

Patient Care

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A. Occupations

1) Registered Nurse (RN)

- Regulated health profession in Ontario - College of Nurses of Ontario www.cno.org
- The College regulates two categories of nurses, Registered Nurses (RN) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPN). Registered Nurses Extended Class RN (EC) - commonly referred to as Nurse Practitioners – are also regulated by the College

Role

Source: <http://www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/groups/3152.shtml>

Registered nurses perform some or all of the following duties:

- Assess patients to identify appropriate nursing interventions
- Collaborate with members of an interdisciplinary health team to plan, implement, co-ordinate and evaluate patient care in consultation with patients and their families
- Administer medications and treatments as prescribed by a physician or according to establish policies and protocols
- Monitor, assess, address, document and report symptoms and changes in patients' conditions
- Operate or monitor medical apparatus or equipment
- Assist in surgery and other medical procedures
- May supervise licensed practical nurses and other nursing staff
- May develop and implement discharge planning process on admission of patients
- May teach and counsel patients and their families on health-related issues in collaboration with other health care providers.

Educational Requirements

- 4 year university or college degree (i.e., Algonquin, Centennial, George Brown colleges (joint university & college programs)
- RNs may continue their academic training to specialize in a specific area of nursing or to become a nurse practitioner, nurse clinician, nursing consultant, or nursing researcher

Skills/Qualities

Technical

- Basic computer skills: word processing, internet, email, presentation programs, spreadsheet manipulation and database knowledge
- Specialized programs: (i.e, documentation, patient care planning, patient monitoring)
- Operate medical equipment

Source: *Excerpted and adapted from <http://www.cybercorp.net/rhiggins/thesis/higitd.html>*

"The use of computers in health care is no longer a question for discussion and debate. Their application in nursing is a reality in many centers ..."@Cite(HannahKJ88a ", p. 263"). The primary

applications are in the support of nursing documentation, patient care planning, and patient monitoring.

Nurses must spend a considerable amount of time documenting the care they are giving to their patients. In non-computerized environments, this involves writing the nursing notes in longhand. These notes report on the treatments, medications, procedures, diagnostic tests, and other components of the patient's health and activity over a certain period of time. In computerized environments, the documentation process can be automated through the use of standard reporting forms and checklists that allow the nurse to use various computer interface modalities to quickly enter the information concerning the patient. Menus, windows, pointing devices, or cursor keys can be used to select standard items from lists, while specific data (such as numeric values) can be entered via a keyboard. This automated documentation process not only saves time, but it also increases the accuracy of patient information and makes it more readily accessible for diagnostic or statistical analysis.

Computerized patient care planning can be implemented in a manner similar to the documentation process noted previously. Since standard lists of nursing diagnoses and interventions for particular patient problems have been prepared for almost all areas of nursing, it is not too great a leap to present these items via computer so that they can be selected and associated with particular patients. The computer can present possible etiologies that can be selected in the development of the complete nursing diagnostic statement.

Another big area of computer application in health care with major implications for nursing functions is patient monitoring. Dedicated computer controlled devices have been utilized for bedside monitoring of electro-cardiogram, heart and breathing rate, temperature, and various other vital physiological parameters for over 10 years. Presently these systems are becoming much more sophisticated and they are being integrated with the automated record keeping mentioned previously. In this way, the monitored status of the patient becomes associated with the nursing and medical records entered by members of the healthcare team. In addition to this, automatic posting of laboratory test results keeps the record current and further reduces nursing paper work (previously, lab reports would pile up on the desk until filed away in the patient's chart). In all, this automated and integrated patient record becomes a powerful tool for patient monitoring, record keeping, ongoing assessment, and evaluation.

In terms of more advanced applications for nursing practice, Hannah (1988) mentions decision support systems in reference to possible applications of artificial intelligence. She suggests that data collected by nurses in the process of assessing or monitoring the patient could be entered at bedside computer terminals and quickly processed by expert decision support systems to provide a more individualized set of possibilities for inclusion in the nursing care plan (p. 271).

Communication

- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Listening skills to understand problems and hear what patients are saying
- Speaking skills for effectively communicating to patients about their health

Other

- The learning ability required to complete the academic requirements
- Knowledge of health promotion, geriatrics, medications, technology, and behavioural issues
- Tolerance to work with patients who are seriously ill or injured
- People-orientation for working with wide variety of people each day
- Critical thinking skills to quickly assess situations to find out what a patient needs
- Detail-orientation to notice changes in conditions and quickly decide what the changes mean

- Cooperation skills for working with colleagues in other disciplines to give the best care to patients
- Sensitive, compassionate, sense of humour
- Analytical and assessment skills
- Program planning, documentation, presentation skills
- Ability to multi-task and prioritize
- Time-management, organizational and supervisory skills
- Good physical condition is required for long periods of standing, walking, and some lifting

Typical Employers

Source: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/openingdoors/occupations/regnurse.html#c>

- Registered Nurses typically work in hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, home care and rehabilitation services in Ontario.
- some are employed in doctor's offices, insurance companies, social assistance organizations, educational services, and a variety of other industries.
- three industry sectors employ the majority of Registered Nurses in Ontario: Hospitals employ 64%, Ambulatory Health Care services employ 17%, and Nursing and Residential Care facilities employ 14%.

