

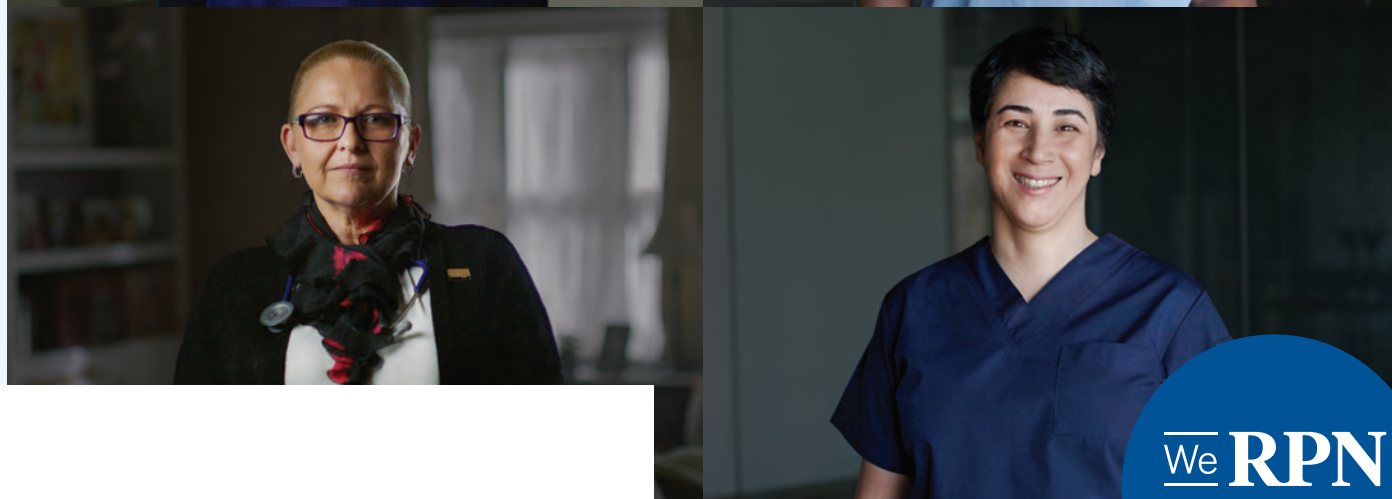
We are

Spring 2020

# Practical Nursing



Year  
of the  
Nurse  
—  
2020



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SPRING 2020

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# 16

**Yes!**  
**We are nurses**



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# Nursing Education Grants

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# A new decade brings new challenges for nurses



When the clock struck twelve on January 1st, 2020, I was looking forward to kicking off a new year and a new decade. I was extremely proud of the progress we'd made over the past number of years to raise the profile and showcase the important contributions RPNs make to our health system.

Our association had just marked an important milestone with the evolution of our identity from RPNAO to WeRPN, reflecting our renewed commitment to professionalism and collaboration. And the World Health Organization had designated 2020 as the "Year of the Nurse and the Midwife"—a special recognition to celebrate the widespread impact that nurses and midwives have on the lives of those in their care.

Fast forward a few months, and now we're faced with a world that has changed in ways I'm sure none of us could have imagined. Leaders across the globe are struggling to contain the impact of COVID-19, restricting movements, and putting in place emergency measures to shutter large parts of society in an effort to flatten the curve and protect the health and safety of the public. It's a world we haven't seen before — an unpredictable and frankly scary time for everyone, but especially for nurses and other health care providers.

Back in 2003, I was a frontline nurse during SARS, so I understand the professional challenges that nurses across the province are facing in delivering care under these conditions. I also understand the personal toll that it takes on you when you're faced with constant worry about your patients' wellbeing, as well as your and your family's safety.

During SARS, healthcare workers literally put themselves between the public and the outbreak. For some nurses the sacrifice was terrible. Many became sick, infected their families and two of our precious Ontario nurses died. I don't think it would be overstating things to say that this province was saved by the sacrifices of those nurses and their families. And once again we see the unwavering courage of nurses as they step up to protect Ontarians as best they can during COVID-19.

In times like this, we need to support one another. I want all the nurses who are out there at the bedside delivering care in this critical time to know that we're on your side. As your professional association, our job is to advocate on your behalf and make sure you have the support and resources you need to deliver care safely and effectively. We have been doing that and will continue to do more to make sure your concerns are heard by key decision makers. I imagine we will have a long road ahead before we return to any sense of normalcy, and RPNs can depend on us to be there with them throughout the journey. We are making it a priority to keep our members informed with daily updates. If you're not already receiving our daily communications, be sure to sign up.

