We RPN

Registered Practical Nurses
Association of Ontario

Summary of Research Activities
2020-2022

External Requests for Recruitment of RPN participants for research studies	
Request 1	
Researcher: Dr. Anna Garnett, RN, PhD Assistant Professor Associate Scientist-Lawson Health Research Institute Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing Western University FIMS & Nursing Building, Rm 2306, London, ON N6A 5B9 Tel: (519) 661-2111 ext. 80416 Email: agarnet6@uwo.ca	Title: ***Apart but Together – Understanding Connectivity in the Context of COVID-19***
Recruitment period: November 2020 – March 2021	
Social connectedness is an important contributor to the well-being and quality of life of older adults residing in LTCHs (Kehyayan, Hirdes, Tyas, & Stolee, 2016). Family members play an important role in the social connectedness of LTCH residents (Gaugler, 2005). However, the current COVID-19 pandemic has led to institutional mandates restricting access of family members to long-term care residences to protect residents' physical health. While necessary to protect LTCH residents' lives, it is proposed that this necessary physical separation has negative ramifications for the residents and their family members. The purpose of this proposed research is to understand the experiences of social connectedness between residents and family members who are or have been separated due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Specific objectives guiding this research are: 1) Investigate the impact of LTCH facility access restrictions on the experience of social connectedness between family members and residents. 2) Examine LTCH health providers' responses to support the social connectedness between family members and residents and the contextual factors that affect these responses. 3) Produce guidelines for LTCH health providers and administrators that will enable them to most effectively support social connectedness between family members and residents in a pandemic or infectious disease outbreak context. Demographic and interview data will be collected from all participants. A qualitative content analysis will be conducted with constant comparison (Kim et al., 2017). Descriptive statistics will be used to display demographic data. The current study findings will be used to develop a webcast, knowledge translation video, plain-language summary poster for LTCH staff, policy brief and journal manuscript. In addition, the results of this pilot research will be used to inform the development of a larger multi-site research proposal for a study that will be conducted in southwestern Ontario and that will be submitted to SSHRC or CIHR.	

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Results: 3 RPNs participated in the study along with 8 other health providers and 21 family caregivers. The study has concluded, and findings are being prepared for journal submission. Dr. Garnett will be in touch as the publication of study findings proceeds.	
Request 2	
Researcher: Dr. Sepali Guruge and Dr. Lori Schindel Martin Ryerson University Daphne Cockwell - School of Nursing Faculty of Community Services	Title: ***Co-creating innovative strategies to address the wellbeing of older persons and their healthcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic***
Recruitment period: October 2020- December 2020	
This study expected to explore healthcare providers' experiences of caring for older people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aims to understand, from the point of view of healthcare providers, the successes and challenges they experienced in the relational care of older people in a range of care settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ARC team is also interested in learning about the resources and the strategies healthcare providers are using/ have used/needed to engage in mental health self-care during the pandemic.	
Results:	
Request 3	
Researcher: Elizabeth Peter PhD, RN, FAAN Professor Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing Member, Joint Centre for Bioethics Chair, Ethics Review Board, Public Health Ontario University of Toronto 155 College Street, Suite 130 Toronto, ON M5T 1P8 416-946-3437	Title: ***Reducing the Moral Distress of Nurses during the COVID-19 Pandemic***
Recruitment Period: December 2020 – April 2021	
The COVID-19 pandemic is presenting significant moral challenges to nurses, resulting in moral distress. Despite the large amount of research describing moral distress, there are almost no evidence-based strategies to reduce it. The overall purpose of this research is to explore what strategies reduce moral distress in nurses during the COVID 19 pandemic. The research methodology study is qualitative description. For this arm of the study, approximately 20 Registered Practical Nurses who have been caring for patients with COVID-19 in long term care will be recruited. They will be interviewed virtually via Microsoft Teams. The data will be analyzed using thematic analysis. **Knowledge to Action (K2A)** The K2A cycle was developed by CIHR to encourage the translation of research into practical applications to improve the health of Canadians. Our study represents an early stage in the K2A cycle; the application of knowledge to a specific context. We anticipate that the results will identify strategies that reduce the moral distress of nurses who are working in response to a global pandemic. Based on these findings, we will assemble specific guidelines related to alleviating moral distress in this context. We will broadly disseminate our findings through collaborations with nursing committees and organizations locally, such as TAHSNp, provincially and nationally, such as the RNAO,	

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WeRPN, CNO and CNA, as well as internationally, such as the ANA and AAN, to share and distribute this resource.

