

# Nursing Health Services Research Unit

a collaborative project of  
The University of Toronto  
Lawrence Bloomberg  
Faculty of Nursing and  
McMaster University  
School of Nursing

Our mission is to develop,  
conduct and disseminate  
research that focuses on:

- design
- management
- utilization
- outcomes
- provision  
...of nursing.

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## LATE CAREER NURSE FUNDING INITIATIVE. PHASE 2: IMPACT EVALUATION Fact Sheet III of IV. Outcomes

This fact sheet (III of IV) is part of a series which presents selected content from 2 reports produced for the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) entitled, *Stretching to Success: Results of the Phase 1 Process Evaluation and Results of the Phase 2 Impact Evaluation*. The full reports are available on line at [www.nhsru.com](http://www.nhsru.com).

The above reports highlight feedback and the results of a process evaluation (Time 1) and an impact evaluation (Time 2) of the *Late Career Nurse Funding Initiative (LCNI)* which were conducted between March 2005 and March 2007.

### ***OUTCOMES OF THE PROCESS EVALUATIONS (TIME 1)***

The outcomes of the process evaluation (Time 1) indicated that the LCNI was successful and had a positive impact on individual nurses' quality of work life, on patients and their families and on organizations. One of the recommendations from the process evaluation was to continue funding the LCNI and to conduct additional research (Time 2) to evaluate the extent of the impact of the LCNI on the both individual nurses and their organizations.

### ***IMPACT OF THE LATE CAREER NURSE INITIATIVE (TIME 2)***

The impact evaluation (Time 2) was conducted between February and December 2006 in acute care and long term care facilities across Ontario. The findings provided evidence about the impact of the LCNI on the participating nurses and their respective organizations. The research design for the impact evaluation included:

1. Questionnaire (survey) distribution to participating nurses before and after the 2<sup>nd</sup> funding LCNI opportunity
2. Questionnaire (survey, same as above) to non-participating late career nurses before and after the second LCNI funding opportunity
3. Focus groups and key informant interviews in 12 organizations using a structured interview tool

A total of 54 organizations participated in Time 2; 26 (48%) were hospitals and 28 (52%) were long-term care facilities throughout Ontario.

### ***Impact on Nurse Participants***

Nurse participants documented numerous ways in which the LCNI had made a positive difference. These included:

- Decreased physical workload
- Improved job satisfaction and quality of worklife
- Empowerment as a result of new knowledge or recognition for their expertise
- Additional time to spend with patients
- Delayed retirement plans if LCNI continued

As part of the survey nurses were asked if there was anything they wanted to share about their experience; 104 respondents provided written comments, some based on their nursing experience in general and some based on their experience during the LCNI. Comments specific to the LCNI included:

- “For the first time in my career, I can spend more time with residents and their families. I have time to problem solve and follow through on resident care issues” (LTC participant)
- “I feel like I made a difference. I feel valued and appreciated”
- “To do something for this group is a step in the right direction. However, I feel a more concrete effort needs to be done to make a difference. For example, to reduce the hours to qualify for FT employment so that this aging group would qualify for health/insurance benefits which is most important at this time, and is only enjoyed by the full time staff. To exclude night shift from this age-group” (a hospital nurse)

#### **Impact on Nurse Non-Participants**

The impact on nurse non-participants ranged from having no interest to considering participating in the next LCNI if offered at their organization. Some non-participants indicated they were not aware of the LCNI and others stated they would rather stay in their “comfort zone” of providing patient care rather than do “paper work”. Examples of their comments included:

- “I was planning to retire in 2006 at 62 years of age. To participate in the program would not affect my hospital or any other RN wishing to participate.”
- “The benefit of the program is not significant enough to influence my career plans.”
- “I must work until 65 (financial reasons) and I know I must take care of my mental and physical health to do so.”

#### **Impact on Organizations**

The LCNI had multiple impacts at various levels within organizations and these were categorized under three main headings as seen in the chart below:

<b>Development of Tangible Tools &amp; Projects</b>	<b>Staff/Scheduling Challenges</b>	<b>Impact on other Employees</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit &amp; quality assurance tools (e.g., medication audits to prevent medication errors)</li> <li>• Staff and patient education programs</li> <li>• New patient care protocols, standards &amp; policies</li> <li>• Resources for palliative care &amp; improved skin care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges to backfill for the nurses participating in the LCNI</li> <li>• When replacements could not be found, LCNI were often required to return to direct patient care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior nurses had opportunities to mentor junior nurses &amp; new grads</li> <li>• Junior staff backfilled for LCNI gaining increased skills and confidence</li> <li>• Improved communication between health care team members</li> <li>• Improved working relationships between pharmacy and nursing staff related to medication safety</li> <li>• Manager workload increased to assist nurses with LCNI projects</li> </ul>

#### **Barriers to Implementation of the LCNI**

Specific barriers associated with implementing the LCNI within organizations included:

- Fewer staff available to replace the LCNI participants for their “late career” days during the summer months
- Short timelines for proposal submission to the Ministry & use of funding
- Support to the LCNI participants from managers was sometimes a challenge due to time constraints

For further information see the other fact sheets in this series or refer to the full report available on the NHSRU website [www.nhsru.com](http://www.nhsru.com).