Average Hourly Wage

Source: www.labourmarketinformation.ca

\$23.51 (average) \$34.90 (high) \$12.50 (low)

Salaries vary according to such factors such as experience, level of responsibility, seniority, size of company, size of city, etc.

2) Nurse Practitioner (NP)

- Regulated health profession in Ontario - College of Nurses of Ontario www.cno.org

Role

Source: <http://np-education.ca/np/index.cfm?main=faq.html>

- RN(EC)s have the independent authority to perform additional controlled acts including: diagnosing of common diseases, prescribing & administration of certain treatments and medications, and ordering basic diagnostic tests (i.e., lab tests and x-rays)
- This also includes health promotion, disease prevention and wellness care for families, individuals, and communities

Educational Requirements

- 3-4 years Nursing diploma degree plus additional 12-24ms NP program
- Source: <http://www.npao.org/phcnp.aspx>
The Council of Ontario University Programs in Nursing (COUPN) established the Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner (PHC NP) Programme in 1995. A consortium of ten Ontario universities offers the program: Lakehead, York, McMaster, Ottawa, Laurentian, Western, Windsor, Queens, Ryerson and Toronto.

Skillsets/Qualities

Technical

- Basic computer skills: word processing, internet, email, presentation programs, spreadsheet manipulation and database knowledge
- Specialized programs: (i.e. documentation, patient care planning, patient monitoring)
- Operate medical equipment

Communication

- Superior oral and written communication skills

Other

- The learning ability required to complete the academic requirements
- Knowledge of health promotion, geriatrics, medications, technology, and behavioural issues
- Sensitive and compassionate, sense of humour
- Teamwork skills
- Analytical and assessment skills
- Documentation skills
- Program planning skills
- Ability to multi-task and to prioritize
- Time-management and organizational skills
- Supervisory skills
- Presentation skills
- Good physical condition is required for long periods of standing, walking, and some lifting

Typical Employers

NPs usually work where there is a need for primary health care services, including:

- Community Health Centres
- Long Term Care
- Aboriginal Centres
- Community-based facilities (public health, occupational health, correctional services)
- Ambulatory Care Centres (i.e., emergency departments)
- Collaborative Practices with physicians

Average Salary

\$37.13/ hour (average)

3) Registered Practical Nurse (RPN)

- Regulated health profession in Ontario - College of Nurses of Ontario www.cno.org

Role

Source: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/openingdoors/occupations/regpranurse.html#c>

- Registered Practical Nurses provide nursing care, usually under the direction of a Medical Practitioner, Registered Nurse, or other health team member.
- Perform nursing functions, such as taking blood pressure and other vital signs, applying aseptic techniques, ensuring infection control, monitoring nutritional intake, and conducting specimen collection.
- Administer medication, observe and document therapeutic effects, monitor the progress of patients, evaluate the effectiveness of nursing interventions and consult with appropriate members of the health care team.

Educational Requirements

- 2-year diploma program from a community college in Ontario (i.e., Mohawk, Algonquin, Durham colleges etc.)
- Source: <http://www1.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ojf/ojf.jsp?lang=e§ion=Profile&noc=3233>
The College of Nurses determined that by January 1, 2005 all practical nursing graduates entering the profession in Ontario had to have a two-year diploma in nursing. To work in the occupation, they must also pass the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Exam (CPNRE) and be registered with the College of Nurses of Ontario.

Skills/Qualities

Technical

- Basic computer skills: word processing, internet, email, presentation programs, spreadsheet manipulation and database knowledge
- Specialized programs: (i.e, documentation, patient care planning, patient monitoring)
- Operate medical equipment

Communication

- Able to communicate clearly in oral and written language

Other

- Able to follow orders and work under supervision
- Sensitive and compassionate
- Sense of humour
- Teamwork, interpersonal skills
- Good judgment
- Able to maintain patient confidentiality
- Assessment and documentation skills
- Able to multi-task and prioritize
- Problem-solving skills
- Time-management and organizational skills
- Good physical condition is required for long periods of standing, walking, and some lifting

For more information on what is expected see Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities Practical Nursing Program Standard
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/college/progstan/health/nurse.html#learning>

Typical Employers

Source: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/openingdoors/occupations/regprnurse.htm#c>

- hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, home care services and doctors' offices
- Three industry sectors employ the majority of Registered Practical Nurses in Ontario: Hospitals employ 49%, Nursing and Residential Care facilities employ 32% and Ambulatory Health Care services employ 14%.

