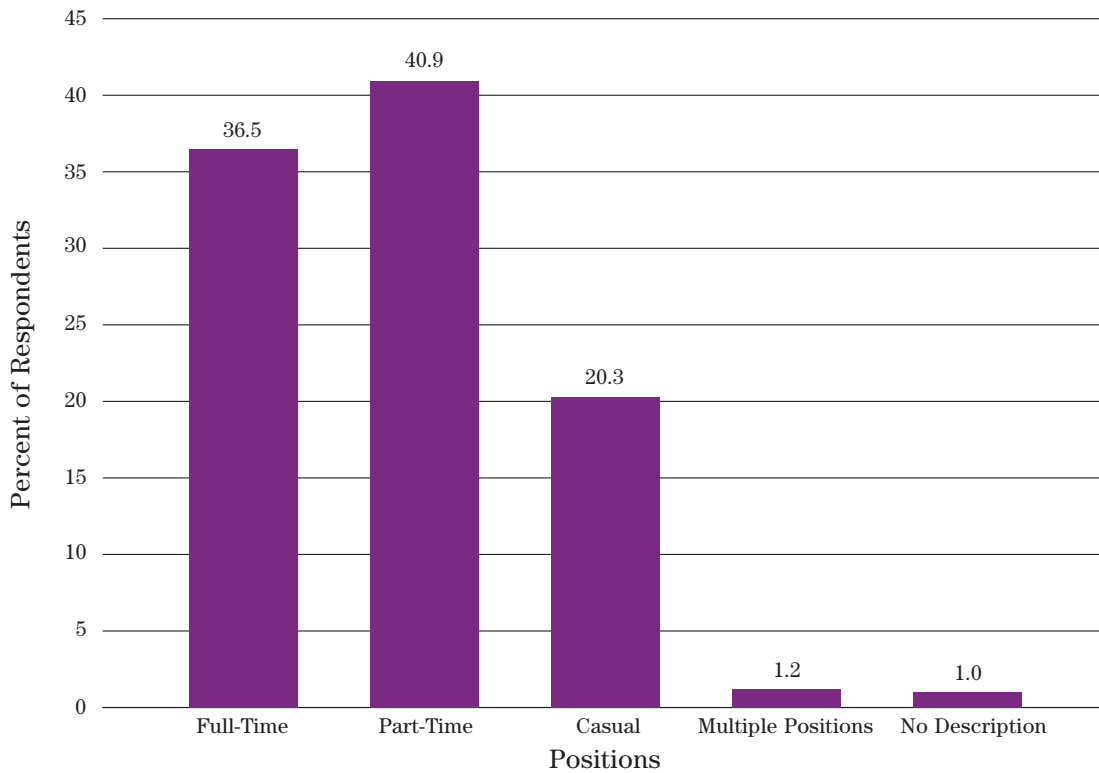
Under the Late Career Initiative, hospitals and long-term care homes can apply to the ministry for funding to allow experienced nurses to spend 20 per cent of their time doing something other than physically demanding patient care, such as developing patient education materials or teaching patients. This program gives nurses the opportunity to balance the demands of their work, while ensuring their employers are able to hire other nurses and provide the same level of direct patient care. The ministry has received a number of innovative proposals, and plans to assess their impact on nurses' job satisfaction and on employers' ability to retain skilled nurses. Effective strategies will be promoted throughout the system.

Lift Initiative

In the 2004 Budget, the government committed to providing \$60M for patient lifting equipment to promote patient safety for nurses in long-term care facilities and hospitals. The Patient Lift Initiative is part of a comprehensive, multi-year Nursing Strategy designed to address the core issues affecting nurse recruitment, retention and supply. The Patient Lift funding focuses specifically on the reduction and prevention of musculoskeletal injuries. Funding was used to purchase patient lifts (e.g., ceiling lifts) and to provide education on prevention of musculoskeletal injuries.

These initiatives are just the first wave of strategies designed to help Ontario maintain a healthy nursing workforce. The Nursing Secretariat will continue to introduce new initiatives that will focus on creating healthy workplaces, ensuring a strong nursing voice in health care, enhancing respect for the nursing profession and increasing the recruitment and retention of nurses in Ontario. Stay tuned for more announcements as we work together to roll out the Provincial Nursing Strategy in ways that are both innovative and accountable.

Type of Employment Reported by Recently Graduated Nursing Students



Source: Adapted from Nursing Health Services Research Unit, *McMaster University, Educated and Underemployed: The Paradox for Nursing Graduates*, November 2004.

Nursing and Health Outcomes Project Now Part of Province-Wide Information Management Strategy

In its plan to transform the health system, the Ontario government has made information management a priority. In the past, the health system has been hampered in its efforts to improve services by the lack of a standard approach to collecting and organizing information on health outcomes. The system has never collected consistent, reliable data on nursing, so it has been limited in its ability to analyze or understand the impact of nursing services on patients.

In 1999, in response to recommendations from the Nursing Task Force Report, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care launched the Nursing and Health Outcomes Project. Its task was to create health information systems that would provide comprehensive, reliable data on nursing services. The profession would then be able to assess how different nursing interventions affect patient outcomes, and use that information to establish performance standards.

