

# Nursing Education

## What does it takes to become an RN or RPN?

### Registered Nurses (RNs)

Nursing is a career that offers challenges and the independence to make decisions. Nursing involves caring for the whole person - the physical, intellectual and social needs. Nurses also plan and deliver health programs for groups or communities.

Nurses are the heart of care. As a registered nurse, you can make a difference in one person's life through one-on-one, and in the health of all Canadians through research and leadership.

If you're thinking about a career in nursing, you should seriously consider studying for a degree (BN or BNSc). More career opportunities and the possibility of graduate study will be open to nurses with university degrees. Most provinces already require a baccalaureate in nursing (BN or BScN) to enter the profession.

To become a Registered Nurse, you must enrol in a baccalaureate (bachelor) degree in nursing. Locally, the four-year program is available at the University of Windsor and St. Clair College. There are 3,932 RNs in Windsor-Essex County.

Degree programs take four years. Besides learning social and physical sciences, and nursing, as in the diploma program, university programs generally offer additional studies in leadership, health teaching, research and other disciplines.

If you are interested in continuing your education, master's and doctoral programs in nursing are available in many places in Canada. Entrance requirements differ from one school to another. Generally, the admission requirements are high school graduation with senior level English or French, mathematics, chemistry, physics and biology. You can contact your provincial nurses' association or individual schools for their specific requirements

and information on funding.

This is an excellent time to enter nursing because there is a shortage of them. At some point in their life, every Canadian will require the services of a nurse. Since many nurses will soon retire, Canada needs bright young men and women to choose nursing as a career. Changes in the health care system continue to broaden the opportunities for nurses. An especially important trend is the increasing number of services that emphasize illness prevention and health promotion programs. Many of these are planned and staffed by registered nurses.

Registered nurses earn salaries that compare with other professionals with a similar amount of education. Health care is offered 24 hours a day, so expect to work some nights and weekends, like doctors, law enforcement officers and others who provide essential services.

Nursing is full of opportunities to grow, to advance and to change your career direction. Whatever your interest – working with children, scientific procedures and high tech equipment, teaching and promoting healthy practices, developing your management skills – nursing has something for you.

One of the most exciting opportunities for nurses in Canada is Northern nursing. Often, community health centres in Canada's North are run completely by the nurse – independent and in charge. Many Aboriginal nurses return home to help their communities, other nurses find they enjoy learning about a different culture.

The great thing about nursing is that your choices never end. With some years of experience and further studies you could branch out in almost any direction imaginable.

A nurse administrator coordinates nursing services in a hospital or community health centre. Handling large budgets,

supervising staff and setting the standards for excellent care takes strength and good management skills.

### Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs)

Registered Practical Nurses play an essential role in all sectors of health care and are employed in a vast array of career paths. Statistics indicate that there is a growing need for nurses, which means a growing opportunity for employment.

In Windsor, RPNs are educated in a three-year program at St. Clair College. After graduation, RPNs write a national certification examination. Once the RPN successfully completes this exam, they are registered as practical nurses by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO).

RPNs must renew their CNO membership annually, maintaining up-to-date skills and knowledge of current practices, to preserve their professional standing. RPNs are regulated by the CNO through the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1993, and the Nursing Act, 1991 as amended. There are 942 RPNs registered with the College of Nurses of Ontario in Windsor-Essex and 764 RPNs are currently employed in nursing here.

RPNAO, with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) offers a Career Development Centre. The Centre's development is in response to recommendations regarding recruitment and retention from the provincial Nursing Task Force.

Nursing is a career choice for those who are looking for diversity and challenges. It is also an opportunity for those who want to give back to society in a caring and educated way. The opportunities are limited only to the imagination and the passion of the individual.

For those who choose the road less trav-



Sheila McCabe – well know instructor, she has impacted many students lives over the years

eled post-graduate continuing education is key to achieving one's professional goals. Working in research, for instance, will require knowledge of how to collect data, how to pull out the statistical information and how to disseminate the data for utilization. Those who choose the mainstream of nursing must become experts in their particular field. Since nursing science and the essence of caring are so closely intermingled, it is critically important that the provider of care can acknowledge and critically apply these qualities to practice.

RPNs work in a variety of settings inclusive of but not limited to the operating room, long-term care, and specialty areas such as emergency, pediatrics and community settings. The Practical Nurses work with individual clients, provide education to groups in addition to provide support to family members.

Typically, RPNs are attracted to positions where they can work with people through the healing process and provide hands on nursing care.



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