We plan on making our findings and any recommendations readily available to a broad audience of nurses using a variety of novel knowledge translation strategies. Specifically, we will develop policy briefs and short informational videos that can be shared through social media channels (specifically Twitter), and potentially short podcast episodes that report on strategies to address distress across a variety of topics. |
| Results: 20 RPNs participated; Presented at Bloomberg Rounds (recorded) titled: RPNs' Experiences of the Moral Habitability of Long-Term Care Environments during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Preliminary Results of a Qualitative Study
Presentation: https://play.library.utoronto.ca/watch/8c8e4494e706256566585f9264061508. |

Request 4	
Researcher: Dr. Judith Horrigan
Associate Professor,
Laurentian University School of Nursing, & Occupational Health and Wellness Research, Lead for the Centre for Research in Occupational Safety and Health (CROSH)
Laurentian University Centre
936 Ramsey Lake Road, Sudbury ON, P3E 2C6
Telephone: (705)-675-1151, ext. 3718 or toll free 1-800-461-4030
Email: jhorrigan@laurentian.ca	Title: ***The mental health of registered nurses and registered practical nurses in northern Ontario during the COVID-19 global pandemic***
Recruitment period: March – September 2021	
COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organization, and has changed the way people live, work, and interact within their communities. Front-line healthcare workers, such as RNs and RPNs, have risen to the challenge, playing a vital role in maintaining public health and safety, and responding to calls, in the face of the COVID-19 health crisis. The impact of the pandemic on their mental health including but not limited to their psychosocial work environment (e.g., work stress, job satisfaction and work demands) and their means of coping remains unknown. Prolonged exposure to deleterious mental health outcomes is associated with negative consequences to both physical and mental health. These are significant to healthcare organizations because of their correlations to worker retention, turnover, patient satisfaction, and patient safety. The expected outcomes of this research study could effectively manage stress and the mental health needs of RNs and RPNs through data-driven findings. Healthcare organizations may utilize the findings to develop policies for pandemic planning, programs, services and practices designed specifically for a public health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. WeRPN's contribution will be acknowledged in all presentations, educational resources/webinars, and articles resulting from this study.	
Results: 59 RPNs; The goal of this study is to identify the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and well-being of registered nurses and registered practical nurses in northern Ontario. This mixed method study collected quantitative data through on online survey and qualitative comments at the end of the survey. Participants who completed the online survey were given an opportunity to participate in a focus group. Recruitment of registered nurses (RN's) and registered practical nurses (RPN's) nurses to participate in the study was assisted by posting survey descriptions	

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and links on the Centre for Research in Occupational Safety and Health (CROSH) website, promoted by WeRPN, the RNAO and the ONA. The survey was available online to access from March 16th, 2021 to July 23rd, 2021. A total of n-143 participants completed the survey: 78 RN's and 59 RPN's. Six participants did not indicate their nurse profession type. Demographic information was collected for descriptive statistics analysis that included job classification, job type, age, practice area, gender, ethnicity, marital status, education level and the number of children. RPN participants indicated working in the following practice areas: 26 in only Hospital settings. Eleven worked in both a hospital and community practice setting, nine worked only in a community setting, 2 two worked in a community and other practice setting not described, eight worked in another setting not described, and three did not indicate the practice area. Unfortunately, the Long-Term Care option did not appear on the survey when it was launched. Currently quantitative and qualitative data analysis is being conducted on the survey data. The qualitative questions prepared by WeRPN included: "Please rank the following experiences that caused you moral distress during COVID-19. Rank 1 to 4 with 1 equal to most moral distress: 1. Compromising or the inability to maintain personal safety; 2. Social isolation of residents/patients with restricted visitor policies; 3. Concern for co-workers, i.e. PSWs; and 4. Inability to manage safe, quality care due to increased workload. The second question was "What changed most dramatically in your life with the pandemic?" A focus group was not conducted as only one nurse contacted the research team showing an interest in participating in a focus group. Once data has been analyzed, the results will be shared with WeRPN, the RNAO, ONA and other stakeholders. Findings will also be disseminated through conferences, shared on the Center for Research in Occupational Safety and Health (CROSH) platforms, and submitted manuscripts for journal publication.

