

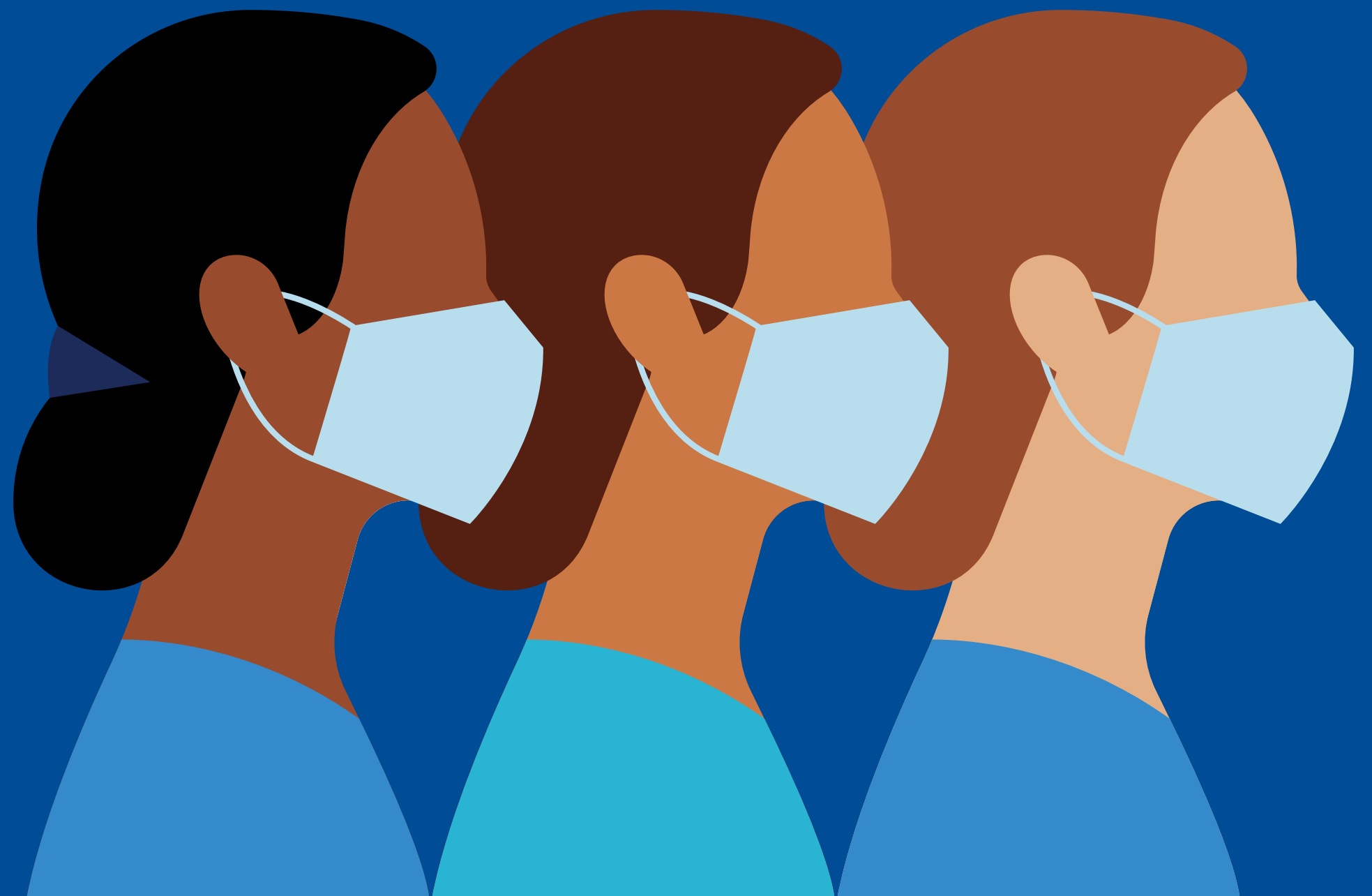
Resilient. Proud. Necessary:

A Portrait of Courage

2021/2022 Annual Report

We RPN

Registered Practical Nurses
Association of Ontario



We are Hope



As we look back on the last year, we've seen challenges. We've seen struggles. We've also seen resilience. We've seen WeRPN members benefit from the government funding programs we aggressively championed being put in place — programs such as NEI and BEGIN. They've been included in PTSD legislation. They've been assured four hours of care per resident in Long-Term Care (LTC).

