The Nursing Secretariat News

Office of the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer
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Message from the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer

I am pleased to take this opportunity to share my thoughts with you about the status of nursing today and into the future. Since assuming the role of Provincial Chief Nursing Officer on June 4, 2007, I have had the privilege of interacting with many nursing colleagues across Ontario, and gaining their insightful perspectives regarding current and distant issues that impact the profession of nursing. Common to each exchange with nursing leaders, educators, researchers, front-line staff and others, I discovered an enthusiasm, commitment, and dedication to creating synergy through the formation of collaborative relationships. I am profoundly affected by the degree to which nurses in every sector believe in their ability to influence positive change that will strengthen the profession of nursing and lead to improved quality care for Ontarians.

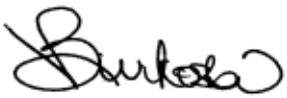
This shared vision among the nursing community demonstrates the *productive power of nursing.* Nurses at the bedside are uniquely positioned not only to deliver ongoing, consistent care, but also to identify organizational process and health system gaps, redundancies and deficiencies. Educators in nursing are keenly aware of demographic and health trends that create the need for curriculum shifts to meet the demands of health care consumers. Nursing researchers avidly seek to understand the dynamics of the changing health care environment and its influence on nursing practice and patient outcomes. Leaders in nursing value the need to create safe and quality practice environments in order to recruit and retain nurses, and sustain a healthy nursing workforce.

The future of nursing rests with each of us, and is dependent upon our continued dedication to confronting the challenges we are presented with, and celebrating the successes we have achieved. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Nursing Secretariat will endeavour to provide nurses, at all levels, in all sectors, with the necessary tools to enhance their productive power.

Our collaborative efforts to enhance timely and quality access to care include:

- integrating inter-professional care teams;
- supporting the full scope of nursing practice;
- examining new and expanded nursing roles;
- discovering new methods of measuring nursing workload;
- building nursing leaders and researchers;
- creating greater awareness regarding the distinctive needs of nurses practicing in all settings and locations; and,
- communicating the value of nursing to the health care system.

Through these efforts we will work together to develop a sustainable nursing workforce. Thank you for allowing me to serve you as we venture down this exciting path.



Vanessa Burkoski,
RN(EC), BScN, MScN
Doctorate, Health Administration (c)
Provincial Chief Nursing Officer

Ontario

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Message from Minister George Smitherman, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

It is my great pleasure to welcome Mrs. Vanessa Burkoski to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as she assumes the vital role of Provincial Chief Nursing Officer. She now takes on the responsibility for one of the most important roles in government – a role that focuses on advancing the nursing agenda in Ontario, to the benefit of both our nurses and the patients under their care.

Vanessa exemplifies the consummate nursing professional. She has an impressive track record of more than two decades of hands-on patient care experience, clinical knowledge, administrative leadership and educational achievement. Our government has outlined an aggressive and detailed plan for innovation in public health care, and I know that Vanessa will bring to her new role the kind of passion, energy and dedication that will enhance and build on that plan, from a nursing perspective.

So as I welcome Vanessa to the role of Provincial Chief Nursing Officer, I also welcome her to a dynamic team that is eager to work with her – a team whose own commitment and dedication will be strengthened by her leadership.

Honourable George Smitherman, Minister

Team and Bios

Standing left to right are: Kathy Mendez, Winnie Ng, Marsha Pinto, Adriana Ibarguchi, Chantal Lafortune, Jennifer Lerner, Doreen Thibert, Leslie Zubilewich, Karen Moreira
Sitting left to right are: Sophia Ikura-MacMillan, Kristine Lee, Julia Cho, Annette Ellenor, Vanessa Burkoski, Dennis Torres, Deanne Montesano

Sophia Ikura-MacMillan is manager of the Nursing Secretariat and supports the policy advisors and support staff in policy design and implementation.

Adriana Ibarguchi is a Senior Policy Analyst and works on nurse practitioner issues.

Annette Ellenor is a Senior Policy Analyst with lead responsibilities for new nursing roles.

Deanne Montesano is a Senior Policy Analyst who joined the Secretariat in July 2007. She is currently working on Nurse Practitioner initiatives and has an extensive background in the regulation of health professions.

Julia Cho is a Senior Policy Analyst with lead responsibilities for the Nursing Graduate Guarantee.

Kristine Lee is the Knowledge Transfer Specialist working with the Nursing Secretariat and provides direction on the use of nursing research to inform policy development.