Request 5	
Researcher: Dr. Susan Bookey-Bassett, RN, PhD, Principal Investigator Assistant Professor Ryerson University, Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing 288 Church Street Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1Z5 Telephone: 416-979-5000 ext. 556309 Email: sbookeybassett@ryerson.ca	Title: ***Leading in a Crisis: Understanding Interprofessional First Line Healthcare Leader Roles and Experiences During COVID-19 Pandemic***
Recruitment period: March – July 2021	
Results of this study will reveal experiences of frontline nursing leaders working in the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic. These results will inform educational leadership programs that develop leadership efficacy during a crisis and provide recommendations for strategies to be used in future crises. RPNs in leadership roles are key to ensuring the delivery of high quality and safe health care. RPNs participation in this study will ensure their voices and experiences are made known as we continue to endure the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aligns with the "Driving Evidence" tenet of the WeRPN strategic plan in that the results will contribute to the body of evidence about the role of the registered practical nurse as leaders in the health care system. WeRPN will be acknowledged as assisting with recruitment and noted in any forthcoming manuscripts. The research team will also be pleased to share findings that are unique to RPNs as well as the full study results in the form of a webinar or other professional development forum (e.g., WeRPN Annual General Meeting).	

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Results: 6 RPNs; The PI has completed the study and is working on the knowledge dissemination pieces. The research team will be producing two manuscripts and presenting at a few conferences in 2022. There were a total of 6 RPNs in the sample (6% of the total). It is too bad we didn't get more RPNs. The PI will provide details regarding the manuscripts and presentations as they are determined.	
Request 6	
Researcher: Ms. Jen Calver, RPN, B.Sc. Principal Investigator Graduate Student (Masters Level) Organization: Ontario Tech University 2000 Simcoe St N Oshawa ON, L1G 1C0 Telephone: 905-375-4157 Email: Jennifer.calver@ontariotechu.net	Title: ***Nurses' Perspectives on the Policy Objective to End Hallway Health Care in Ontario to Address Alternate Level of Care in Hospitals***
Recruitment period: February -March 2021	
This study examines the interrelationship between nursing and policy implementation. Using qualitative methods, this research aims to describe and summarize the interpretations and level of discretion from nurses (RPNs, RNs) who work in hospital and provide direct care for patients identified as alternate level of care (ALC) in a time when the government has committed to end hallway healthcare. By exploring the lived experience of Ontario nurses who provide direct care for ALC patients, this research is important to better understand the disconnect between public policy intention and how it is actually translated into professional practice. RPNs will have an opportunity to participate in a telephone or ZOOM interview (according to their preference) to assist in understanding the practice of nursing in the current policy environment. It will also inform our understanding of the role front-line health care workers in the implementation of government policy, specifically, the implementation of health care policies in hospital care settings. WeRPN's assistance with participant recruitment will be acknowledged in the methods section of two scholarly manuscripts and any peer-review publication or reports resulting from this research.	
Results: Currently in data analysis phase of project	
Request 7	
Researcher: Jon Parr Vijinski PhD Candidate, Principal Investigator University of Calgary, Faculty of Nursing 348 Sunnyside Ave Toronto, Ontario, M6R-2R6 Telephone: 416-766-6741 Email:jon.parrvijinski1@ucalgary.ca	Title: ***Caregivers' Experiences of how Music facilitates Communication for People with Dementia***
Recruitment period: April 2021 – June 2021	
An important part of dementia care is communication with the person with dementia (PwD), as communication is vital for maintaining a sense of self, relationships, and quality of life. Music offers an alternate form of communication that is still an accessible conduit for people with dementia as they have increasing inability to use verbal language. The primary purpose will be to develop a theory of how music may facilitate communication (verbal and nonverbal) for people with dementia from the perspectives and experiences of formal, including RPNs (many of whom are the front line professional caregiver on a daily basis for PwD).	

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Particular potential benefits for RPNs include: (1) to understand their experiences as the primary interlocutors with the PwD; (2) to seek new knowledge from their perspectives about the potential for music to facilitate meaningful communication for the PwD; and (3) to provide RPNs new knowledge to be incorporated into clinical practice.	
Results: No RPN participants; defending in January 2022	
Request 8	
Researcher: Ms. Jennifer Thiel, RN Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology student Adler University 520 Seymour Street Vancouver, BC, V6B 3J5 Telephone: 604-816-6267 Email: jthiel@adler.edu	Title: ***Compassion Satisfaction and Coping Well in the Context of the COVID19 Pandemic***
Recruitment Period: July 2021- August 2021	
Purpose: The voices of nurses are not always heard or recognized, particularly relating to their strengths. My research study aims to amplify the voices of Canadian nurses using a strength based approach. The purpose of the study is to explore the positive experiences of nurses who self-identify as coping well. It will also seek to identify the strategies used by these nurses to enhance their capacity to cope in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Compassion satisfaction is defined as the positive feelings and experiences an individual derives from helping others and from being able to do their work well. Research Question: How are Canadian nurses experiencing compassion satisfaction in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and how are they coping well? Nurses who participate in the study may discover something new about themselves as a result of answering the questions. They might become more aware of the components of professional quality of life (compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue) as well as other effective coping strategies they haven't used before. Discussing their coping strategies and experiences with compassion satisfaction may help them to remember and reflect upon their strengths. The information they provide may assist current healthcare providers on how to cope well during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses who participate will have the opportunity to enter for a chance to win one of four $25 e-gift cards to Indigo or Amazon.	
Results: Currently in data analysis phase of project	
Request 9	
Researcher: Dr. N. Snobelen, DHA, MBA, B.Sc.(C.D.), Reg CASLPO (non-practicing), S-LP(C) Co-Investigator Legacy Rehabilitation 9677 Pinehurst Line Chatham, Ontario N7M 5J3 Telephone: 519-352-7190 nsnobel@uwo.ca	Title: ***Nurses' Perspectives on the Geriatric Nursing Practice Environment and the Quality of Older People's Care in Ontario Rehabilitation Hospitals - a modified replication study***
Recruitment period: November 2021 – January 2022	
Older adults often present with medical complexities which impact their response to rehabilitation and require mitigation to maintain independence, reduce the risk of premature institutionalization and mortality. RPNs will benefit from knowing the provincial level of preparedness of RPNs to care for	