While they couldn't have predicted it, as it turns out, the World Health Organization timed the Year of the Nurse designation quite well. Now into the future, when we think back to 2020, we'll certainly remember the thousands of nurses in Ontario and millions across the globe who helped to keep us safe.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Dianne Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

**Dianne Martin, RPN**  
CEO, WeRPN

# It's time to celebrate our nurses



We all know that nurses are the backbone of our health system. Whether they work in the community, long-term care, hospital or other settings. Every day nurses are impacting the lives of patients, clients and residents across Ontario. And this year, that impact is going to be put front and centre on the international stage.

**T**he World Health Organization, in partnership with the International Congress of Nurses, has declared 2020 the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. This year-long recognition is intended to “celebrate the work of nurses and midwives, highlight the challenging conditions they often face and advocate for increased investments in the nursing and midwifery workforce.” Right now, nursing shortages are putting the health of populations across the world at risk and, with this renewed focus, the hope is to generate new attention on the need to support our nurses. WHO estimates to achieve the goal of universal health by 2030, we need to add 9 million more nurses and midwives.

In Canada, we know we're not immune from many of the challenges faced on the international stage. While we're lucky to have a stable supply of RPNs, we're expecting to see a shortage of our RN colleagues on the horizon. At the same time, we're facing issues retaining our nurses because of the increasing demands and pressures they're facing on the job. In my hometown of Windsor, I'm hearing from colleagues facing growing stress trying to deliver the kind of care they want to their patients.

But, while we want to shed light on the realities facing our profession, this year also gives us a chance to celebrate the many achievements we've made together. Throughout my 40-year career, I've been amazed to see how the role of the RPN has changed so dramatically. Starting my career as a nursing assistant, we fought long and hard to be recognized as nurses.

We've seen our education grow, and our scope of practice evolve in response. And more and more, we've witnessed RPNs take on new and exciting leadership roles. Throughout it all, we've continued to champion our greatest passion, which is supporting and caring for our patients, residents and clients and advocacy for positive change in health care.

I'm looking forward to spending 2020, celebrating the fantastic work we do as nurses and making sure all my nurse colleagues and friends know how much they mean to me. How will you be celebrating this year?

Across Ontario and Canada, nursing organizations will be showcasing our profession, and I encourage you to take part. Here are just a few ways you can join in the celebrations:

- Visit **WeRPN.com** to learn more about the Year of the Nurse and how we're honouring nurses.
- Encourage your employer to plan an event or activity to celebrate all categories of nurse in your workplace.
- Grow your nursing knowledge by attending an educational event or participating in a continuing education course
- Think about mentorship! Whether you're a new nurse or just looking for a change, accessing a mentor can help you reach your goals. Or, if you're an experienced nurse, consider how you can share your wisdom and experience with a colleague.
- Push yourself out of your comfort zone. Have you been thinking about changing roles, joining a committee or seeking out a new leadership opportunity? Make 2020 the year you realize your goals.

Whatever you do, make sure you take a moment to recognize how important the work you do is and the tremendous impact it has on the lives of so many.

Thank you and Happy Year of the Nurse!

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Linda Keirl".

**Linda Keirl, RPN**  
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# Intraprofessional collaboration is the new teamwork

The term collaboration is used everywhere. Across Canada, governments are transforming health care organizations, and these changes are requiring us to work collaboratively with new teams and organizations. Within organizations, increasing patient complexity, resource constraints and human resource shortages are driving discussions about new ways of working that leverage the contributions of all nurses in achieving safe, high-quality care.

We've reached a point where intraprofessional collaboration is no longer an option but essential to the future of nursing in Canada.

**E**xtensive research shows the positive impacts of collaboration and teamwork on patient, staff and organizational outcomes. A 2018 study by Grubaugh and Flynn<sup>1</sup> states that willingness to assist team members, known as team backup, has been identified as a core indicator of effective teamwork and is associated with reductions of adverse events. The study also notes that threats to teamwork occur when conflict in the workplace is ineffectively managed. These findings support the importance of the nurse leader's ability to manage conflicts and highlight the importance of conflict management as a leadership competency. In a 2015 study, Ma et al.<sup>2</sup> found that nurses reported lower intent to leave, higher job satisfaction, and better quality of care in units with better collaboration and stronger nursing leadership. They concluded that creating a care environment with strong collaboration among care providers and nursing leadership can help hospitals maintain a competitive nursing workforce supporting a high quality of care.