The project team identified nursing indicators and nursing-sensitive health outcomes that should be collected in acute care, complex continuing care, long-term care and home care settings to measure the impact of nursing services on patient outcomes. In 2002/03, 16 sites pilot tested the data collection and analysis. The nurses involved in the pilot found that collecting information on health outcomes helped them plan patient care and improve their practice.

The project is now part of the province's Information Management Strategy, led by Adalsteinn Brown, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Policy Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto and the principal investigator for the Hospital Report Research Collaborative. Province-wide data collection will be phased in. In 2006, collection of data on nursing-sensitive health outcomes will begin in some organizations in the acute care, complex continuing

care, long-term care and home care sectors and will be expanded to additional organizations over several years. In 2007, standardized collection of health outcomes data will begin for the pharmacy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy disciplines, as well as for the primary care, mental health, public health and rehabilitation sectors. Some time after that, the system will also start collecting standard information on staffing and quality of work life indicators for the various disciplines.

All this information will help us understand the impact of nursing on patient's health, and learn how to deploy nurses in different settings to make the best use of their skills and have the greatest benefit for patients.



Pictured left to right: Rosanne Jabbour, Doreen Thibert, Annette Ellenor, Lynn Macfie, Valerie Russell, Sophia Ikura-MacMillan, Sherri Huckstep and Sue Matthews. Absent from the photo is Antonella (Donna) Ricci.

The Nursing Secretariat Staff

Sue Matthews is the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer (PNCO) for Ontario. Before taking on this responsibility, she held a variety of positions within nursing, including Staff Nurse, Nurse Educator, Manager, Director of Patient Programs, and Chief of Nursing and Professional Practice. Sue has an RN Diploma, a Bachelor of Arts in Health Studies and a Masters of Health Science Nursing, and she is close to completing her Doctorate in Public Health at Charles Sturt University. She is also a Fellow of the Wharton School of Business.

Sherri Huckstep is the Manager of the Nursing Secretariat. Before joining the Secretariat, she was the Deputy Chief of Nursing & Profession Practice at Southlake Regional Health Centre. Sherri has her BScN from York University and is currently enrolled in the Professional Masters of Public Administration program at Queen's University.

Sophia Ikura-MacMillan is a Senior Analyst with responsibilities for policy development and program implementation. Sophia was the lead on implementing the Nursing Strategy. She is currently supporting the development of the ministry's long-term plan for Nursing Human Resources, including recruitment and retention

strategies, as well as forecasting and planning activities.

Lynn Macfie is a Senior Analyst working in policy development in the Secretariat. Before coming to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Lynn was a policy analyst with the Ministry of Community and Social Services. She brings extensive policy experience, strong communications skills and knowledge of government decision-making processes to the team.

Annette Ellenor is a Senior Analyst who supports policy development and program implementation in the Secretariat. Annette has held a variety of positions within nursing, including Staff Nurse, Educator, Nursing Manager and Research Manager. Because of her passion for improving nurse safety and patient care, she has been the lead on key initiatives, such as the Ontario Patient Lift Strategy.

Rosanne Jabbour, a Senior Policy Analyst, graduated from nursing school in 1993 and held a variety of nursing positions across sectors before moving to government. Prior to joining the Secretariat, she worked as Senior Policy Analyst at Health Canada's Ontario / Nunavut Regional Office and Policy Advisor for the Office of Nursing Policy.

Doreen Thibert works as a Senior Policy Analyst (part-time) and is the lead on issues specific to Registered Practical Nurses. She coordinates Nursing Week activities for the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer. She is also responsible for the website and newsletter.

Antonella (Donna) Ricci is the Administrative Assistant to the team. Before joining the Nursing Secretariat, Donna worked as assistant to the Regional Director, Central Region. She recently helped coordinate the Ontario Patient Lift Strategy and the Nursing Strategy Initiatives.

Valerie Russell is the Executive Assistant to the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer. Before joining the Nursing Secretariat, Valerie held a number of administrative / executive assistant positions within the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of the Attorney General and Management Board Secretariat. She also worked as EA to the Associate to the Co-Chair, F/P/T Advisory Committee on Population Health and Health Security (ACPHHS). Valerie manages the daily activities of the PCNO and assists in coordinating the Secretariat's activities.

PCNO Itinerary for Nursing Week – May 9th to May 13th, 2005

During Nursing Week, Sue Matthews, the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer, will be visiting communities across Ontario and attending a range of events designed to celebrate nurses and nursing.

Look for news about activities in the following communities:

May 9th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto• The Regional Niagara Public Health Celebration• Hamilton Health Sciences
May 10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Markham Stouffville Hospital• Hanover & District Hospital• Markdale Hospital Site – Grey Bruce Health Services• Owen Sound Hospital Site – Grey Bruce Health Services• Meeting with nursing leaders in Owen Sound
May 11th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Penetanguishene General Hospital• Mental Health Centre, Penetanguishene• Royal Victoria Hospital, Barrie
May 12th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• James Bay General Hospital, Moosonee
May 13th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timmins and District Hospital

Women's Executive Network 2004 – Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women Awards

Dr. Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health Division and Sue Matthews, Provincial Chief Nursing Officer were recognized as two of Canada's top 100 most powerful women by the Women's Executive Network in 2004.

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