We've seen members protected by the highest quality PLP insurance in the sector, improve their skills through professional practice programs and develop leadership skills through ongoing education.

But despite all of that, the majority of our members continue to face financial hardship and the normalization of untenable workloads.

WeRPN is not the only association that's been fighting this battle. Unions and other nursing groups in Ontario have been trying to address these issues and haven't been successful...yet.

We say 'yet' because when we look ahead to the upcoming year, we see hope.

We see that the public has heard our message with unprecedented media coverage. We see the government (albeit slowly) starting to recognize that

the path we're currently on when providing quality health care in this province is not sustainable. We're seeing more opportunities for practical nurses to build their skills — and apply those skills in ways that contribute to the health and wellness of all of us.

We're seeing strength in our numbers.

Our efforts may be working. But our work is not done.

As you'll see in this report, you're backed by an association and a Board of Directors that is working tirelessly to ensure your voice is heard — through advocacy, programming and providing forums for discussion, support and shared experiences. When Board terms conclude, as Suzanne's does this year, it can be difficult to step back because of the pride we take in how our profession and practice are perceived and respected. The passion for our work is all-consuming.

Small steps lead to big shifts — and we're only just beginning.

Dianne Martin
CEO

Suzanne Schell
President



We are across the health system

RPNs are regulated health professionals who deliver excellent care and support to patients, residents and clients across the continuum of care.



RPNs are the second-largest group of regulated health professionals in our healthcare system.



RPNs make up one-third of the province's nursing workforce.



Over 95% of RPNs provide direct care to patients across Ontario.



RPNs make up 66% of nurses in long-term care.

In a health system where resources are strained, pressures are mounting, care is evolving and everyone is at their most vulnerable, the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (WeRPN) builds the profile and professional capacity of RPNs so we can better care for our patients and better support our fellow health workers.

As leaders in professional practice, we champion the critical role of RPNs in Ontario's health system and offer ongoing professional development to support excellence, quality and safety of care.

Today, more than 50,000 RPNs support patients, clients and residents in Ontario hospitals, public health units, community, long-term care facilities, schools and private health providers.

Year by the numbers

1.26+
million
Visits to WeRPN.com

4
New Graduate
workshops
delivered

118
Nurses participated
in our online
education courses

4,000+
Total users accessing the Workplace
Violence Prevention Toolkit resources

16,647
Members Strong

34.6K
Followers on social
media platforms

10,000+
Users accessed the
De-escalation Toolkit

69
Presentations to
Practical Nursing
students at
Ontario colleges

1,400+
Registrants for monthly webinars

12
Student Bursaries
Awarded through the
Education Trust Fund

14,000+
People accessing our
Career Directions Toolkit

477
Approved
BEGIN
applicants

Up to
\$1,500/yr
in Professional Development
Grants provided through the
Nursing Education Initiative (NEI)



There's Strength in Numbers

Each new membership allows us to grow the impact we have on behalf of all RPNs. Over the past year, we continued our sustained membership growth. Our membership grew to 16,647, an increase of 93 members from the previous year.

As always, practical nursing students continue to be an essential part of our overall membership. Our professional practice team continued to engage with educational institutions over the past year, keeping our student membership strong. This year we were pleased to have 1,396 student members join our nursing community.

Enhancing the Value of Membership

WeRPN is committed to continually enhancing the value of membership by identifying new product and service offerings. This year we launched the Telus Health MyCare benefit that allows members to book video appointments with a family doctor, dietician and mental health counsellor. Members receive a special 25% discount on 50-minute sessions on Telus Health dietician and mental health counselling.

This year we continued to evolve the member experience through the development of orientation videos. Eight new videos were produced, offering valuable information on a variety of topics. This resource is available to new and returning members and provides information on WeRPN's benefits, where to access resources and how to get involved so that all members can get the most out of their membership.