The Institute for Health Care Improvement (IHI) identifies camaraderie and teamwork as a component of achieving Joy in Work.<sup>3</sup> For staff to be engaged, they must feel that they are a part of a team, working together towards something meaningful. They must have people at work they can turn to for advice who care about them. They must work in teams where appreciation for each other's work is regularly expressed.

While there are many examples of exemplary collaboration or teamwork in nursing, it is inconsistent, and communication issues continue to be the root cause of many patient safety incidents. Public expectations, new technologies, new staff types, rapid patient turnover and human resource shortages all create stress, which paradoxically limits our ability to collaborate when we need it most.

Dougherty and Larson<sup>4</sup> describe the collaboration between nurses as “an interpersonal relationship between and among colleagues defined by the commonality of a goal recognized by each party, shared authority, power, and decision making, based on knowledge and expertise.” D'Amour and Oandasan<sup>5</sup> identify that knowledge, skill and attitude are essential competencies in interprofessional collaboration. These competencies are equally relevant to intraprofessional (nurse to nurse) collaboration.

**Knowledge:** In order to collaborate, we must understand our own and other's roles — we cannot work effectively with others without role clarity. This is especially relevant to Ontario nurses with our overlapping scopes of practice. Although the legislation governing the scope of practice has been in place for many years, a WeRPN report<sup>6</sup> identified that many misconceptions exist with respect to RPN scope of practice, contributing to role confusion, conflict and inappropriate utilization. These misconceptions continue to be evident in many practice settings today.

**Skill:** To work collaboratively, we must be able to communicate, negotiate and manage different perspectives. We need to be able to establish and maintain trusting relationships with a diverse group of colleagues. We must be able to interpret the scope of practice and provide feedback when it impacts staffing decisions. Yet giving feedback is not easy. Authors Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen<sup>7</sup> say that when they ask people to name their most challenging conversations, feedback always comes up. They state that “When we give feedback, we notice that the receiver isn't good at receiving it. And when we receive feedback, we notice that the giver isn't good at giving it.”

**Attitudes:** Neither knowledge nor skill is sufficient. Real intraprofessional collaboration requires us to move beyond turf wars, generational differences and ‘us versus them’ attitudes to the belief that there is more than enough work for all of us and that each role and individual brings value to the practice setting. Appreciation and respect are not finite goods, to be doled out only occasionally for fear of having less for ourselves. We are truly stronger together!



Knowledge, skill and attitude are critical precursors to collaboration but must be combined with action. Here are some practical strategies to foster intraprofessional collaboration within nursing:

#### For Individuals

- Be a role model and demonstrate through your actions that you value collaboration. Offer to help your colleagues when you can — even those who do not routinely assist you. Do your part to demonstrate intraprofessional collaboration to nursing students so that they, in turn, recognize its value in the practice setting.
- As human beings, we tend to support those we know and like — so take time to develop relationships with your colleagues. Attend huddles and staff meetings. Volunteer for working groups and committees where you can work with others you may not interact with regularly. Attend work-related social gatherings.
- Practice giving and receiving feedback with a trusted colleague. Your goal should always be to try and ensure your message is heard and gets across positively and constructively.

#### For Leaders

- Support all nurses to work to their full scope of practice. Review job descriptions and policies to ensure that they are current and reflect regulatory standards and expectations. Ask for input from staff.
- Incorporate scope of practice discussions and role clarity into recruitment practices, role expectations, orientation, assignment decisions and performance discussions.
- Make space at huddles and staff meetings for meaningful discussions and stories that involve teamwork. Did the

charge nurse do a great job in realigning assignments yesterday? Did a nurse go out of his way to support a colleague? Acknowledge them!

- Incorporate programs and approaches that provide teams with opportunities to collaborate and communicate. Examples include leadership development, patient safety and performance improvement programs. The TeamSTEPPS (Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety) program has been identified as a standard for team training in healthcare.<sup>8</sup>

We've reached a point where intraprofessional collaboration is no longer an option but essential to the future of nursing in Canada. It is a key requirement for safe, high quality care and healthy work environments. Let's commit to making 2020 'The Year of the Nurse,' our year to do better. Our patients, our colleagues and our organizations require it.

<sup>1</sup> Grubaugh, M.L. & Flynn, L. (2018) Relationships Among Nurse Manager Leadership Skills, Conflict Management, and Unit Teamwork. JONA Volume 48, Number 7/8, pp 383-388.

<sup>2</sup> Ma, C., Shang, J., Bott, M.J. (2015) Inter- and intra-disciplinary collaboration and patient safety outcomes in U.S. acute care hospital units. JONA Volume 45, Number 9, pp 435-442.