New – Community Assessment Visit Program for Nurses

The Nursing Secretariat is pleased to introduce an exciting new program entitled the **Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program.** This is a new initiative that is part of the HealthForceOntario strategy, the province's health human resources strategy which was created to ensure that the province has the right number, mix and distribution of appropriately educated health providers to meet the health needs of Ontarians.

Through the Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program, the ministry will provide reimbursement for travel and accommodation for nurses and graduating nursing students and their eligible spouse (if applicable) who are interested in working in communities designated as underserviced.

The expected benefits of the Nursing Community Assessment Visit Program include:

- enhanced distribution of nurses working in underserviced and rural communities in Ontario;
- increased access to currently available nursing employment opportunities across the province; and
- additional resources for employers to support nursing recruitment.

For further details about the program, eligibility and process please refer to the following websites:

www.healthforceontario.ca
www.nursingsecretariat.on.ca

One of the key commitments of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is to provide Ontarians with better access to nurses and other health care professionals. The ministry is pleased to partner with you to benefit the residents of your communities.

Doreen Thibert is a Senior Policy Analyst for Nursing Education Initiative (NEI), Late Career Initiative, Nursing Graduate Guarantee Multi-Year Communications, Inter-professional Career Education Fund (ICEF), the NS Newsletter and website.

Marsha Pinto is a Senior Policy Analyst with lead responsibilities for the employer capacity demonstrations and strategies to increase participation rates, activity, and productivity.

Dennis Torres is a Policy Analyst responsible for the Late Career Initiative, as well as developing and maintaining program databases and managing a number of different funding contracts.

Winnie Ng is the Financial Analyst at the Nursing Secretariat. She provides financial advice and support to the Nursing Secretariat on its various initiatives.

Chantal Lafortune is the Executive Assistant and is responsible for overseeing the daily functions of the office of the PCNO.

Kathy Mendez is a Policy Assistant and supports the policy priorities and issues management activities of the office through the provisions of research and analytical services.

Karen Moreira is a Clerical Assistant who supports the Nursing Secretariat and the administrative components related to the Nursing Graduate Guarantee initiative.

Leslie Zubilewich is a Receptionist/ Administrative Assistant. Her key responsibilities include staffing the reception desk, answering and directing calls and handling all administrative tasks. She also coordinates the PCNO's Nursing Week site visits and activities and the distribution of the Nursing Secretariat newsletter.

Jennifer Lerner is the Scheduler for the PCNO. Her key responsibilities include organizing meetings and travel, coordinating responses to incoming correspondence as well as assisting in handling administrative tasks.

Provincial Chief Nursing Officer's Site Visits

Connecting, listening, learning: Ontario's new PCNO visits northern communities

The importance of connecting

Vanessa Burkoski had barely settled into her new role as Ontario's Provincial Chief Nursing Officer when she took to the road and headed north on an outreach and fact-finding mission. Its purpose: to develop an understanding of issues specific to the nursing profession in Ontario's northern communities.

Vanessa came to the PCNO post with a wealth of experience, gained over her 23 years in the nursing profession, including experience in emergency care, primary care, administration, research, education and public health. Nevertheless, she felt the need to understand the perspective of nurses working in northern and remote communities. "I felt the Secretariat needed to reach out to those nurses. They're isolated. I needed to learn first-hand what the strengths and challenges are in their communities. I wanted to better understand their needs. I wanted to reach out to them and deliver the message that these vital health care professionals are such an important part of our health care system."

The vital art of listening

Traveling with several analysts, Vanessa was particularly interested in understanding how the Nursing Graduate Guarantee and the Late Career Initiative have impacted front-line nurses and administrators. She intended to explore whether there are facets of northern nursing practice that either make the initiatives effective and easy to adapt, or conversely, challenge or prevent their implementation. Most importantly, Vanessa was focused on innovative strategies that northern communities have implemented to better support the practice of nursing and recruitment and retention to remote and rural areas. These discoveries required asking the right questions, and listening carefully to the answers – not simply in one facility or in one location, but in many. Vanessa and her analysts visited organizations in many different sectors and communities, including Sudbury, Sioux Lookout, Red Lake, and Thunder Bay.

Welcomed by these organizations, they met with more than 200 facility administrators, chief nursing executives, front-line nurses and support staff. Focus groups were an important opportunity to elicit their candid responses to important questions: What are your challenges? How can we support you? How are the Secretariat's initiatives working? Is the Nursing Graduate Guarantee helping to build your workforce? Is the Late Career Initiative helping you retain older nurses? All participants were encouraged to share the unique challenges and rewards of working in a northern context.

