The Nursing Shortage Creates an Abundance of Nursing Jobs in Canada

The nursing shortage results from a simple equation of increasing demand and reduction in supply. Now is a good time to consider nursing as a career in Canada. You will never be without work and the challenge and opportunity for growth will BE.

May 26, 2010 - <u>PRLog</u> -- There has been a nursing shortage in the Canadian health care system for over 30 years. All indications are that this shortage will worsen and become more acute over the next 10 years.

The Canadian Nurses Association is predicting a shortage of 78,000 nurses in the year 2011. By 2016 the expectation is that there will be 113,000 unfilled nursing jobs in Canada.

There are many factors that contribute to the increasing demand for nurses including the needs of the Canadian population, the aging of the workforce already in nursing jobs, and the values and beliefs held by the Canadian public regarding their universal health care system.

Population Health Needs in Canada

It is accepted in Canada that every single person will need professional nursing services at some time in their life and this demand will increase as the Canadian population ages.

There is a well established correlation between aging and the demand for health care services. The population over 85 is the largest growing population segment in Canada. People are living longer and living with more morbidity and chronic illness that ever before. As the Canadian population ages there will be increasing demand on the Canadian health care system for services, and a large part of that demand will be for professional nursing services.

Nursing Workforce

The nursing workforce reflects the baby boomer demographics of the Canadian public. The average age of a working nurse across all provinces is in the late forties, so a large segment of the workforce already in nursing jobs in the Canadian health care system will be retiring over the next twenty years. This mass exodus will create more and more unfilled nursing jobs. Canada has never been able to produce enough nurses to meet the demand so the nursing shortage will increase over the next twenty years.

Values and Beliefs of the Canadian Society

The Canadian culture places a high value on equity, fairness and public accountability. When the services of the health care system are needed Canadians expect that the needed services can be accessed regardless of age, gender, income, occupation, race, or sexual orientation. At the same time because of the high regard for individual expression and freedom in Canada those services are expected to be individualized to accommodate the needs and preferences of each person and their family. Providing individualized care requires optimized nurse patient ratios.

Nurse patient ratios have been decreasing over the last twenty years in order to optimize the time that nurses have to plan with patients and their families for patient centered care.

While the evidence shows that having nurses involved with patients and their families in planning hospital care and discharge back home reduces complications and readmission rates, lower nurse patient ratios also

increases the demand for nurses and contributes to the ever increasing nursing shortage.

Nursing as a Career

Canada has never been able to produce enough nurses to meet the demand. Nurse education programs across the country have wait lists. Increasing the number of seats in education programs is not an option as the nursing shortage also extends to the professional and academic areas. Masters educated faculty are in short supply and there are already ongoing vacancies in university faculty positions in nursing programs.

Nursing as a career is full of opportunity and diversity. While the bedside nurse is what most people think of when they envision nursing as a career, the truth is that many nurses do not work at the beside. Nurses work in communities, in research, in outpatient clinics, and a variety of other nursing jobs in the Canadian health care system.

Because Canada has a universal health care system, governments are constantly re-examining how health care can be delivered in the most efficient and cost effective way without sacrificing quality. As a result new regulations in some provinces will see nurses performing some functions that were previously out of their professional scope of practice. These actions are all in a attempt to provide good quality services in a timely way for the Canadian public.

There is an ongoing nursing shortage in Canada and yet the future holds more opportunities and increasing demand for nursing services. More and more nursing jobs in Canada will become vacant in the next twenty years and all Canadians will need professional nursing services.

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