<sup>3</sup> IHI Framework for Improving Joy in Work. (2017). Retrieved January 27, 2020 from <http://www.ihl.org/Topics/Joy-In-Work/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Dougherty, M.B. & Larson, E. L. (2010). The Nurse-Nurse Collaboration Scale. JONA Volume 40, Number 1, pp 17-25.

<sup>5</sup> D'Amour, D., and I. Oandasan. (2004). IECPCP framework. In Interdisciplinary Education for Collaborative, Patient Centred Practice: Research and Findings Report. Health Canada.

<sup>6</sup> Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (2014). It's All About Synergies. Understanding the Role of the Registered Practical Nurse in Ontario's Health Care System.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen. Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well. Viking Press. 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Clancy CM, Tornber DN. TeamSTEPPS: assuring optimal teamwork in clinical settings. Am J Med Qual. 2007; 22(3): 214-217



# My journey in healthcare

by G. Randall



If you travel along the road of being a health care provider, you will probably come across a variety of personalities and cultures each adding to your personal growth. I entered the world of nursing as a novice and still continue to grow each day in my chosen field of practice. I was not aware of the toll it took on you personally, but that I guess that is how you gain experience and learn while you navigate the wide field of nursing.

I cannot say it was a pleasant or not rigorous journey, but along the way, it enabled me to map out the path I chose to take. When I graduated from nursing school over 6 years ago I was not aware of the culture of nursing and the harsh reality of how nurses sometimes treat each other as they now enter that world of healthcare. I still love the interaction of nurses and patients as patients give feedback wanted and/or unwanted according to how you choose to accept their advice. I often asked myself, do I fit into this culture of pain, death, and healing to which I often reply “**Yes**.” I chose this profession not because of the following: glamour, tired feet, accolades, pay package, verbal or physical attacks by disoriented patients, awards, friendships, long hours, sleepless nights, dark circles under my eyes, hectic work environment, lost family time and not being appreciated for work you did well but for the connection with various individuals, a smile, a warm embrace from family who lost a loved one, a touch of assurance to my patient’s that you are there and I see you not as a number, but as an individual.

There is a motif of emotions that goes with being a Registered Practical Nurse and the selfless reward that I make a difference each day. I cannot say that I have no regrets in being a nurse, but each day I focus on what I have accomplished and will continue to do in my journey. I look forward to guiding young novice nurses as I once was and giving them all the necessary guidance. Being a placement student on the job training is overwhelming, but through it all, I survived. It may seem a bit extreme but I know as a young RPN student it was a challenge learning on the job and being judged by your peers. The kaleidoscope of emotions as nurse is ever-present, but being an RPN is truly rewarding. I experience an embrace how technology continues to become the focal point in changing nursing healthcare in today’s world. I look forward to seeing you on that road.

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New Helpline  
**supports**  
Ontario  
Caregivers

Family Caregivers can now easily access information about supports and services in their community by calling the new Ontario Caregiver Helpline.





The Ontario Caregiver Helpline

1-833-416-2273

In Ontario, there are 3.3 million caregivers; family members, partners, friends and neighbours who provide physical or emotional support to someone in need. They are all ages, some as young as 15, and their contribution to the health care system is significant. Family caregivers are enabling people to remain in their homes, providing the personal, emotional and often medical care needed, regardless of whether they know how or feel confident in their ability to do so. With caregivers investing 11 – 30 hours a week, their contribution based on minimum wage is a minimum of \$26B.

The 2019 *Spotlight Report*, released by The Ontario Caregiver Organization (OCO) and The Change Foundation, shines a light on the needs of unpaid caregivers. The survey uncovers how caregiving impacts the lives of both the caregiver and the care receiver, how caregivers feel about their role, and what additional supports or information they need.

Most caregivers say they are honoured to provide care, but they are tired and overwhelmed. More than half find the overall management of caregiving to be stressful, particularly coordinating services, meeting physical and emotional needs, balancing with other responsibilities and managing emotions. Thirty-seven percent of Ontario's caregivers say the role has had a negative effect on their mental health. This number increases to 57% for those caregivers who support someone with a mental health challenge.

In addition to the emotional impacts, there are financial hardships associated with caregiving. Three in four caregivers say they have taken time off work to manage their caregiving responsibilities, and one in four caregivers say their relationship with their employer has been negatively affected. Many feel it has hindered their career growth, and some have even lost their job.

The *Spotlight Report* reveals the reality that caregivers are struggling to cope. Unless we look at new and innovative ways to support family caregivers, they are at risk of becoming patients themselves.

