

**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

**PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANT (PDA) INITIATIVE**

**January 18, 2008**

**Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
Nursing Secretariat  
56 Wellesley St. W., 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M5S 2S3**

**E-mail: [nursingsecretariat.moh@ontario.ca](mailto:nursingsecretariat.moh@ontario.ca)**

**Fax : 416-327-1878**

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Introduction.....	3
Background.....	3
The Challenge .....	4
<b>Goal, Objectives, Outcomes and Principles .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Goal of the Initiative .....	5
Outcomes of the Initiative.....	5
Guiding Principles .....	5
<b>Who May Apply .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Mandatory Eligibility Criteria.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Additional Criteria .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Role of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Application Process and Key Dates .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>General Terms and Conditions .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Key Contact Information.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Applicant Checklist.....</b>	<b>13</b>

# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANT (PDA) INITIATIVE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### *Introduction*

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Nursing Secretariat is seeking applications from organizations interested in participating in the PDA initiative. The application process is open to any organization that employs nurses for the purpose of delivering health care services in any of the following sectors/settings in Ontario: hospitals, Long-Term Care Homes, home health care/community health, public health and correctional facilities.

The initiative is a one year pilot project that will involve providing PDAs with evidence-based practice resources to front-line nursing staff to improve access and integration of evidence at the bedside. Anticipated outcomes of this project include increased support for evidence-based practice, improved patient outcomes and enhanced quality of work-life for nurses. The MOHLTC has allocated \$3M for this initiative for a number of sites across the province representing various health care sectors, organizations and regions.

This package includes three additional documents to assist applicant(s) in completing their application:

1. Guide for Applicants to the PDA Initiative
2. Schedule A: Notice of Intention to Respond
3. Schedule B: Application to participate in the PDA Initiative

### *Background*

In the course of caring for their patients, nurses are increasingly challenged to regularly access information that is current and reliable. With the advent of the Internet and the increased use of information technology, health care professionals have the opportunity to improve the quality and safety of care provided to their patients/clients by integrating evidence into practice.

PDAs are hand-held computer devices that store information, provide access to resources and offer a range of interactive clinical tools for practitioners (ie.

calculators, drug databases, diagnostic manuals, etc.<sup>1</sup>). PDAs are increasingly becoming an integral tool in health care. They have the potential to enhance a practitioner's ability to provide timely, high quality and safe delivery of patient care, reduce errors, and increase the provider's confidence and satisfaction in her/his professional practice.

PDAs can be programmed for wireless or cellular access to allow regular updates of information resources and/or clinical tools, or they can be stand-alone devices with pre-loaded information resources and/or clinical tools. This Call for Applications is open to allowing applicant organizations to utilize a variety of models and types of PDAs depending on the needs of their organization.

This Ministry initiative builds upon efforts to date that have increased the availability of equipment to support nurses in the provision of patient care, including lifting devices. It also builds upon the government's commitment to improve resident care in Long-Term Care homes, address patient safety issues, promote healthy work environments and support the delivery of inter professional care.

## ***The Challenge***

Nurses working in certain settings (Northern, rural, corrections, home health care) have a unique set of challenges in accessing appropriate clinical information resources. They are often working in relative isolation, without the support of a supervisor, co-workers or other readily accessible health care professionals. Information technology can promote safe, high quality care through tools that improve communication, increase access to knowledge and provide clinical decision support.

The PDA Initiative will provide up to 1,000 PDAs (800 hand-held devices and 200 Tablets) to nurses in various health care organizations across the province and will accomplish the following objectives:

- Support the implementation of evidence-based practice
- Improve nurses' use of research in practice
- Improve patient outcomes
- Enhance nurses' quality of work-life

The remainder of the document provides the following guidelines for health care organizations interested in participating in the pilot project:

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that the PDA Initiative does not envision allowing organizations to utilize the PDAs to store or transmit patient information.

- Goals, Objectives, Desired Outcomes and Guiding Principles of the Initiative;
- Mandatory Eligibility Criteria for Application;
- Application Process and Key Dates;
- General Terms and Conditions;
- Frequently Asked Questions; and
- Applicant Checklist.

## **Goal, Objectives, Outcomes and Principles**

### ***Goal of the Initiative***

The goal of the initiative is to demonstrate the value and effectiveness of providing PDAs to improve access to information resources for nurses across various health care sectors. The selected organizations will participate in ongoing evaluation activities in order to demonstrate whether the goals and objectives of the project have been achieved.

#### Objective of the Initiative

- a) Demonstrate the value and effectiveness of PDAs in improving access to information resources for nurses across various health care sectors, including correctional institutions.

### ***Outcomes of the Initiative***

- Support the implementation of evidence-based nursing practice
- Improve nurses' use of research in practice
- Improve patient outcomes
- Enhance nurses' quality of work-life

### ***Guiding Principles***

- The project will aim to support multiple sectors/settings (ie. hospitals, long-term care, community, public health and corrections.)
- Applicants will build partnerships to enhance all sectors' capacity to participate in the project.