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older adults in rehabilitation, the RPN perceived quality of geriatric care, and the values of the rehabilitation practice environment regarding the specialty needs of the older adult. RPNs will benefit by identifying rehabilitation RPN advanced learning needs, and methods to translate and implement the knowledge. Knowledgeable RPNs are then able to influence organizational policy, environments, values and care-planning for the increasingly complex rehabilitation older adult patients. Preparedness to care for geriatric patients in rehabilitation will positively impact social and economic outcomes of older persons and our health care system fulfilling the advocacy role for RPNs.	
Results: Approved for recruitment assistance; recruitment underway; recruitment extended to March 2022	
Request 10	
Researcher: RNAO Kim Jarvi Senior Economist Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario Direct line: 416-408-5614 Main: 416-599-1925 (X236) Fax: 416-599-1926 Attention: Kim Jarvi kjarvi@RNAO.ca www.RNAO.ca	Title: COVID-19 and workforce wellbeing: A survey of the Canadian nursing workforce
Results: Declined due to duplication - Nursing in Ontario during COVID-19 by WeRPN, December 2020	
Request 11	
Researcher: Joshus Wyman, PhD. Banting Postdoctoral Fellow Ontario Tech University 2000 Simcoe St N Oshawa, ON, L1G0C5 joshua.wyman@ontariotechu.ca	Title: Examining the needs of health professionals for increasing disclosures of elder maltreatment.
The primary goal of the current study is to develop a stronger understanding of how to improve the identification and reporting of older (OA) maltreatment. To improve interventions for OA maltreatment, we must first understand the current barriers to reporting and gathering detailed information about these crimes by the common bystanders and witnesses. This will be achieved in this study by providing much needed information about how we can better train and support health professionals who are often involved in the identification and reporting of OA maltreatment. These research goals are in line with the WeRPN strategic plan, particularly with regards to gathering information that can be used to advance the expertise of RPNs in the health system and the community. For future publications about this project, we are happy to acknowledge WeRPN assistance with recruiting for this project; this information would be in the Acknowledgements section of the published manuscripts.	
Results: Approved by RAC; Recruitment underway January 2022	

Internal Studies/Surveys	
Researcher: Isabelle Aimegriny Victor, Undergraduate Student Ryerson University	Title: *Practical Nursing (PN) Students' Post Graduate Employment Preference*

Internal Studies/Surveys	
School of Health Services Management	
Recruitment Period: January 2021 – March 2021	
This project aims to understand practical nursing (PN) students' employment preferences after graduation to recommend strategies to make healthcare staffing equitable for the least-preferred healthcare sector and attract talented nurses. The objectives are to describe PN students' workplace preferences and their decisions on future career destinations and determine the workplace factors associated with future career preferences will be to collect data via an electronic survey for the project analysis.	
Results: Completed	
Researcher: Ms. Lisa Dale Undergraduate Student Ryerson University School of Health Services Management	Title: ***Exploring the perceptions of Practical Nursing (PN) Students on caring for the older person***
Recruitment Period: December 2021 – March 2022	
The primary goal of this project is to understand PN students' perceptions on caring for the older person and then compare how these perceptions are related to PN student characteristics such as demographics, semester of study, formal education and experience caring for older adults.. Using a validated survey, data will be collected to understand the following research questions: (1) What are the perceptions of Practical Nursing students' about caring for the older person? (2) How do these perceptions differ according to PN student characteristics defined by their semester of study, age, training, and experience caring for older people. In understanding this topic better, there is an opportunity to identify if changes to the current PN curriculum or additional training could improve the retention and recruitment of RPN professionals working in the LTC sector to address staffing shortages.	
Results: In progress	
Researcher: Dr. Robert Schwartz Professor Patrick Feng, Research Manager University of Toronto, Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation Health Sciences Building 155 College Street, 4th Floor Toronto, ON M5T 3M6 Tel: 416-978-3901 Email: Robert.Schwartz@utoronto.ca Tel: 416-978-1565 Email: patrick.feng@utoronto.ca	Title: ***Enhancing competencies and the working life of RPNs: An interventional study with WeRPN and Closing the Gap Inc.***