The Ontario Caregiver Organization has a role to play in health system transformation. Its focus is solely on caregivers, and unlike other organizations, OCO is here to support all caregivers, regardless of age, diagnosis or geographical location.

Recently, OCO launched the Ontario Caregiver Helpline — a single point of access where caregivers can speak to a community resource specialist to identify local supports and services for both the patient and the caregiver. For example, caregiver support groups or information related to caregiver tax credits. This was a direct response to what caregivers identified, with 77% saying they want one place to call for information and support.

As the Helpline continues to evolve, OCO is also working on other programs and services that are still needed. OCO's mandate is to not duplicate anything that is already available but rather to amplify and support the growth and sustainability of the many great programs that already exist. Where there are gaps, OCO will work with caregivers to co-create innovative solutions. Currently, OCO is working on a caregiver peer support program and a new workplace program that will support employers and caregivers in the workforce.

We know caregivers often look to nurses as a trusted source of information, including what supports are available in the community. Now, nurses can provide caregivers with one phone number and website where they can access the information they need. The community resource specialists who answer the phone are certified through the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems and have experience in either health care or social services. They are also trained to understand the complexities of caregiving. Community resource specialists will offer caregivers an additional follow up call to confirm they were able to access the support they need.

The Ontario Caregiver Helpline is available 24/7 at 1-833-416-2273, or live chat Monday through Friday from 7:00 am – 9:00 pm at [ontariocaregiver.ca](http://ontariocaregiver.ca). For more information about the Helpline, the *Spotlight Report* and other programs and services, visit [ontariocaregiver.ca](http://ontariocaregiver.ca).

# Dispatches from Queen's Park

by Tiff Blair



Between the response to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and the government's ambitious health transformation plans, we've seen a lot of activity from Queen's Park over the last few months. As always, we strive to keep our members informed about a number of updates that have emerged and keep you up to date on how we are continuing to advocate on your behalf to our health leaders and decision makers.

## Launching Ontario Health Teams

Last year, the government announced plans to overhaul Ontario's health system in an effort to bring about more integrated, patient centered care. This strategy involved the creation of a new health super agency — Ontario Health — which would oversee the government's transformation agenda.

Over the fall, we saw the government move one step closer to the implementation of that strategy by announcing the first cohort of 24 Ontario Health Teams — each of which will be rolling out the government's new model of organizing and delivering health care across Ontario. According to the Ministry "through an Ontario Health Team, patients will experience easier transitions from one provider to another, including, for example, between hospitals and home care providers, with one patient story, one patient record and one care plan". The province continues to move forward with the implementation of Ontario Health, the new superagency which will ensure a consistency of care across Ontario.

WeRPN continues to work closely with the Ministry of Health and monitor updates as the government moves forward with the implementation of this transformation to ensure the perspectives of RPNs are at the forefront.

## Expanding Access to Nursing Education

For the past several years, we have been calling on the government to take steps to make nursing education more accessible for students and RPNs, particularly to those in rural and remote communities.

This winter, we were pleased to see the government answer our call. In February, WeRPN's CEO, Dianne Martin, joined the Honourable Ross Romano, Minister of Colleges and Universities and other stakeholders at Georgian College where the Minister announced that the government would be introducing a new policy to allow Ontario colleges to grant Bachelor of Nursing degrees.

This announcement removes some of the barriers that RPNs have identified with regard to accessing ongoing education. This also provides exciting new opportunities to help educate future RNs in communities that are already experiencing nursing shortages. Allowing colleges to grant nursing degrees will give prospective nursing students and RPNs with more choice and the ability to complete their nursing education closer to home, keeping nurses in those communities that need them most.

We are currently waiting for further details regarding the implementation of this new policy and the timelines. What the government has shared so far is that for this policy to take effect, the Ministry of Health must work with the College of Nurses to amend a regulation made under the *Nursing Act, 1991* but no timeline has been released for this.

Following the change in legislation, colleges that are interested in offering nursing degrees will have to develop those curriculums and submit them to the Ministry for approval. We expect that the timing for this will vary from college to college. We will continue to monitor this closely and will be sure to share information with RPNs as soon as further details are available. WeRPN will also be working closely with all parties to make sure that we build more streamlined pathways for RPNs to bridge to the RN role.



### Examining Staffing in Long Term Care

In 2018, WeRPN was an active participant in the Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System, advocating on behalf of RPNs. Last summer, we saw Commissioner Gillese release her final report, including 91 recommendations for ways to increase the safety of those residents in Long Term Care (LTC).

