

Nursing Health Services Research Unit

a collaborative project of
the University of Toronto
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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Nursing Health Services Research Unit McMaster University & University of Toronto Fact Sheet:

Internationally Educated Nurses (IENS) in Ontario:

This fact sheet is based on: *Internationally educated nurses in Ontario: Maximizing the brain gain*, a study commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care. The full report is available on the Nursing Health Services Research Unit web site www.nhsru.com.

Background

- We do not know how many IENs reside in Canada or Ontario due to the lack of comprehensive and reliable information.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that many IENs who live in Ontario never enter the nursing workforce

IENs in the Ontario workforce

- In 2005, Ontario had the second highest percentage of internationally educated RNs (11.9%) of all Canadian provinces. (Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), 2006).
- From 2000 to 2005, the number of internationally educated RNs in the Ontario workforce rose from 8,267 to 10,684. (CIHI, 2006).
- Only 830 RPNs educated abroad were employed in Ontario in 2005 (CNO, 2006a).
- Numbers of internationally educated RNs entering the Ontario workforce increased from 223 in 1998 to 1,532 in 2004. In 2004, they represented 23.8% of new entrants (CNO, 2006b).
- The 1,114 internationally educated RNs that joined the workforce in 2005, represent 34.1% of new entrants (CNO, 2006b).

Source countries of IENS in Ontario

- RN registrants from the Philippines, the major IEN source in Ontario, increased from 132 in 1995 to 455 in 2004. (CNO, 2006b).
- Substantial numbers of IENs come from India, the USA, republics of the former USSR, China and the United Kingdom. (CNO, 2006b).
- Most international RPN entrants, come from the Philippines and India. Numbers have increased but remain low (CNO, 2006b).

Migration and Entry to Practice

Migration

- The study suggested that limited information about nursing in Canada is supplied during Citizenship and Immigration interviews. Nurses without Internet access to professional websites are unaware of the requirements for Canadian licensure.
- Some nurses in the study assumed that a high score in the immigration points system would assure smooth entry into the job market. This was not always the case.
- Most IENs enter Canada as permanent residents. Some are refugees. A minority are temporary migrants with work permits.

- Some IENS who were refugees reported that restrictions such as settlement in a specified location affected their employment chances.
- IENs with job offers prior to migration may enter Canada on work permits and obtain temporary licenses.
- IENs entering Canada on work permits under the Live-in Care-giver Program (CIC, 2006) must complete their contracts before applying for permanent residence. This stipulation delays their application to the CNO.

Application for Registration

- Many IENs encounter challenges when registering, including problems obtaining credentials (e.g., transcripts, evidence of recent practice). Some never register. In comparison, 90% of Ontario-educated RNs register within 12 months (CNO, 2005).

Education

- The 4-year baccalaureate requirement for RNs and the 2-year diploma for RPNs have implications for IENs as most of them need educational upgrading.
- Eligible IENS can complete upgrading programs to prepare for the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Examination (CPNRE) and/or bridging programs to complete the BScN degree and Canadian Registered Nurse Examination (CRNE)
- Educators in college upgrading programs work with students to create personalized education plans based on letters of direction provided by the CNO.
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), provides an alternative to acquiring qualifications through formal academic courses by evaluating competency. It is being used with increasing frequency.
- York University's post-diploma program specifically targets IENs. Other universities integrate IENs into regular bridging programs for post-diploma nurses.

Language

- Criteria for language fluency can be met by being a native speaker, passing one of 6 written and 4 spoken tests specified by the CNO or completing educational upgrading.
- Accessibility of testing centres and costs of language tests are important considerations for IENs who are unemployed or in low-paying jobs.
- The newest language test accepted by the CNO, the Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) is profession specific but not yet widely available

Licensing examinations

- Nurses are allowed three attempts to pass their licensing examinations.
- The pass rate in the (CRNE) and the (CPNRE) is much lower for nurses educated out of province (including IENs) than for nurses educated in Ontario (CNO, 2006c).

Recent developments

More system supports to help IENs to enter the workforce are being developed.

- CNO provides an interactive website to help IENs with applications.
- The Enhanced Language Training (ELT) initiative, announced by the Government of Canada in 2003-04, includes language assessment and training for CELBAN.
- Bridging programs for IENs have been established in 5 universities/colleges
- Creating Access to Regulated Employment (CARE) programs are available to in Toronto and Hamilton to prepare IENs for professional examinations and employment in the Canadian healthcare system.
- HealthForce Ontario is establishing a marketing and recruitment centre including a comprehensive job portal, and a centre where internationally educated health professionals can obtain information needed to work in Ontario (MOHLTC, 2006)