## **Who May Apply**

Applications for participation in the PDA Initiative are open to any organization that employs nurses for the purpose of delivering health care services in any of the following sectors/settings in Ontario: hospitals, Long-Term Care Homes, home health care/community health, public health and correctional facilities.

The MOHLTC will take into consideration factors including organizational size, geography and sector, among others, in evaluating potential applicants. Applications are particularly encouraged from organizations in northern, rural and remote communities. It is the intent of the MOHLTC to have a diverse cross-section of pilot sites that are representative of the various sectors that employ nurses.

## **Mandatory Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible to participate in the PDA Initiative, all applicants must meet the following mandatory eligibility criteria as part of the application process:

### **1. Information Technology (IT) support**

Each organization must secure some form of information technology (IT) support. The Ministry recognizes that organizations have varying degrees of access to information technology and as a result, we are encouraging organizations to work together to participate in this pilot project. Organizations with a more highly developed IT infrastructure may wish to partner with another organization and provide IT support, access to computers for PDA back-up and other resources to facilitate the success of the project.

### **2. Executive and Nursing Commitment – Signed Letters of Support**

Applicants are required to include officially signed letters of support from the following:

- a) Executive sponsor or senior administrator acknowledging the organization's participation, identifying the primary contact person and the individual responsible for project oversight (mandatory);
- b) Nursing representation from one of the following (mandatory):
  - i. Chief Nursing Officer, Vice-President of Patient Care or an equivalent individual responsible for nursing care in the organization; or
  - ii. Individual or group of individuals that represent front-line nurses within the organization.

- c) IT support contact (mandatory).

## **2. Participate in Evaluation, Knowledge Transfer and Dissemination**

A formal evaluation of the project will be undertaken to examine whether the provision of PDA-supported evidence-based practice resources results in:

- 1) A change in frequency of utilization of evidence based resources;
- 2) Improvements in meeting nurses' perceived information needs;
- 3) Improvements in self-reported patient outcomes; and
- 4) Improvement in nurses' job satisfaction.

To support the evaluation process, applicants are required to:

- a) Support staff participation in interviews, focus groups, reflective journaling, surveys and any other data collection for evaluation purposes; and
- b) Support staff participation in educational sessions.

This support will include release time for staff participation in education sessions as well as research involvement during the course of the pilot project.

## **3. Provide a completed Application Package**

All applicants must complete and submit the application package in its entirety. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. (Please note that while the submission of a Schedule A - Notice of Intent is encouraged, it is not mandatory.)

## **4. Outline a Sustainability Plan**

All applicants must outline a sustainability plan which demonstrates how they will support the use of the PDAs for a minimum of 12 months after the completion of the pilot stage. This plan may be undertaken as a partnership among organizations.

## **Additional Criteria**

In addition to the Mandatory Eligibility Criteria, the following factors will be considered when reviewing applications to participate in the PDA initiative:

## 1. In-kind contributions

The Ministry encourages organizations to outline any in-kind contributions that they are prepared to offer to support this project within their organization and potentially in other organizations within a partnership framework. These might include: IT support for partner organizations, part-time FTE to provide project support/oversight, use of on-site facilities for education and training of staff on the use of PDAs within their particular organization, release time for staff participating in educational sessions and research activities, etc.

## 2. Long-Term Vision

The Ministry encourages organizations to articulate their long-term vision for how devices such as PDAs can enhance nursing practice and improve patient care within their organization.

## Role of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

The MOHLTC will provide pilot sites with the following support:

- Access to the hardware (as approved by their application), the downloaded resources and IT support for the resources;
- Initial training on the use of the hardware and software applications;
- Overall monitoring of the pilot sites;
- Project management oversight to ensure timelines and deliverables are met within the resources allocated;
- Act as a central point of contact for issue resolution;
- Monitor progress of the initiative.

## Application Process and Key Dates

### Application Process

#### 1. Submit the Notice of Intention to Respond Form

Interested applicants are required to complete Schedule A – Notice of Intention to Respond form by **January 28, 2008**.

Completed forms should be submitted to the Nursing Secretariat by e-mail at [nursingsecretariat.moh@ontario.ca](mailto:nursingsecretariat.moh@ontario.ca) or by fax at 416-327-1878.



***Please note that completion of the full application is not required as part of the intention to respond.***

## **2. Questions**

Questions regarding this Call for Applications may be submitted in writing to Doreen Thibert, Senior Policy Analyst, Nursing Secretariat ([Doreen.Thibert@ontario.ca](mailto:Doreen.Thibert@ontario.ca)) before February 8, 2008.

Please first review the FAQs included in this document prior to submitting any questions. A maximum of five questions will be accepted from each applicant.

Please note that the Ministry reserves the right to seek additional information from applicants about their proposals.

A teleconference will be held on Wednesday, February 13, 2008 to address any additional concerns and any questions raised by potential applicants.

