



Aging at Home

Nursing Health Services Research Unit
(McMaster site) www.nhsru.com

In 2006, 50,577 (16%) of the 320,248 nurses in Canada were CHNs. There is little research about the CHN workforce and how it can contribute to improving health system capacity.

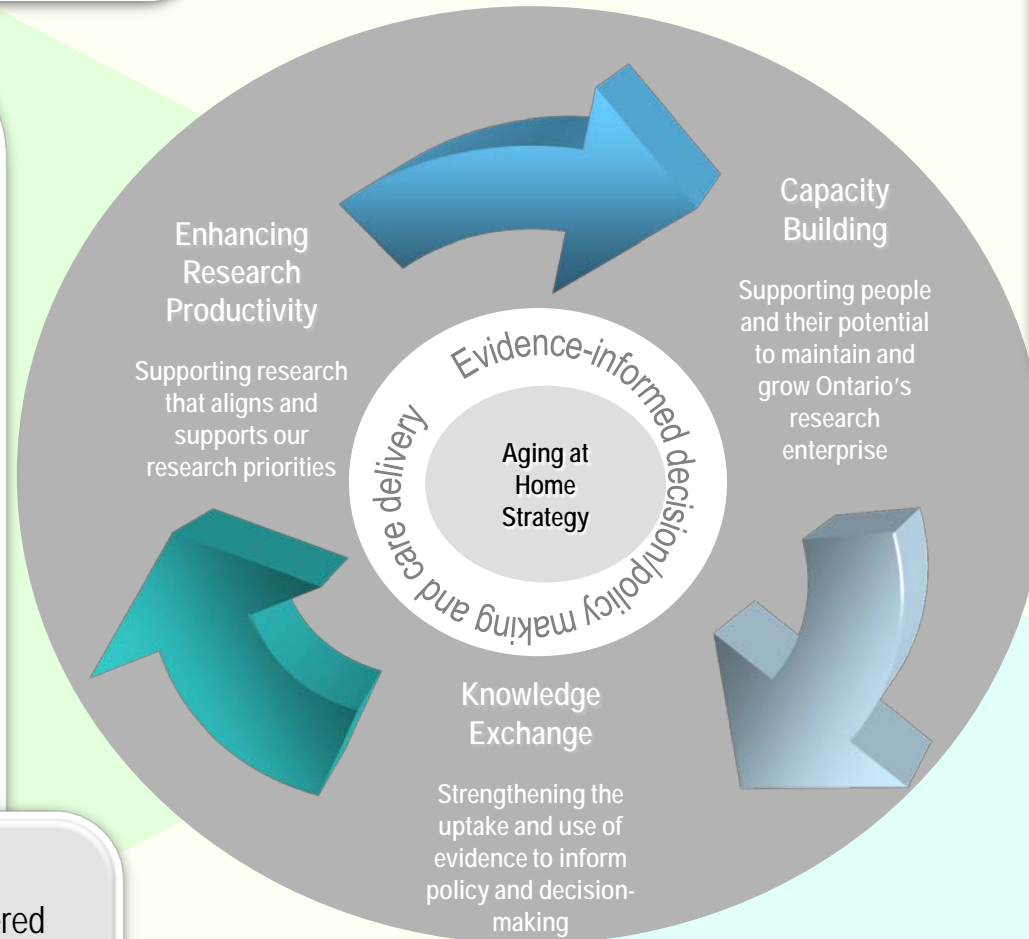
Aging at Home Strategy

- A study was conducted to investigate the workforce profile of community health nurses and public health nurses.
- Ontario's seniors' population is expected to double in the next 16 years. It is important that resources are available to assist those who wish to remain at home.
- Through this strategy, announced August 28, 2007, community living options for seniors will be expanded dramatically, with a wider range of home care and community support services available.
- More than \$700 million in funding over three years will be invested through the province's 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs).

Definitions

- Community Health Nurses (CHNs) include Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), known as Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) in Ontario.
- Public Health Nurse (PHN) – University prepared registered nurses in the sub set of community nursing assigned to public health programs.

Research Results Evidence based strategies to use CHNs and PHNs to their full potential will improve service outcomes: - enhanced team functioning, leadership skills and access to learning opportunities are required to sustain professional skill and confidence.



"Given the shift from hospital care to in-home and community care and the increased emphasis on public health renewal, it is essential that adequate numbers of skilled staff are available to meet community health care needs. When the nursing shortage escalates, Canada may not be able to meet the demand for Community Health Nurses (CHNs)."

Jane Underwood, Co-investigator, Nursing Health Services Research Unit (McMaster site)

Demographic Profile of CHNs

- RNs:
- ~28% >55 years compared to 22% all RNs
 - ~ 5% < 30 years compared to 10% all RNs
- LPNs
- : ~ 9.5% > 60 years compared to 10% all LPNs

Strategies for Policy:

- Federal and provincial health authorities need to address the Community workforce data gaps by:
- Establishing and testing alternative data sources to enumerate community and public health staff, using provincial databases derived from employer databases will improve community health planning .
- Federal and provincial health authorities could improve community nursing workforce capacity by:
- Developing collaborative recruitment and retention strategies amongst employers across Canada.
 - Providing leadership training with emphasis on effective teamwork to assure managers maximize CHN effectiveness
 - Providing access to evidence and continuing education for CHNs and managers

Study funded by Canadian Health Services Research Foundation; Public Health Agency for Canada; Health Canada (First Nations & Inuit Health Branch, Health Human Resources Strategy Division, and Office of Nursing Policy); British Columbia Ministry of Health (Nursing Directorate and Communicable Diseases & Addictions Prevention Branch); Nursing Health Services Research Unit (McMaster site) and Vancouver Coastal Health.