



Ontario government initiative increases full-time employment for new nurses

HAMILTON, ON (Sept. 19, 2008) - The Ontario government's initiative to provide full time work to new nursing graduates is a success, according to a report by researchers in McMaster University's Nursing Health Services Research Unit (NHSRU).

The report says the Ontario's Nursing Graduate Guarantee (NGG), an \$89 million initiative, is reversing a 20-year trend towards part-time and casual work.

The researchers found the proportion of registered nursing (RN) graduates with permanent full-time jobs increased from 2005 (42%) to 2007 (65%). At the same time, part-time work among these nurses decreased from 27% to 11%, and casual employment from 7% to 4%.

The McMaster researchers also discovered a similar trend among registered practical nurses (RPNs). Between 2005 and 2007, permanent full-time jobs for RPNs increased from 14% to 22%, while part-time work decreased from 39% to 19%, and casual from 19% to 14%.

The positive trend towards increased full-time jobs over the past three years suggests that the ministry's investment in creating full-time opportunities for new graduates is effective, the researchers say.

Lead author Andrea Baumann, director of the Nursing Health Services Research Unit (NHSRU), McMaster University site, said: "This government initiative reinforces that it is important to have a stable, reliable workforce in healthcare settings. Quality patient care is dependent on continuity. The information in this report allows for results-based workforce planning that is evidence-based across healthcare organizations in Ontario."

The overall response to the Nursing Graduate Guarantee was very positive and both new graduates and employers provided valuable feedback for future initiatives.

In February, 2007 the McGuinty government announced it was investing in a new Nursing Graduate Guarantee program that would guarantee new nursing graduates in Ontario full-time jobs in hospitals, long-term care, home care, mental health, public health and primary care. The NGG is the largest program of its kind in the world, ahead of initiatives underway on Vancouver Island, B.C, and in Victoria, Australia.

Under the NGG, the province pays for the first six months of employment while the employer is responsible for six weeks of funding, giving new graduates a window of seven-and-a-half months to transition into permanent full-time jobs while gaining full-time clinical experience.

The McMaster analysis of the effectiveness of Ontario's NGG is contained in an 80-page study: Employment of Nursing Graduates: Evaluation of a Provincial Policy Strategy.

As part of the evaluation, the HealthForceOntario NGG employment portal as well as the employment status of 2007 nursing graduates in Ontario were assessed through surveys, interviews and focus groups with nurses and employers in all healthcare sectors.

The research showed that 83 per cent of RN graduates and 33 per cent of RPN graduates found employment in acute care hospitals making the acute care sector the largest employer of graduates from the program. The remaining RNs worked in public health (4 per cent), complex continuing care/rehabilitation (3 per cent) or with various other employers. Few worked in long-term care. By comparison, the remaining RPNs worked in long-term care (33 per cent), followed by continuing complex care/rehabilitation hospitals (13 per cent), community organizations (10 per cent) or addiction and mental health centres (5 per cent).

The five main areas of practice for RNs were medicine (18 per cent), surgery (17 per cent), emergency (11 per cent), maternal/newborn (9 per cent) and pediatrics (9 per cent). The five main areas for RPNs were geriatrics (30 per cent), complex continuing care (13 per cent), medicine (11 per cent), surgery (9 per cent) and mental health/psychiatric/addiction (8 per cent).

Included among the researcher's 12 recommendations for enhancing job prospects for newly graduated nurses are:

- . Retain an employment initiative for new graduates.
- . Focus on specific employment initiatives for RPNs
- . Create strategies for full-time employment in long-term care and rural areas
- . Identify the employment barriers to full-time work

-30-

Note to television producers: McMaster University is equipped with a television studio and can facilitate live or pre-taped interviews.

Dr. Baumann is available for interviews.

To arrange an interview, and a copy of the report, please contact:

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