

# 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 Welcome Message from the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer



Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Nursing Secretariat News.

Let me start by introducing you to the Nursing Secretariat. The Secretariat is part of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Our role is to provide strategic advice on health and public policy issues from a nursing perspective. Created in June 2000, we advise the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, senior management, and other government agencies on the development, implementation and evaluation of nursing policies, research and programs.

In addition to being the voice of nurses within the government on health system issues, the Nursing Secretariat supports communication among nursing groups and the government. The Secretariat works in conjunction with nursing stakeholders through the Joint Provincial Nursing Committee (JPNC).

We facilitate the implementation of the Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) Strategy. Currently, we are spearheading the implementation of the Nurse Practitioner (NP)

Demonstration Project that has placed some 20 NPs in underserved communities in the province.

The Nursing Secretariat collaborates with other jurisdictions on federal, territorial and provincial nursing initiatives by participating in various forums, issues management, policy development and sharing information and best practices.

We would like to invite you to join us in celebrating National Nursing Week from May 10 to 14. During this week we plan to increase public awareness by celebrating the important role nurses play in health care.

As we move policy forward, we welcome your ongoing contributions. We value your partnership on key issues such as nursing retention and recruitment, education and research, primary care reform as well as interdisciplinary modeling in order to advance best practice strategies in nursing.

Only by working together can we advance and strengthen the nursing profession in Ontario.



Sue Matthews  
Provincial Chief Nursing Officer

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# Nurses play strategic role in the health care system

The ministry recognizes and values the vital role that nurses play in the health care system. Since its inception in early 2000, the Nursing Secretariat has worked with various stakeholder groups and employer organizations to support the nursing profession and identify issues that need to be addressed. One important issue that has arisen is the shortage of nurses. As a result, the Nursing Secretariat has made nursing human resources issues its focus and the following strategies have been developed:

- A Nursing Education Initiative (NEI) provides grant support for the continuing education and professional development of nurses. This tuition reimbursement program is administered by the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) and the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (RPNAO). For more information, visit their website at [www.rnao.org](http://www.rnao.org) and [www.rpnao.org](http://www.rpnao.org)
- The JPNC released its first progress report entitled *Good Nursing, Good Health: A Good Investment* in 2001, which identified the significant progress made in the implementation of the Nursing Task Force (NTF) recommendations.

The report is posted at: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/ministry\\_reports/nurserep01/616209\\_moh\\_good\\_nursing.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/ministry_reports/nurserep01/616209_moh_good_nursing.pdf)

The next status report is expected to be released this year.

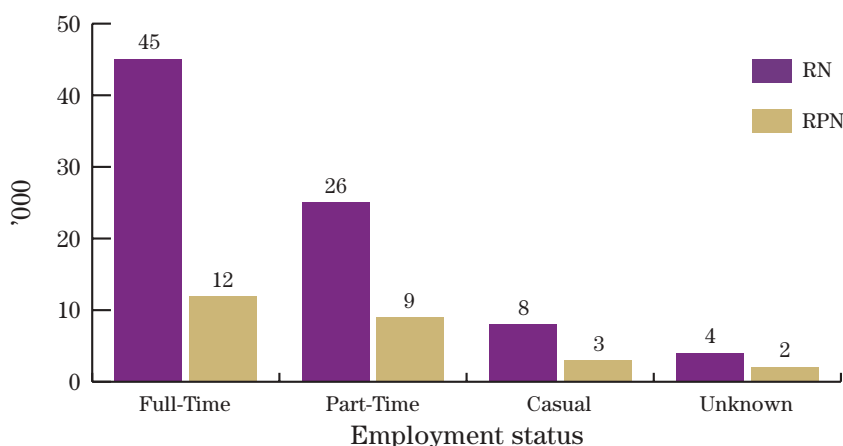
- The Nurse Practitioner (NP) Demonstration Project started in 2003 as a component of the Advanced Practice Nursing Strategy. Since then, the project has placed NPs in underserved communities and continues to promote collaborative relationships between MDs and NPs in the full delivery of primary health care (see next page for more information).
- The *Report on the Integration of Primary Healthcare Nurse Practitioners into the Province of Ontario* has been released by the Minister to the public. The report is now posted on the website at [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/ministry\\_reports/nurseprac03/nurseprac03\\_mn.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/ministry_reports/nurseprac03/nurseprac03_mn.html)