The nurses, their administrators and staff were forthcoming and transparent, offering real and workable solutions and sharing a wealth of constructive and insightful information. It is clear that northern communities recognize that, while they are separated by distance, they can bridge that through collaboration and sharing of resources and ideas. As Vanessa noted, "...they know what their needs are and how they can help each other. From one organization to another, they spoke of each other with respect and with pride."

Vanessa and Henriette LaFontaine, RN, Elizabeth Centre, LTC Home, Sudbury

"Beyond Queen's Park" – Support for Northern Nursing

Vanessa came away impressed, and with a profound respect for the nursing administration and staff in the facilities and communities she visited. She found the front-line nurses' commitment to delivering quality care in spite of geographic distance and the challenges of isolation to be both inspiring and motivating. Nurses spoke proudly of their unique opportunity to rapidly gain organizational management and broad clinical practice skills because of the wide variety of the patient conditions they manage.

Vanessa Burkoski will let none of the learning gained from her travels to the north sit idle. She and her team are now exploring opportunities for refining Ontario's Nursing Strategy to respond to the needs of all nurses working in rural and remote communities.

Sudbury & District Public Health
Left to right: Sandra Laclé, Vanessa Burkoski, Claire Warren, Nancy Lacasse, Shelley Westhaver, Sheila Poirier and Sue Caverson

Pioneer Manor – Sudbury
Randy Hotta, Glenda Gauthier (in blue top) and staff

Red Lake Medical Centre BBQ
Left to right: Judy Carlson, Ruth Londry, Arlene Proskiw, Debbie Larson and Annwyl Shewchuk with Vanessa Burkoski and Sophia Ikura-MacMillan

Red Lake Medical Centre BBQ

Thunder Bay Regional Hospital – Surgical Day Care
Left to right: Jane Wright, Lise Pollard, Marsha Honeysett, Linda Pearce, Susan Richards and Linda Miller

New Roles – Nurse Performed Flexible Sigmoidoscopy Colorectal Cancer Screening Pilot

In 2006, the Ontario government announced funding to pilot nurses performing flexible sigmoidoscopy; this pilot is a partnership between Cancer Care Ontario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The objective of this pilot is to introduce and evaluate flexible sigmoidoscopy as part of an inter-professional care team, through an innovative approach to providing enhanced colorectal screening.

Ontario is the first province to launch this screening method. Nurse performed flexible sigmoidoscopy is an innovative approach to using nurses' knowledge and skills to expand access to colorectal cancer screening. Flexible sigmoidoscopy has been endorsed by the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care for screening average risk individuals. It has been proven safe and effective and has been used in the U.S. and U.K. for years.

Six organizations began training for this new role in September 2007; 14 nurses will be participating in this training.

Tribute to Lynn Macfie

With sadness we announce the loss of our dear friend and colleague Lynn Macfie who passed away on September 27, 2007. Lynn was an integral part of the Nursing Secretariat. She brought extensive policy experience and knowledge of government decision-making processes to the team. Lynn's "behind the scenes" work made the Provincial Nursing Strategy a reality and made a difference for nurses across the province.

Those of us who knew her had the privilege of working together and sharing special times with an incredible individual. She was a wonderfully gifted, intelligent person whose kind spirit and generosity touched us all. Lynn will always be remembered for the way she experienced life whether it was through her memorable travels (especially Turkey), her biking (even in the worst weather conditions), her love of old movies, literature and good food.

Despite her illness, Lynn continued to actively engage in work. Her perseverance and determination to manage her illness were truly a testament to her remarkable character and strong will. She was a wonderful colleague and friend and we will miss her dearly. She brought joy and laughter to our lives every day.

Lynn, you will always hold a special place in our hearts. We Love You!

Nursing Grads Soar at Sunnybrook

By: Nadia Norcia Radovini

New nurses are buzzing around Sunnybrook, as the hospital has undertaken the province's Nursing Graduate Guarantee Initiative, offering nursing graduates across Ontario exciting opportunities to learn and grow while securing them full-time employment.

For nurse Tess Mountain, the initiative means she's currently working in her dream job: "This is the mecca of where I wanted to get to, the place I wanted to be." Currently working in the trauma and acute care areas at Sunnybrook, Tess graduated from Trent University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) in the spring of 2007. "It's phenomenal. I certainly think it's because of the new grad initiatives. In addition, the support for new nursing graduates is so incredible here; especially because Sunnybrook is a teaching hospital, so everyone is so willing to explain things."