WeRPN approached Closing the Gap Inc to partner on an interventional research project that would study an approach to enhancing competencies and the working life of RPNs. This proposal aligned with the strategic goals of Closing the Gap. The University of Toronto Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation (U of T) were contracted to conduct a third-party research evaluative study on the process of implementation and results of the interventions.

There are two concepts involved in this interventional study:
1. To educate the managers responsible for RPNs on "Joy in Work" (JIW) and to implement JIW strategies to improve health care provider satisfaction.

Internal Studies/Surveys	
2. To educate RPNs on the use of health coaching techniques for health literacy and system navigation and to implement/practice techniques to improve client outcomes and enhance the patient experience. This study outline was revised to accommodate Closing the Gap's 2021 work priorities.	
Results: On hold – personnel changeover	

Partnership Requests – Letters of Support/in-kind contributions/assumed recruitment	
Researcher: Dr. P. Baxter Associate Professor McMaster University School of Nursing 1280 Main Street West, HSC-3N28C Hamilton, ON LBS 4K1	Title: *Creating Synergy to Meet Resident Needs in LTC Homes: A Mixed Methods Study*
Results:	

Partnership Requests - External Funding applications	
Dr. Don Rose and Dr. Sherry Espin, Ryerson	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Partnership Engagement Grant COID-19 Special Initiative Title: *The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on dual role (front-line care providers/adult learner) Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs)* Funding: Declined
Dr. Denise Connelly, Western	Drummond Title: *Building capacity in rehabilitation services to optimize results for the older adult and their families/care partners* Funding: Declined
Dr. Denise Connelly, Western	Parkwood Institute Research Special Endowment Fund Title: *Building capacity in rehabilitation services: mapping rehabilitation case practices of Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurses working on inpatient Geriatric and Stroke Rehabilitation Units* Funding: Declined
Dr. Denise Connelly, Western	Canadian Institute for Healthcare Research Title: *Not Just a Visitor: The way forward with family as essential care partners within long term care health care teams*

	Funding: Streamlined yet declined; expected to re-submit
Dr. Eric Tanlaka, University of Windsor	Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada Title: ***Building capacity in stroke rehabilitation interdisciplinary teams: Conceptualizing rehabilitation nursing practices and perspectives of Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) and Registered Nurses (RNs).*** Funding: Application pending

Partnerships - Externally Funded Studies	
Dr. D. Connelly, Western and Lambton College	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Partnership Engagement Grant COID-19 Special Initiative Title: ***COVID-19 and resiliency: how registered practical nurses working in long-term care adapt in times of personal, professional, and institutional crisis.*** Funded: $25,000 + MITACS $15,000
Knowledge Mobilization	
Flores-Sandoval, C., Connelly, D., Garnett, A., Smith Carrier, T., Snobelen, N., Calver, J., Salatino, S., Wilson, C. (2021, October). A scoping review of workplace factors and interventions that impact resilience in nurses and support of older adults for application in long term care homes. Presented at Canadian Association of Gerontology 2021, Hindsight 20/20- Looking back for a vision forward, Toronto (virtual), Ontario, October 21-23, 2021.	
Tomlin, N and Foster, S. WeRPN Leadership Course Resilience Module	
Tomlin, N and Foster, S. WeRPN Self-Care Learning Module – Resilience	
Calver, J., Salatino, S., Guitar, N. WeRPN Guidebook to LTC Homes – Organizational Resilience – in progress	
Dr. D. Connelly, Western	Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement Research/Canadian Patient Safety Institute (Excellence Canada) Implementation Science Teams – Strengthening Pandemic Preparedness in Long-Term Care Title: ***COVID-19: Implementation of virtual P.I.E.C.E.S™ for resident care planning with family to build and sustain team collaboration and resilience for the workforce in LTC*** Funded: $150,000
Knowledge Mobilization	
Gao, H., Yous, M., Connelly, D, Hung, L., Garnett, A., Hay, M., Snobelen, N., Salatino, S. Implementation and Evaluation of Virtual Team-Based Care Planning using P.I.E.C.E.S.TM for Older Persons in Formal Care Settings: A Scoping Review. Poster Presentation at Canadian Association of	

Gerontology 2021: Hindsight 20/20- Looking back for a vision forward, Toronto (virtual), October 21-23, 2021.