This winter, the Minister of Long Term Care, Merrilee Fullerton, provided an update on the Ministry's progress in implementing these recommendations. As of February, the Ministry has completed 18 of the 91 recommendations. Included among the actions was a new directive released by the Ministry regarding glucagon, severe hypoglycemia and unresponsive hypoglycemia that aims to put in place best practices for safe insulin policies, including clear expectations on training for and reporting of insulin-related medication incidents.

Another key recommendation that the Ministry has moved on is the establishment of a Long-Term Care Staffing Study Advisory Group to help craft a staffing strategy for LTC. In February, the Ministry announced that an expert advisory group comprised of front line providers would be working closely with the Ministry and stakeholders to put forward a staffing strategy by June 2020. Among this group of professionals is WeRPN member and RPN Anita Plunkett. Anita currently teaches the personal support worker program through the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario and has done so for nine years. She is also an advanced and diabetic foot care nurse. We're thankful to have her representing the voice of RPNs at this important table.

WeRPN has presented recommendations on LTC staffing to the advisory group and looks forward to continuing to engage with the Ministry to support the development of this important staffing strategy.

### Ontario's Response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Since the new year, WeRPN has been working closely with the Ministry of Health's Emergency Operations Centre and other health partners to strengthen Ontario's response to COVID-19 and ensure that nurses and other health professionals and those they care for are protected.

Since the beginning of March, the government attention has moved away from health transformation to focus almost exclusively on containing the pandemic, and this is where we expect attention to remain for the foreseeable.

For RPNs seeking additional information, we have created a dedicated page on our website that includes links to a variety of Ministry guidance documents for acute care, long term care, home care and public health. We have also launched daily communications updates to ensure that RPNs have access to the latest information. We encourage members to visit [www.werpn.com](http://www.werpn.com) to access the latest information and resources.

We know we will likely face uncertainty for the weeks and months ahead. During that time, you can count on us to keep you updated on key directions and policy changes coming from government. We are all in this together!





Jen Calver, RPN, BAHSc, GPN(c)



# Yes!

# We are nurses

This year we celebrate Florence Nightingale's vision for the "Year of the Nurse." As nurses, we are dedicated to promoting, advocating, maintaining, and improving the health and wellness of the public.

We work tirelessly to provide individualized nursing care to each patient within a complex and sometimes confusing healthcare system. As nurses, we have experienced many changes in healthcare. A countless number of times, we have been faced with many challenges while advocating on behalf of our patients. I am certain that every nurse can envision multiple situations where they have persevered and succeeded in overcoming various situations to support the best interest of the patient.

In recent years, we have observed a shift in the demands of health care services from primarily acute care needs towards more chronic and long-term care needs. Although many reasons underlie the fundamental principles of this shift, it has become evident that an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to health services have prevailed. During these times, it is important we, as nurses, take a moment to pause and reflect on our intraprofessional practice. Like many Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs), I often find myself explaining to members of the public and even my family and friends that RPNs are, in fact, 'real' nurses. Individuals who have never studied or invested interest in understanding the art and



science of nursing, may not ever understand the full scope of skills, knowledge, and judgement that each nurse brings to the table.

In saying this, I believe there are a few essential considerations every nurse should remember. In Ontario, there are two categories of nursing. Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) and Registered Nurses (RNs). Nurse Practitioners (NPs) are an extended class within the RN category. In other provinces outside of Ontario, there are RNs, RPNs, and NPs. However, in some western provinces, RPN represents Registered Psychiatric Nurses and not Registered Practical Nurses. In these provinces, there are Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). Another consideration is that each nurse enters into professional practice after demonstrating their knowledge, skill, and judgement at the entry-to-practice level according to their nursing category. After graduating from the designated nursing programs, each nurse is accountable to engage in continuous learning activities. Post-graduation, many nurses dedicate themselves to advancing their professional nursing practice within a specific sector. Many nurses become advanced practice

nurses and specialize in an area of patient care.

In this regard, we can understand why it may be necessary to advocate for ourselves and our nursing practice. The autonomy of nursing enables nurses to develop the skills and knowledge needed for the professional discretion to balance the heavy job demands, collaborate with interdisciplinary health teams, and support patients and families across all health sectors. This year, the “Year of the Nurse,” I challenge each of you to reflect on your professional practice and be proud of the nurse you have become. Believe in yourself and your practice!

Jen Calver, RPN, BAHSc, GPN(c) has a background of experiences in clinical practice, education, and research roles across health care and academic institutions. She has a special interest in populations with complex and chronic care needs, ageing, policy, health service research, and interprofessional collaboration. Her clinical background is in gerontological nursing, and public health. Jen is currently pursuing her graduate studies in the Master of Health Science concentrated in Community, Public, and Population Health at Ontario Tech University in Oshawa.