"Our goal is to recruit nurses, and to keep them," says Dr. Susan VanDeVelde-Coke, executive vice-president Programs and Chief Health Professions and Nursing Executive at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. "The new grad initiative helps to ensure new nurses are comfortable working in their unit, with their colleagues, physicians, and allied health professionals. The program allows new graduates a substantial orientation period, which research indicates is key in retaining new staff."

Sunnybrook hired 85 general nursing graduates, including both Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs). The hospital received its first group in June, and an additional four groups over the summer in acute care, cardiac care, Holland Centre orthopaedics, perinatal and gynaecology, long-term care and various other medical/surgical units.

"Sunnybrook offered the best opportunity for me through the initiative in regards to training," says Jen Smith, also a graduate working in the acute and trauma areas, with a BSN from the University of Windsor. "Sunnybrook is sending us to George Brown for a critical care training course in emergency nursing. We began in September for a few days a week, and receive our certificates in November."

Many new nursing graduates prefer full-time jobs but until recently, found it difficult to find them in Ontario. The initiative assists graduates in gaining full-time experience, easing the transition into the workforce, and helps to ensure nursing grads remain working in Ontario.

The implementation of the Nursing Graduate Guarantee Initiative commenced in the spring of 2007. The ministry created an online job portal that is a meeting place for employers and new Ontario nursing graduates (RNs and RPNs). These job opportunities are in the hospital, long-term care, home care, mental health, public health, and primary care sectors. The process requires new graduates to register on the portal and they apply to jobs posted by employers. To date, over 2,000 matches have been made through the HealthForceOntario jobs portal.

The ministry provides a six-month salary plus benefits for every graduate. The hospitals provide and fund orientation, which takes place for a minimum of three months and includes education in clinical topics, intravenous skills, equipment training through simulation and assistance from nursing preceptors and mentors. For the first time, Sunnybrook standardized the orientation process so all nurses received the same education. Each hospital is also responsible to provide the nurses full-time employment somewhere within the hospital. After three months, if a full-time job is available and the nurse graduate is ready, they can go directly into a full-time job.

For both Tess and Jen, their applications went out in February/March, they were called in for interviews and testing, and were hired in the spring. They began with orientation within a classroom environment, and were then brought on the floor and "buddied" to work alongside full-time nurses. "We worked with a lot of nurses, learning different techniques," says Jen. "It's great to know at the end of this program, we'll have that much more experience and are guaranteed full-time work in the hospital somewhere."

"We're excited about this program and we're grateful to the government for providing funding for it," adds Dr. Susan VanDeVelde-Coke. "We hope the ministry will continue the program; it has been a wonderful opportunity to hire, mentor and welcome new graduates into the Sunnybrook community."

New Graduate Guarantee

The Nursing Graduate Guarantee is currently being implemented across the province, and to date over 2,000 matches have been made through the Nursing Graduate Portal. This initiative, which began in 2007, is open to all Ontario nursing graduates (RPN and RN) and employers in all sectors, including long-term care, home care, hospital, mental health, public health and primary care. Many employers have already capitalized on this important opportunity being offered as part of the province's health human resources strategy – ***HealthForceOntario.***

It is exciting to see the participation of nursing graduates, employers, unions and associations as we partner together in making Ontario the employer-of-choice for all nurses. Through this comprehensive initiative, new nursing graduates will receive the opportunity for full-time employment as well as the benefits of extended orientation and mentorship to support a more effective transition to practice. The Nursing Graduate Guarantee has also been designed to support the existing front-line nursing workforce through re-investment opportunities to enhance professional development and retention.

Given the importance of supporting stable and attractive work environments, parallel work continues with key stakeholders to develop strategies that will build employer capacity for nursing human resources management and improve planning across sectors. Further details on the development of these employer resources will be communicated to the field this fall and updates will be provided in the next edition of the Nursing Secretariat newsletter.