Gao, H., Yous, M., Connelly, D, Hung, L., Garnett, A., Hay, M., Snobelen, N., Salatino, S. Virtual Team-Based Care Planning with Older Persons in Formal Care Settings: A Scoping Review Protocol. Published in BMJ Open, October 21, 2021. https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/11/11/e054900.info

Hay, M., Connelly, D., Garnett, A., Hung, L., Furlan-Craievich, C., Snelgrove, S., Babcock, M., Ripley, J., Schindel Martin, L., Snobelen, N., Salatino, S., Gao, H., & Hamilton, P. (2021). COVID-19: Implementation of virtual P.I.E.C.E.S™ for long-term care resident care planning with family to build and sustain team collaboration and workforce resilience. Oral presentation, Canadian Association on Gerontology 2021: Hindsight 20/20- Looking back for a vision forward, Toronto (virtual), ON, October 21-23, 2021.

Babcock, M., Connelly, D., Furlan-Craievich, C., Gao, H., Garnett, A., Hamilton, P., Hay, M., Hung, L., Ripley, J., Salatino, s., Schindel Martin, L., Snelgrove, S., Snobelen, N. (2021). Implementing virtual care planning with resident/family: A Canadian COVID long-term care experience. Poster presentation, Institute for Healthcare Improvement Forum 2021, (virtual) Orlando, Florida USA, Dec 5-8, 2021. https://bmjopenquality.bmj.com/content/10/Suppl_2/A26.1

WeRPN Externally funded studies (2021-2022)	
Project #100	
Lady Bolongaita 30 Soudan Avenue, Suite 600 Toronto, Ontario M4S 1V6 (416)520-9292 Research Associate, VHA Home HealthCare lbolongaita@vha.ca	Title: Building a sustainable supply of home care RPNs through employer-based education assistance

Registered Practical Nurses fill a vital role in ensuring that seriously ill and frail clients who wish to remain at home in their community can do so safely. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated long-standing recruitment and retention challenges in the home care sector, resulting in an inadequate supply of staff to provide essential care. While there is a shortage of care providers, the sector currently employs individuals who are not working to their full potential. This includes internationally-educated nurses whose credentials are not recognized in Canada, RPNs with the ambition to work to a greater scope of practice, and personal support workers (PSWs) with the potential and drive to become RPNs but who lack the financial means and supports necessary to achieve this qualification.

For over a decade, VHA Home HealthCare has been supporting employees to engage in education an micro credentialing to support their career laddering and professional development. In this way, VHA invests in developing its workforce, with the dual goals of supporting the growth of our existing staff and retaining top talent. Work$mart provides employees with financial assistance and flexible schedules to engage in educational activities. This program can grow the RPN workforce by supporting PSWs into the profession, easing the transitions of internationally educated nurses, and supporting RPNs to pursue micro credentials and opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Work$mart is designed to give employees opportunities to grow while enhancing retention within the organization and the home care sector.

The study will evaluate how well the Work$mart program has been achieving its objectives of supporting staff development and retention. To do this, we will (1) characterize users of the Work$mart program, (2) examine strengths and weaknesses of this program from the perspective of both users and those who have pursued professional development/education independent of the program, and (3) explore how well this program has supported staff retention.

To address our first and third research objectives, we will use administrative (employee record) data that allows us to track each user's sociodemographic characteristics, educational history (including country of education), work characteristics and tenure with VHA before and after using Work$mart, and the specific micro credentialing/educational opportunity pursued.

To address our second objective, the study will conduct semi-structured interviews with at least 15 RPNs, including those who have used Work$mart to support their entry to the profession, those who have used it for micro credentialing and/or leadership development, and those who have pursued professional development/education independent of Work$mart. The RPNs will be asked to share their experiences, including any barriers that they experienced and related factors influencing their intention to remain with VHA.

Findings from this study can inform the development and refinement of workplace education support programs at VHA and throughout the health care sector. Our partner World Education Services (WES) will support the dissemination of findings to influence policy and decision making. We anticipate that this will provide strong support for the growth of the RPN profession and contribute to alleviating the current acute and chronic nursing shortages.