# Leading the way together — A recap of the 61st AGM & Conference

Ontario Minister of Health Christine Elliott delivers remarks at the WeRPN Conference

Last October, RPNs from across the province gathered in London, Ontario, for two days of engagement, networking and a celebration of practical nursing at WeRPN's 61st Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference. The agenda was packed with opportunities for learning, knowledge exchange and discussion about the latest trends in nursing.

The two-day event kicked off with a passionate keynote by Erin Davis, former radio host of 98.1 CHFT's Morning Show. Erin shared the captivating story of her experience with loss and grief after the unexpected loss of her daughter Lauren, at the young age of 24. Through her engaging storytelling, wit and humour, Erin set the tone for an inspiring event.

To start our AGM, we were joined by the Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, MPP John Fraser, who shared stories about growing up as the son of a nurse. Our CEO Dianne Martin also set the stage for the evolution of RPNAO's look and feel and brought branding leader Erin Brand of Parcel Design up to showcase our new brand WeRPN, which was met with much support from the audience. Members then voted for their Board representative for Region 1, re-electing Melissa Erdodi.

Over the course of the two-days, attendees enjoyed a series of breakout sessions focused on topics ranging from the RPN leadership, quality care improvement and CNO's code of conduct to supporting nurses with disabilities and the role of the natural environment in health care.



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We thank all the RPNs  
and health partners  
who joined us.



Above: Norma Tomlin, Professional Practice Coordinator, kicks off the Conference

Top right: WeRPN CEO Dianne Martin joins Award of Excellence Recipients at the Evening Gala

Bottom right: RPN Panelists share experiences and unique perspective of RPNs across Ontario



The Evening Gala was yet again a fun-filled affair thanks to the return of energetic Master of Ceremonies George Thomas. Within minutes of taking the stage in his festive costumes, George has guests up on the dance floor. We also welcomed local MPP Teresa Armstrong, who delivered remarks about the important roles nurses play. During the gala, WeRPN also celebrated the work of RPNs from across the province with its Annual Awards of Excellence. The Award winners are detailed in subsequent pages.

Day 2 began with the screening of *Cracked: new light on dementia*, an innovative theatre production and film that challenges the stigma associated with dementia, followed by an engaging discussion. During the afternoon, we were delighted to welcome Ontario's Minister of Health, Christine Elliott, who shared details about the government's plans to end hallway healthcare with the creation of Ontario Health Teams.

One of the highlights of the conference was a mid-day plenary that featured stories from RPNs. The five RPNs who

took part in our 2019 *Caring Ontario Forward* Nursing Week campaign, shared their personal stories and career trajectories, highlighting the challenges and opportunities they faced along their paths. This engaging discussion with Jen Calver, Deanna Clatworthy, Wendy Colmenero, Sandra Osbourne and Megan Sloan, shed light on the shared experiences and unique perspective of RPNs working in different settings across all corners of Ontario. The conference concluded with an energetic and funny closing keynote by comedian Jody Urquhart.

We thank all the RPNs and health partners who joined us for this exciting event, and we hope to see many of you at our upcoming 62nd AGM and Conference.

# Awards of Excellence



Each year, WeRPN honours the professionalism, commitment and passion of Ontario RPNs and their employers. This year, we were pleased to celebrate amazing RPNs with our Awards of Excellence.

## **Employer Award of Excellence**

This award recognizes an employer that has demonstrated outstanding achievement with improving the utilization of RPNs and fostering a safe, respectful and empowering work environment where RPNs can work to the fullest of their knowledge, skill and judgment. This year, we were proud to honour **Stevenson Memorial Hospital** for its work to support RPN leadership, innovation and practice.

## **Award of Excellence and Innovation**

The Award of Excellence and Innovation is presented to an RPN who has contributed in a significant way to practical nursing in Ontario and whose efforts have demonstrated exemplary nursing practices. The 2019 winner was described by colleagues “as a supportive educator, collaborator and engaging leader with a commitment to excellence.” Congratulations to **Kerry Gartshore**.

## **Preceptor Award of Excellence**

This award honours an RPN who has contributed in a significant way as a role model for a practical nursing student. The 2019 winner **Marichelle Calanza** was described by her student “as an inspiring role model demonstrating outstanding competence and professionalism, always prepared, meticulous when researching her patient’s health history and showing respect and compassion to patients, families and colleagues.” Congratulations!