Minister George Smitherman will work with the Nursing Secretariat to appoint a task team to review the recommendations and consider next steps that would further integrate NPs into the primary health care system. For a copy of the minister's speech, go to: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/media/speeches/archives/sp\\_04/sp\\_013004.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/media/speeches/archives/sp_04/sp_013004.html)

- In collaboration with the RNAO and RPNAO, the Nursing Secretariat is promoting awareness of the Voluntarily Immediately Available Nurse (VIANurse) Program. VIANurse is a registry of registered nurses (RNs) and registered practical nurses (RPNs) who are willing to work in Ontario health care facilities designated by the ministry to be on emergency status. For further information, contact Dr. Irmajean Bajnok at [ibajnok@rnao.org](mailto:ibajnok@rnao.org) or Joanne Young Evans at [jyoungevans@rpnao.org](mailto:jyoungevans@rpnao.org)
- In February 2004 the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced an investment of \$64M to hospitals:
  - \$25M is to be used to create more full-time positions
  - \$25M to enhance the work environment of nurses, and
  - \$14M for the purchase of patient and nurse safety equipment.
 (See <http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/english/news/nurses030404.asp>).

On April 22, 2004 Minister Smitherman announced a further investment of \$25M for the creation of full-time nursing positions in small and medium-sized hospitals.

## RNs and RPNs employed in nursing in Ontario



Every year, the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) collects statistics among its members to provide demographic information about Ontario's nursing population. The latest statistics in 2002 showed that there are 83,123 RNs working in nursing in Ontario out of which 44,865 are employed full-time, 26,330 are working part-time and 7,830 are casual employees.

As for RPNs, there are 25,573 working in nursing in Ontario with 11,634 having full-time employment, 9,331 working part-time and 3,028 working on a casual basis. The Nursing Secretariat is working with stakeholders to positively address the issue of increasing full-time nursing positions in the workplace.

Source: CNO Membership Statistics 2002.

Note: These statistics are based on the complete employment information provided by CNO members.

# NS takes lead in NP Demonstration Project

The Nursing Secretariat spearheads the Nurse Practitioner (NP) Demonstration Project that has placed primary health care NPs in communities where there are no or too few family physicians. With funding of \$3M annually, this community-based project has placed up to 22 NPs who provide primary health care in underserved communities.

The communities include Marmora, Havelock, Ottonabee-South Monaghan, Beaverton/Sunderland, Sutton, Rosseau/Whitestone, Sauble Beach, Dundalk, Linwood, Tilbury and Lakeshore. NPs have been working in this NP-managed model of care for many years, but until recently, were only in the more remote locations such as Nursing Stations in northern Ontario. Now this NP model can also be seen in many southern Ontario communities.

In this community-developed model, the Nursing Secretariat worked with District Health Councils, MOHLTC Regional Offices, municipal

governments, local health care programs and community associations in designing a unique model which would best suit each site. The project became operational in 2003 and was implemented within the context of promoting community partnerships in the provision of primary health care and enhancing collaborative relationships between family physicians and NPs in the area. In every site, the NPs provide a broad range of primary health care services from disease prevention and health promotion to diagnosis and treatment of health-related problems in consultation with family physicians.

Increasing access to health services and health care professionals is a priority of the current government. The ministry recognizes the value of NPs and MDs who collaborate to provide primary health care. The implementation of this NP Demonstration Project is expected to enhance access to service and better integrate NPs into Ontario's health care system.



Keene Health Centre Opening: The first patient at the Keene Health Centre cuts the ribbon to officially open the Nurse Practitioners' Office at Ottonabee-South Monaghan. Looking on are Ottonabee Township Reeve Council Member, Dave Nelson, former MPP Gary Stewart, Board of Health Chairman George Mitchell, Township Administrator Heather Scott, and nurse practitioners Liz Wojtowicz and Kathryn May.