Project #200	
Veronique Boscart Conestoga College Executive Dean School of Health and Life Sciences 299 Doon Valley Drive, Kitchener, ON, N2G 4M4 VBoscart@conestogac.on.ca	Title: Exploring the Role of the Registered Practical Nurse in Long-Term Care Homes

Long-term care homes (LTCHs) employ both Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) as part of their staffing model in Canada. Despite the important role that both RNs and RPNs carry in supporting quality of care and life in residents and families, and leading unregulated staff, the role of RPNs is largely under-document. The majority of nursing research in LTCHs has focused on the role and impact of the RNs (Whitmore et al., 2019). The purpose of this study is to explore the role of RPNs working in LTCH. Specifically, we would like to understand experiences of RPNs on how to optimize the role of the RPN in LTCHs. This study will adopt a phenomenological approach. Researchers will invite up to 10 RPNs working in LTCHs to participate in a one-on-one interview with a RPN working as a LTC-embedded researcher. Data will be analyzed using Colazzi's (1978) steps of analyzing phenomenological data and will inform some much-needed onboarding training materials for new RPNs starting a career in LTCH.

Project #300	
Dr. Denise Connelly PhD Associate Professor- School of Physical Therapy, Associate Dean -Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies	Title: Building capacity in rehabilitation services: Mapping rehabilitation nursing care practices in Geriatric and Stroke Rehabilitation Units

Faculty of Health Sciences
Room 1588, Elborn College,
Western University, London, Ontario
dconnell@uwo.ca

Given the increasing prevalence of chronic disease and the growth of the ageing population, building capacity within interprofessional healthcare teams is essential to meet the demands of the rehabilitation sector. Registered practical nurses (RPNs) contribute to rehabilitation goals through extensive bedside contact, engaging patients in basic activities of daily living, and promoting continuous and coordinated care. However, rehabilitation practices by RPNs are not well understood, and their work may be taken for granted, undervalued and/or underutilized. Despite the international attention to rehabilitation nursing as an area of specialization, and the value of nursing in rehabilitation patient outcomes, little is known about the roles and experiences of RPNs working in rehabilitation nursing settings compared to international standards of practice.

The objective of this research is to explore the rehabilitation functions and roles of RPNs who work in inpatient geriatric and stroke rehabilitation units, and to map their practices to those outlined in rehabilitation nursing frameworks, particularly the American Association of Rehabilitation Nurses Competency Model for Professional Rehabilitation Nursing (2014) , the Royal College of Nursing model in the United Kingdom (2007) and the Australasian Rehabilitation Nursing Competency Standards for Registered Nurses (2004). We will assess RPNs perceptions regarding their roles in rehabilitation in geriatric and stroke units, and the nature of nursing interventions in the rehabilitation of older adult patients. Three rehabilitation units have committed to partnering on this research study as sites for observations of RPNs practices. A mixed-methods explanatory sequential methodology will be used. An online survey will be used to assess RPNs perceptions related to rehabilitation nursing practices on an inpatient unit. Approximately 100 RPNs across Ontario, who work in stroke or geriatric rehabilitation units, will be recruited to participate in an online survey. Observations will be used to verify and document the behaviours and rehabilitation practices described by RPNs on the stroke and geriatric rehabilitation unit. Semi-structured interviews with approximately 30 RPNs will be conducted with RPNs to capture their understanding of nursing rehabilitation practices.

Project #400	
Sonya Canzian Executive Vice-President – Programs Chief Nursing Executive and Chief Health Disciplines 30 Bond St. Toronto, ON M5B 1W8 Sonya.Canzian@unityhealth.to	Title: Barriers and Facilitators to the Practice of Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) Role in an Academic Acute Care Hospital

An increase in acute care demands due to staff shortages and fiscal constraints has resulted in nursing teams feeling progressively overwhelmed and burdened (Brophy et al., 2021). To contest these demands, new nursing care delivery models have been developed and implemented across Ontario (Bauman et al., 2014). Subsequently, Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) are now being reintroduced into nursing and interprofessional teams, within acute care settings (Joynt & Kimball, 2008). Ongoing changes in educational requirements for RPNs to meet evolving standards of practice have enabled an increase in healthcare competencies, and clinical skills training. Furthermore, an expansion in scopes of practice accredits RPNs to deliver high level care to patients with complex acute care needs (MacKinnon et al., 2018).