## **3. Submit a Completed Application**

Applicants are required to complete all sections of Schedule B – Application to Participate in the PDA Initiative. Please follow all instructions for this Schedule.

Completed applications are due by **February 18, 2008**.

Completed forms should be submitted to the Nursing Secretariat by e-mail at: [nursingsecretariat.moh@ontario.ca](mailto:nursingsecretariat.moh@ontario.ca) or by fax at 416-327-1878.

## **Key Dates**

Key Milestone	Date
Release of Call for Applications	Jan 18
Submission of completed Schedule A: Notice of Intention to Respond form	Jan 28
Last date for applicants to submit questions regarding the Call for Applications (questions will be distributed to all applicants)	Feb 8
Teleconference for interested applicants	Feb. 13
Closing date of Call for Applications	Feb 18
Evaluation of responses	Feb 29
Notification of successful applicants	Early March

## **Progress Report(s)**

A progress report must be submitted to the [nursingsecretariat.moh@ontario.ca](mailto:nursingsecretariat.moh@ontario.ca) by 5pm on September 15, 2008.

A final report must be submitted within three months of the end of the proposed pilot project, by June 30, 2009.

## **General Terms and Conditions**

- This Call for Applications is being issued so that the MOHLTC can gain a better understanding of the outcomes of PDA use by front-line nursing staff. The MOHLTC reserves the right to determine all qualitative and quantitative aspects relative to the evaluation criteria.
- By inviting a proposal, the MOHLTC makes no commitment or obligation to the applicants in any way, specifically no obligation to enter into any contract as a result of this Call for Applications.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- The MOHLTC shall in no event be responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal in response to this Call for Applications.
- Requests to present data or publish or present papers derived from work under this Call for Applications in professional journals or in any other types of publications or at professional conferences must be made to the MOHLTC and prior approval must be obtained in writing from the MOHLTC.
- Applicants must disclose if they already receive funding for these purposes from the MOHLTC or other funding sources. Existing funding will not necessarily preclude organizations from participating in this initiative.
- The MOHLTC shall have the right to cancel this Call for Applications, at any time, either prior to, or after the closing date of the Call for Applications without award. Thereafter, the MOHLTC may issue a new Call for Applications or revoke the original call for applications and refrain from providing future calls for applications related to this project. The MOHLTC shall not be obligated to provide reasons for the cancellation.
- Organizations are expected to be knowledgeable about relevant privacy legislation and must ensure that the pilot sites meet the Personal Health Information Privacy Act (PHIPA) legislation accordingly.
- Approval for successful applicants is subject to organizations entering into an agreement with the Ministry. The agreement will outline all of the terms and conditions associated with the organization's participation in this project, including accountability provisions.
- Successful applicants will be required to fulfill reporting requirements to the MOHLTC.

## **Key Contact Information**

For further information regarding this Call for Applications, please contact:

Doreen Thibert  
Senior Policy Analyst  
Nursing Secretariat  
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
Phone: (416) 212-3509  
E-mail: [Doreen.Thibert@ontario.ca](mailto:Doreen.Thibert@ontario.ca)

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **What is the maximum number of PDAs that an organization can request?**

There is no maximum number, however, organizations must provide a written plan as to how they will use the PDAs to improve patient care within their organization. In addition, they must provide on-going IT support to ensure the PDAs are compatible with their organization's IT system and infrastructure. Please note that the Ministry retains the right to determine the appropriate number of devices to provide each successful applicant.

### **Who will distribute the devices to the organizations?**

The Ministry will contract with a supplier to purchase, load and distribute the devices to organizations that have been approved to participate in the PDA Initiative before the end of March 2008.

### **Who will provide training to the nursing staff on how to use the devices?**

The Ministry's Nursing Secretariat will arrange for initial education for all nursing staff who participate in the PDA Initiative. On-going training and support for the software applications will be provided by vendors contracted by the Nursing Secretariat. Please note that each successful applicant will also be required to provide education and support to ensure the devices are compatible with their organization's IT system and infrastructure.

### **Who owns the PDA devices?**

The organization that participates in the PDA Initiative will own the device(s). In exchange for their participation and the use of the device, the organization must outline a plan to sustain the use of the PDA for a minimum of an additional 12 months beyond the end of the pilot period.

## Applicant Checklist

Please verify you have completed the following steps as part of your response.

Checklist	Completed? Y/N?
I have received all attachments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call for Application</li> <li>• Guide for Applicants to the PDA Initiative</li> <li>• Schedule A: Notice of Intention to Respond</li> <li>• Schedule B: Application to Participate in the PDA Initiative</li> </ul>	
I have read the Call for Applications to Participate in the PDA Initiative document	
I have read all of the supplemental material including the Guide to Participating in the PDA Initiative	
I understand what is required and have read the eligibility requirements	
If I have questions, I have submitted a maximum of 5 questions	
I have submitted Schedule A: Notice of Intention to Respond form	
I have submitted a completed application (Schedule B) including signed letters of support	