Nursing Research

2006 Nursing Research Initiative

In March of this year, the Change Foundation and the Nursing Secretariat, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced the successful projects for the 2006 Nursing Research Initiative. The successful demonstration projects, which will run through 2007, will help to pilot innovative strategies that focus on developing "Best Practices in Nursing Human Resources Planning and Management." The following were the successful projects:

- Increasing Capacity of the Effective Implementation of Advanced Practice Roles for Underserviced Populations: A Collaborative Facilitative Approach Supporting Healthy Work Environments through Inter and Intra-professional Relationships, Work-Life Balance and Nursing Leadership Development
- Development of Distance Education Model for Nurses
- A Critical Care Bridging Program: From Proof of Concept to Sustainable Education/Practice Exemplar – Bridge Funding
- Work and Health: Optimizing Nurses' Physical Health in Hospital Work Environment
- Creating a Virtual Practice Community of Nurses Who Serve the Homeless
- Building a Knowledge-Intense Nursing Workplace Using a Practice Scholarship Program (PSP)

For more information on the 2006 Nursing Research Initiative, visit the Change Foundation website at: **www.changefoundation.com**

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Nursing Secretariat announce Nursing Research Fund Call for Proposals

The Nursing Research Fund (NRF) provides funding for studies that focus on the management, organization and effectiveness of nursing human resources and services. In addition, the research aids the development, implementation and evaluation of the initiatives that support the Ontario Nursing Strategy.

Through this call for proposals, the Nursing Secretariat is looking to fund Ontario researchers or relevant organizations (as per eligibility requirements) through the NRF to conduct research that aligns with the specific priorities/themes as identified by the Nursing Secretariat. More information on the Call for Proposals can be accessed on the Nursing Secretariat website, or by accessing the MOHLTC research website at: **www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/ministry/research/nurse_research.html**

For any questions regarding the Nursing Research Fund Call for Proposals contact Kristine Lee, Research Knowledge Transfer Specialist, kristine.lee@ontario.ca, or (416) 327-9690.

New Demonstration Site Projects in Nursing Human Resources Planning, Call for Applications

Thunder Bay Regional Hospital's ICU
Left to right: Kelly Hawkins, Joanne Vezina, and Carolyn Freitag (Manager)

In May 2006, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced the "Nursing Graduate Guarantee" (NGG), as part of HealthForceOntario. The NGG is the government's promise to provide every 2007 Ontario nursing graduate (RN and RPN) with the opportunity to work full-time in the province. The minister convened a task force to provide direction on how to support the creation of more full-time nursing positions within organizations. A key recommendation was to improve employers' capacity for health human resources (HHR) planning.

The Nursing Secretariat has been working with a group of representatives from across the continuum of health care to identify opportunities to support strategic HHR planning at the organizational and system level. There is a wide variability in HHR planning across Ontario with many organizations currently carrying out elements of HHR planning to varying degrees. In some cases, sector specific challenges to recruitment and retention require unique and tailored solutions. A recurrent theme in these discussions has been the need to formalize knowledge transfer of best practices to support health care administrators and mid-level managers in effectively developing, implementing, and evaluating health human resource strategies.

To address these challenges and support the government's promise, the MOHLTC is soliciting applications from health care organizations across all sectors that are interested in becoming demonstration sites for designing, implementing, evaluating, and sharing innovative HHR planning tools and practices. Based on a review of human resource management literature, the MOHLTC has outlined eight workforce building blocks which contain key strategies for consideration and has asked that applicants select one or more of these building blocks for further development. Proposed demonstration site projects must also incorporate a new or existing partnership for enhanced sharing and collaboration. Development of HHR tools and dissemination of best practices will assist in creating greater system capacity for broader HHR planning on a continued and sustained basis.

The application process is open to any organization funded by the MOHLTC for the purpose of delivering health care services, in any health sector: primary care, acute care, community, long-term care and public health. Private sector partners or health care associations are eligible applicants but their partners must be a MOHLTC-funded health care provider acting as the lead applicant.

For more information about this exciting initiative, please visit the Nursing Secretariat website: **www.nursingsecretariat.on.ca**

Surgical First Assist

The Surgical First Assist (SFA) is one of the recently announced health care provider roles that is focused on developing innovative approaches to meet needs in high demand areas such as surgical services. As with all of our announced new roles, this funding is not about substitution of current health care providers, but rather to support a team-based model of care delivery.

SFAs function collaboratively with the surgeon and operating room team to ensure performance of a safe operation with optimal patient outcomes. Creation of these positions supports recruitment/retention strategies by presenting new opportunities for career enhancement and development of new skills.

Health professionals who can fill this role include Registered Nurses and International Medical Graduates. These professionals must have the educational preparation required to practice in the role. Currently the MOHLTC is only looking at RNs in this role.

MOHLTC funding for this initiative is based on providing 50 per cent of the salary and benefit costs associated with this initiative, as part of a two-year pilot. The organization is required to provide the remaining 50 per cent. To date, 16 organizations have been funded to participate in this program.

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An electronic version of this newsletter can be found on the Nursing Secretariat website.

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