

## Where are Nurses Working? Employment Patterns by Sub-sector in Ontario, Canada

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### Abstract

**Objective:** As care shifts to home and community, have nursing jobs followed? We examined the absolute and relative size of the nursing workforce by sector/ sub-sectors in Ontario, Canada. **Methods:** All nurses registered with the Ontario College of Nurses over the eleven years from 1993 to 2003 were categorized as: Active, Eligible, or Not eligible. Active nurses were then categorized by sector (Hospital, Community, Other), and sub-sector. The analysis was repeated by age group and for RNs and RPNs. **Results:** The decline in Active and Eligible nurses was particularly pronounced for younger workers. Both the absolute number and proportion of nurses working in the hospital sub-sector has dropped. In the community sector, growth was evident in the use of nurses as case-managers (in the CCAC sub-sector), community agencies and community mental health (representing a shift from hospital-based workers). However, the steady growth in number and proportion of nurses working in home care agencies was reversed in 1999, with this sub-sector shedding 19% of its nurses by 2003. **Conclusion:** Despite considerable rhetoric to the contrary, nurses still tend to work within institutions (hospitals and long-term care facilities). However, compared to their numbers in 1993, there were fewer nurses providing direct patient care in Ontario at both the hospital and community sectors, and a higher proportion of older nurses.