

This Evidence Note is for the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer, Debra Bournes, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration & the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities. It highlights Workforce Integration of Internationally Educated Nurses (ENs). Published reports are available at [www.nhsru.com](http://www.nhsru.com).

## Workforce Integration

The nursing workforce in Ontario is expected to reduce over the next decade, negatively impacting the healthcare system. An aging workforce combined with a more senior population could mean there will be more patients in Ontario and a smaller number of nurses to care for them.

Employing Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) will ensure [Excellent Care for All](#) by implementing quality improvement plans so a diverse integrated workforce can respond to varied patient needs.

## Key Messages

- Ontario is the leading employer of IENs in Canada. It is vital that these nurses are given early orientation to the Ontario health care system to enable them to enter the workforce without delay. If nurses delay their return to practice, they lose competence and confidence. They may never return to nursing.
- The creation, implementation and evaluation of a best practice guide will help employers integrate IENs effectively into the health care workforce. A Think Tank with key decision makers is scheduled for September 2011 to finalize this guide. *(This project funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), represents collaborations between the NHSRU and the Ontario Hospital Association)*
- A research team representing Hamilton Health Sciences, community partners and the NHSRU are collaborating to develop a program to promote the integration of IENs into the healthcare workforce. *(Funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), the program is being evaluated by the NHSRU)*
- *(A collaboration of the NHSRU and the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) identified key characteristics of a good bridging program. They include faculty who have dedicated time to provide IENs with a supportive environment and flexible programs to serve the diverse needs of IENs.*

## Background

Andrea Baumann and her research team at the NHSRU McMaster site are working on four projects focusing on the workforce integration of Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs). These projects aim to facilitate the entry of IENs into the health care workforce by compiling an inventory of bridging programs, implementing a practice guide for employers and finding ways to strengthen IENs communication and clinical skills.

## Recommendations:

- Further investment by the MOHLTC, MCI, and Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) will ensure workforce integration for Internationally Educated Nurses. Strategies would include greater support for new IEN migrants:
  - IENs will gain familiarity with Canadian nursing culture and preserve their competencies more rapidly if they are exposed to the healthcare system as early as possible.
  - While preparing for or awaiting registration, IENs should be given financial support to receive workplace orientation.
  - Examination eligible IENS should apply for a temporary licence.
  - Strategies for nurses who are not eligible to take the Canadian Registered Nurse Exam (CRNE) can:
    - take bridging programs
    - take the CRPNE examination to become a registered practical nurse
    - take a course to become a Personal Support Worker
- Invest in Universities and Colleges to support
  - Faculty who have expertise and committed time to IENs
  - Educational courses and programs targeted to IENs
- Provide funds for the continued implementation and evaluation of a best practice guide for employers of IENs to ensure quality workforce integration.

## Adapted from:

1) *A Framework for Integrating Internationally Educated Nurses into the Health Care Workforce*, (Poster) Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo. 2) *It Takes a Village: Harnessing the Power of Community Collaboration and In-house Volunteers to Bolster Immigrant Nurse Recruitment and Retention*, presented at Nursing Leadership Network. 3) *Educational Bridging Programs In Canada: Identifying The Characteristics Of Bridging Programs For Internationally Educated Nurses*, for the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN). 4) *Perceptions on Workforce Integration and the Experience of Internationally Educated Nurses from the Philippines: A Pilot Study in Ontario, Canada*.

**Contact:** Andrea Baumann, NHSRU Scientific Director (McMaster Site), (905) 525-9140, x22581  
[baumanna@mcmaster.ca](mailto:baumanna@mcmaster.ca)



This research evidence about nursing health services has been generously funded by a grant from the Government of Ontario. The views expressed are the views of the NHSRU and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Ontario