There is a wealth of knowledge to support nursing teams within acute care settings (MacKinnon et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2017). However, much of this primarily focuses on the perspective of

Registered Nurses (RNs). Additionally, there is a scarcity of literature that examines the integration of RPNs into acute care from the perspective of the lived experience. As RPNs are being reintroduced into acute care settings, it is essential that members of this profession feel well supported, and optimally equipped to be successful in this role. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine these experiences, as well as identify current and potential strategies to support a seamless transition for RPNs to practice within acute care. To further substantiate this study, the perspectives of Clinical Leader Managers (CLMs), Clinical Educator-Nursing (s) (CENs) and Charge Nurses (CNs) will also be included. The aim is to (a) evaluate how well RPNs adjust to working within an acute care setting, (b) examine the suitability of the professional environment for role fulfillment and completion, and (c) understand what strategies impact increased confidence and readiness to care for various patient assignments across differing units, within the acute care setting. A mixed methods study will be employed such that quantitative and qualitative measures will be utilized. The Assessment for Collaborative Environments (ACE-15), which is a validated survey tool focusing on role clarity, team functioning, and communication, will be administered to participants in tandem with in-depth, semi-structured interviews, guided by Jonathan Smith's Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology.

This research study is of significance and directly aligns with WeRPNs' strategic plan. The expected outcomes of this study are: (a) an increased depth of knowledge on RPNs' lived experiences within acute care settings, (b) the creation of effective onboarding protocols for integration into nursing and interprofessional teams, (c) an identification on factors that impact optimal role functioning, and (d) highlighting significant contributions of RPNs' in acute care. Moreover, this study can contribute to the growing body of evidence showing that better-staffed hospitals have improved patient outcomes, reduced mortality, and lower readmissions, which ultimately result in cost saving measures for the Ontario healthcare system (McHught et al., 2021). RPNs play a vital role towards the delivery of acute patient care. Therefore, it is critical that impacting factors to RPNs being optimally equipped within the acute care setting are identified. Ensuring this will not only have successful outcomes for RPNs as individuals, or within the broader nursing and/or interprofessional teams, but will also contribute to enhancing quality patient-centered care (Moore et al., 2017).

WeRPN – Externally Funded RPN Research Fellowships (2021-2022)	
Sonya Canzian Executive Vice-President – Programs Chief Nursing Executive and Chief Health Disciplines 30 Bond St. Toronto, ON M5B 1W8 Sonya.Canzian@unityhealth.to	Lyra Narita, RPN Hemodialysis Unit, St. Michael's Hospital 36 Queen Street East Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1W8

The objective of the research fellowship is to support our Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) fellow to build applied research knowledge and capacity to conduct a qualitative study using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) lens through collaborating in our project, "Barriers and Facilitators to the Practice of the Registered Practical Nurse in an Academic Acute Care Hospital." The fellow will be provided the unique opportunity to build applied research knowledge and capability through learning a stepwise approach to completing a qualitative study including a literature review, qualitative data collection via in-depth interviewing, data coding, thematic analysis, and manuscript development. This fellowship aligns with WeRPN's strategic directions around building competence in research engagement, advancing expertise, and driving evidence towards best clinical practice. Through

collaboration on this study, the fellow will be an integral member in supporting the development of data on the optimization of the RPN role and clinical skill set across the health system. Additionally, the fellow will have hands-on-experience in the advancement of research, which highlights the value and impact of RPNs in providing optimal care within the health system context.

Dr. Denise Connelly PhD
Associate Professor- School of Physical Therapy,
Associate Dean -Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Faculty of Health Sciences
Room 1588, Elborn College,
Western University, London, Ontario
dconnell@uwo.ca

Christina Khan, RPN
St. Joseph's Health Care
Parkwood Institute
550 Wellington Rd
London ON N6C 0A7

Registered practical nurses (RPNs) are well positioned to assist rehabilitation patients with achieving their goals by assisting with basic activities of daily living and promoting continuous and coordinated care. Despite these contributions, the rehabilitation practices of RPNs are undervalued, underutilized, and poorly described in Canadian literature. When compared to rehabilitation nursing competencies and standards of practice in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australasia, little is known about the roles and perceptions of RPNs working in inpatient geriatric and stroke rehabilitation units in Canada. The objective of this research is to explore and examine the perceptions of RPNs roles in rehabilitation units and map the RPNs rehabilitation practices to those outlined in existing frameworks. An embedded mixed-methods design will be used, involving (1) an online survey to assess RPNs' perceptions of rehabilitation nursing practices, (2) observations of RPNs to verify and record the behaviours and rehabilitation practices described by RPNs, and (3) semi-structured interviews to capture their understanding of nursing rehabilitation practices. Gaining a better understanding of the rehabilitation practices of RPNs could improve the rehabilitation of older adults in stroke and geriatric rehabilitation units and provide better insight into the contributions of RPNs to rehabilitation in Canada.

Specific objectives of the fellowship:

1. to engage the nominated RPN fellow in all aspects of the research process to provide exposure to, and training in, conducting research related to RPN practice; and

2. to train the RPN fellow in research skills and knowledge for conducting research, and to apply theoretical research methods to practice.