Average Salary

Source: www.labourmarketinformaton.ca

\$19.62 (average) \$25.03 (high) \$15.00 (low)

Salaries vary according to such factors such as experience, level of responsibility, seniority, size of company, size of city, etc.

4) Other Positions in the Field

Personal Support Worker (PSW)

- The purpose of the support is to assist persons with the tasks of daily living so that they may participate in their community. Services are provided in the community and in long-term care facilities. PSW's may be employed by individuals, community health care agencies, nursing homes, and homes for the aged, or other institutions providing long-term care. PSW courses are offered at several community and private colleges throughout Ontario. A certificate is provided by the training institution. In some cases a candidate without prior training, may be hired and receive on-the-job training, particularly in private settings.

- For more information on what is expected of PSWs see Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities Personal Support Worker Standard
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/college/progstan/health/supwork.html>

Orderly

- Orderlies assist nurses and hospital staff in the basic care of patients. They are employed in hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities.
- For a detailed breakdown of skills and complexity levels see the HRSD web site:
<http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/profiles/26.asp>

B) Labour Market Prospects

Registered Nurse

- *Source:* <http://www1.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ojf/ojf.jsp?lang=e§ion=Profile&noc=3152>
- Employment for this occupation is expected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through the year 2007. However, because of the large size of this occupational group, many more job openings will be created each year from the need to replace workers who retire or leave. As well, the recent upgrading of the registered nurse (RN) designation to the university level in Ontario, may reduce the number of individuals able to complete the required training. The Canadian Nurses Association predicts a shortage of 59,000-113,000 nurses nationally (excluding Quebec) by 2011.
Nurses' roles will change as new technology continues to be introduced at the bedside and as nurses are allowed to perform more advanced procedures. Restructuring of the health care system, including specialization and the shift from institutional to home care is also changing the skills and requirements for nurses. Nurses are encouraged to consider taking on additional training and qualifications, such as nurse practitioners. Nurse practitioners are registered nurses who have a masters degree. They provide basic primary health care that complements that provided by physicians, such as diagnosing and treating common acute illnesses and injuries and prescribing medicine.
- Tele-Health, a recent development in the delivery of healthcare, also provides new job opportunities for RNs provide 24-hour access to healthcare advice

Registered Practical Nurse

- *Source:* <http://www1.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ojf/ojf.jsp?lang=e§ion=Profile&noc=3233>
Employment will increase as the health care system shifts from institutional to home care for people with chronic illnesses and disabling conditions. As well, a substantial number of job openings will arise each year from the need to replace workers who retire.
The role of registered practical nurses will change as more technology is introduced at the bedside. The growing complexity of nursing care and limiting of hospitalization to critically ill patients will place additional educational demands on the workers employed in acute care.
- *Source:*
Sheethttp://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/careers/upload/file_collection/Healthcare_factsheets_2003.pdf
As the government seeks to restrain health delivery costs, health care service providers will increasingly rely on Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) to deliver nursing care in acute care, homecare and long-term care situations. The growing complexity of nursing care and limiting of hospitalization to critically ill patients will place additional educational demands on RPNs To enhance employability as an RPN, it is important to maintain up-to-date skills and knowledge of current practices to preserve professional standing. Today's RPNs must have more comprehensive training in geriatrics, medications, dementias and behavioural issues, as well as better assessment skills and documentation techniques

C) ITPs in the Field

- ITPs, who have wide direct patient care experience such as general practitioners, family physicians, internists, etc., are most prepared for a career as a Registered Nurse as they have the skills to provide direct patient care, consultative services, evaluate patients' physical and mental health, administer medications and treatments, advocate on behalf of patients, deliver health education programs, conduct disease screening and deliver immunization programs.
- In some countries, ITPs obtain a nursing degree as part of their process of becoming a physician. They practice as a nurse while continuing their studies in medical school. There are a few fast-track programs in the province that may be relevant to ITPs with this background. See the 'Care For Nurses' program www.care4nurses.org and 'New Options for Foreign Trained Nurses' <http://www.algonquincollege.com/foreign-trainednurseproject>
- For many ITPs there is a lack of challenge in the roles of Personal Support Worker and Orderly and as a result ITPs often do not find these jobs satisfying.

D) Links

Professional Organizations

- College of Nurses of Ontario www.cno.org
- Canadian Nurses Association www.cna-nurses.ca
- Ontario Nurses' Association www.ona.org
- Registered Nurses Association of Ontario www.rnao.org
- The Canadian Nursing Students' Association: www.cnsa.ca
- Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario www.npao.org
- Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario <http://www.rpnao.org/professional/professional.asp>

Related Web sites

- Canadian RN: www.canadianrn.com
- The Canadian Nursing Index: www.nursingindex.com
- Nurses at Work: www.nursesatwork.com