## **Excellence in the Care of Older Ontarians (The Martha Award)**

This award celebrates the dedication of an RPN who provides exceptional care to older adults in a manner that is respectful, compassionate and professional. This year, for the first time, we had two winners who displayed exceptional commitment to the principles of palliative care. Congratulations to **Victoria Gaerlan** and **Amber Rinfret**.

## **The Michael & Werner Geidlinger Award for Palliative Care**

In honour of the memory of Michael Geidlinger and Werner Geidlinger, this new award recognizes the unique character and tremendous care delivered by RPNs to patients at the end of life. The inaugural recipient of this Award is an RPN described by her colleagues as a “relentless advocate for those in her care.” Congratulations to **Heather Best**.

## **President’s Award**

This award honours an individual, group or organization who demonstrates outstanding commitment to furthering the utilization and recognition of RPNs in Ontario. This year’s winner has been a role model, leader and advocate for optimizing the RPN role. Congratulations to **Megan Sloan**.

# Nominations for the WeRPN Board of Directors

## Dear WeRPN Member:

WeRPN is seeking nominations for members of the association's Board of Directors. We are currently recruiting members to represent Regions 2, 4 and 6, and the Member-at-Large position, for a two-year term, beginning October 2020. In accordance with association by-laws, to be eligible, a nominee shall:

- have maintained a Membership in the Association for minimum of two consecutive years preceding his or her nomination;
- meet the requirements for directors in the Act;
- be a member in good standing, of the College of Nurses of Ontario

Board members will be elected from the pool of nominees through votes cast at the WeRPN Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Thursday, October 29, 2020.

Completed nominations forms are due no later than Wednesday July 15th, 2020 at 4:30PM.

## Nominating a Candidate

To nominate someone for the WeRPN board, the nominator must be a current member of WeRPN. The nominator must reside or work in same region(s) of the nominee, with the exception of Member-at-Large, in which case the nominator must reside or work in Ontario. Nominators are required to complete and submit the nomination form, along with a brief biography of the nominee.

## Commitment Required of Directors

Board members must commit to a two year terms and expected to attend Board meetings that take place five times per year. Board members may also be expected to chair a committee and prepare reports and recommendations for board discussion.

## Bylaws

### 1.0 Division Into Regions

1. The Association shall be divided into seven (7) regions, with each region representing the geographic areas covered by two Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs).  
*WeRPN members can find what LHIN they are in by logging on to [www.lhins.on.ca](http://www.lhins.on.ca) and using their postal code to find their appropriate LHIN.*

**Currently, there are four regions – region 2, 4, 6 and Member at Large – that are up for election for the board of directors of WeRPN.**

WeRPN Region	LHIN Numbers	LHIN Names
2	3, 5	Waterloo, Wellington & Central West
4	7, 8	Toronto Central & Central
6	9, 12	Central East & North Simcoe Muskoka
Member-at-Large		

### 1.02 Qualification for Directors

1. Each Director shall:
  - a) Have maintained a Membership in the Association for a minimum of two consecutive years preceding his or her nomination;
  - b) Meet the requirements for directors in the Act;
  - c) Be a member in good standing of the College of Nurses of Ontario

### 1.03 Election of Directors

1. Directors shall be elected for a two-year term at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association members.

**The role of the Board of Directors is to represent the member in issues of Governance for the Association.**

**Competencies include but are not limited to:**

- Working with people;
- Consensus-building;
- Conflict resolution;
- Teamwork;
- Leadership and motivation;
- Ambassadorship;
- Ethical conduct and conflict of interest;
- Knowledge of today's nursing environment; and
- Engagement.

Please Print Form Details

## Nomination Form for WeRPN Board of Directors Regions 2, 4, 6 and Member at Large

Nominee's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

WeRPN Region \_\_\_\_\_ (Note: Only for Regions 2, 4, 6 and Member-at-Large)

WeRPN Reg # \_\_\_\_\_ College of Nurses # \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

WeRPN Region \_\_\_\_\_ (Note: Only for Regions 2, 4, 6 and Member-at-Large)

WeRPN Reg # \_\_\_\_\_ College of Nurses # \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominator \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to WeRPN, 5025 Orbitor Dr, Bldg 5, Suite 200, Mississauga, ON L4W 4Y5 or complete and email online form available in the **member's section** at [www.werpn.com](http://www.werpn.com) to [kflores@werpn.com](mailto:kflores@werpn.com) by July 15th, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact Kristel Flores, by email at [kflores@werpn.com](mailto:kflores@werpn.com), or by phone at 905.602.4664/1.877.602.4664, ext. 234.



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