## What is the Advanced Practice Nursing Strategy?

The Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) Strategy integrates NPs and other advanced practice nurses into the health system in order to improve access to health care professionals, especially in small, rural and underserved communities of Ontario. Here are some of the steps that we've taken to achieve this goal:

- A policy, regulatory and legislative review to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent primary health care NPs from practicing at full scope. Phase I of this review was completed in March 2003 and amendments were made at that time to remove barriers to RN(EC) scope of practice in public hospitals (PHA Reg 965) and to recognize their role in providing care in long-term care facilities.
- A further evaluation of the barriers and facilitators that impact the integration of NPs into different practice settings and practice models across the continuum of health care is underway. A study has been completed and was released by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on January 30, 2004. The study includes 29 recommendations to remove further barriers, including economic, scope of practice, education and human resource barriers. A task team will be appointed to implement those recommendations.
- The Nursing Secretariat is also exploring the current role of the approximately 250 NPs in acute care and specialty roles to identify barriers to their practice. Acute care NPs practice within specialty areas such as cardiology, oncology, or pediatrics. Although they are often employed in hospital settings they also provide high quality health care to patients in outpatient clinics, community clinics, and home care settings.

## Nursing Week Events

National Nursing Week is May 10 to 14, 2004. The event is expected to generate media attention and the Nursing Secretariat and its partners will use this forum to celebrate nursing. Here are some of the events that the Nursing Secretariat staff will take part in 2004:

- Provincial Chief Nursing Officer (PCNO) speaking engagements at Windsor, Stratford, Kingston, Quinte, Thunder Bay, Kenora and Newmarket, May 10 to 14.
- Registered Nurses Association of Ontario Annual General Meeting, April 22 to 24, 2004 Hilton Suites, Markham.
- Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario 46th Annual General Meeting and Conference, "Supporting Excellence", April 30 and May 1, Delta Mead, Delta Meadowvale Resort Conference Centre, Mississauga.
- Ontario Nursing Association Chapter Meeting, May 12, Quinte.

## NS commends Anna Cain for receiving ACE Award



Congratulations to Anna Cain for winning an ACE Award for Outstanding Achievement presented to her in

December 2003. Anna served as Acting Manager of the Nursing Secretariat from August 2003 to March 2004 and has worked as a Senior Policy Analyst in the ministry since 2001. The Secretariat would like to thank Anna for her commendable work performance. As of April 2004, she is now working as a Provincial Planner with the Health Planning Branch. The MOHLTC ACE (Achievement, Commitment and Excellence) program celebrates outstanding performance in the work staff do in support of the ministry's programs and activities. Thank you for supporting her nomination. We all know that she is more than deserving!



Front row, left to right: Sherri Huckstep, Sue Matthews, Mary Woodman  
Back row, left to right: Doreen Thibert, Sophia Ikura-MacMillan, Rhoda Reyes

## The Nursing Secretariat In-Focus

Here's a brief profile of the staff – the who's who behind the faces that you meet, the voices that you hear and the emails that you receive on a day-to-day basis.

**Sue Matthews** has held a variety of positions as a Staff Nurse, Nurse Educator, Manager, Director of Patient Programs, Chief of Nursing and Professional Practice, and now as Provincial Chief Nursing Officer.

**Sherri Huckstep** is the Manager of the Nursing Secretariat. Sherri was previously the Deputy Chief of Nursing & Professional Practice at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

**Mary Woodman** is the Manager of the Nurse Practitioner (NP) Initiatives. She is a RN(EC) and has practiced nursing for 25 years, primarily in clinical nursing but also in nursing education, research, and administration.

**Sophia Ikura-MacMillan** is a Senior Policy Analyst and specializes in social services policy, operational planning and program implementation, particularly of the Full-Time Nursing Positions.

**Doreen Thibert** works as a Senior Policy Analyst on a part-time basis and is the lead on issues specific to registered practical nurses. She also assists in the monitoring and evaluation of the NP Demonstration Project sites.

**Rhoda Reyes** provides general program and project assistance to the Nursing Secretariat and the NP Demonstration Project. She coordinates the finance and issues forecasts as well as the production of the newsletter and website.

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