

BACKGROUNDER for Essex Chapter Resolution on Nursing Student Internship Program

The background for this resolution is based on addressing the policy priorities (RNAO Vibrant Communities), 1. Improving access to nursing services, 2. Building a Nursing Career in Ontario.

To address these policy priorities a viable solution is needed. A Nursing Student Internship Program (NSIP) could prove to be the answer.

The pending nurse shortage is expected to escalate in 2012. The nursing workforce is aging, (average age is 46.3 years/2009). These same nurses will be eligible for retirement during the crisis of the most significant nursing shortage in Ontario's history. College of Nurses of Ontario (2009). Membership Statistics Report. Retrieved December 3, 2010 from http://www.cno.org/Global/docs/general/43069_stats/43069_MemberStats2009.pdf

Between 2004-2008 improvements have been made to the full time RN employment status, we are on our way to meeting the 70% McGinty Government full time employment promise. Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, Backgrounder of Ontario RNs in 2009. (2010). Retrieved December 3, 2010 from http://www.rnao.org/Storage/65/6007_RN_Backgrounder_2009.pdf

Current nursing educational programs can not secure the quantity of clinical placements needed for training, and/or are limited to facilities that cannot provide the quality of experiences our nursing students require. Student nurses require additional clinical experience.

Recent changes in nurse-patient ratios, layoffs and disputes over nurse wage freezes have further insulted nursing morale. A NSIP will have the profound effect to boost the morale of the current nurse workforce.

Some benefits of the role of the Nursing Student Internship Program for the student would include:

- An opportunity to work in a clinical setting in which learning would be a viable outcome to subsidize the limited resources of clinical placements that nursing educational programs are currently experiencing.
- Produce a strong, confident graduate with real work experience
- Integration into the workplace, building work ethics such as teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving.
- Opportunities to build strong nursing and interprofessional relationships
- Firsthand experience and an understanding of the Ontario healthcare system

Some benefits of the role of Nursing Student Internship Program for the nursing profession include:

- Improve patient satisfaction by allowing nurses more time for value added/direct care opportunities
- Improved nurse morale through having additional team members to perform nursing tasks
- Minimize the loss of 3-9% of RNs who did not renew with the CNO the year following their initial registration. College of Nurses of Ontario (2009). Membership Statistic Report. Retrieved December 3, 2010, http://www.cno.org/Global/docs/general/43069_stats/43069_MemberStats2009.pdf
- Allows the employer the opportunity to assess the suitability of the student for future employment
- Reduced cost of training/orientation if student is later hired

Where as: Student nurses working in the Nursing Student Internship Program would receive quality, practical experience at reasonable wages and subsidize the void in the Ontario nursing workforce.

Therefore be it resolved that the RNAO lobby the Provincial Government to create the role of Nursing Student Internship Program in Ontario to operate within clear, distinct guidelines within our healthcare organizations to help address issues of: nursing shortages, aging workforce, low morale/work life imbalances, lack of quantity/quality clinical placements, retain suitable nursing candidates in the profession and build strong, confident graduates to protect the health of Ontarians.