We are here for you

Keeping Nurses Informed

WeRPN remains committed to disseminating relevant, timely and essential information, policy updates and news through various media such as newsletters, virtual sessions, emails and social media.

The Pulse Newsletter

WeRPN shared 10 issues of our monthly newsletter — The Pulse — which offers a rich variety of content, including RPN profiles, health insights, as well as resources for mental well-being.

We Are Practical Nursing Journal

WeRPN's publications catalogue also includes the We Are Practical Nursing journal. This bi-annual magazine has been a valuable resource for WeRPN members, each featuring original articles covering critical topics such as advocacy, wellness and research. This year we launched the digital edition of the journal to offer our 15,000+ readers the option to 'go paperless'. Due to supply chain issues, the spring-summer Journal was digital-only and we continue to explore various options for future editions.

Building Community on Social Media

To build and sustain meaningful engagement with RPNs across the province, we began monthly Facebook Live events on a range of topics. To complement these events, we posted articles, infographics and videos on Facebook and across all of WeRPN's platforms.

Social Media continued to be an important way to stay connected with RPNs throughout Ontario. We were pleased to see that from March 2022 to July 2022, our analytics increased on all fronts. Most notably, engagement with our posts has grown by 34% over the last year.

We were excited to learn what content resonated most with our members. Our top-performing posts featured our CEO Dianne Martin, her quotes and Facebook Live sessions. Engagement was also particularly high with posts featuring our BEGIN members and recent news reports.



Education and Practice Resources

To support RPNs as they navigate through day-to-day challenges, we held monthly We Learn webinars during the 2021-22 fiscal year. There were a total of 1,454 registrants and on average 42% of the participants attended.

This year we are excited to announce that the newly developed Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Basics for Healthcare Providers course received accreditation from the Canadian Nurses Association. We were pleased to have 118 participants and 25 Indigenous Canada employees use our e-Learning modules.

We continue to have robust engagement with our toolkits, the most popular being the Career Directions Toolkit with over 14,000 visits and our De-escalation Toolkit with over 10,000 visits. Our new Cover Letter Workbook and videos on Self-Marketing have also been useful resources for RPNs interested in advancing their careers.

We launched several self-care initiatives in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Self-Care Toolkit, with modules focused on developing resilience, was accessed by 5,800 members. This was supplemented by the new Positivity Workbook and two new videos highlighting different methods of self-care.

Students and New Grads

To support students and new graduates, we provided four new graduate workshops, each with a 60-person registrant capacity.

Through a virtual platform and online modules, we reached our highest level of student engagement, with 69 college presentations this year, and provided placements for three BHA students. In addition, WeRPN is a member of four College Professional Advisory Committees focused on advising academic program development and high-quality learning opportunities.

BEGIN Program

We were proud to launch the Bridging Educational Grant In Nursing (BEGIN) program in March 2022. This \$100 million program — sponsored by the Ministry of Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Health — provides tuition reimbursement for bridging from PSW to RPN and RPN to RN, respectively, in order to better retain health care workers who might otherwise leave health care altogether. The BEGIN program will aid in addressing the nursing shortage by supporting more than 2,000 additional nursing graduates by 2024–25.



**ATTENTION LTC OWNERS/PROCUREMENT OFFICERS/
OPERATORS/ADMINISTRATORS:**

WE'RE GROWING NURSES FOR YOU.

The new **BEGIN (Bridging Education Grant In Nursing) Program** supports PSWs and RPNs to bridge to PN and BScN programs respectively.

In exchange for generous tuition and wraparound supports, graduates agree to a return of service in the LTC and HCC sectors.

Our goal is to deliver 7,614 nurses to LTC and 3,802 nurses to HCC between now and 2024/25.

What do LTC/HCC employers need to know to be eligible to participate in BEGIN? You must:

- Be a licensed Ontario LTC facility OR a Home and Community Care provider with a service contract with an Ontario Health agency;
- Commit to offering full time RPN and/or RN roles to BEGIN graduates;
- Identify a member of your organization willing to mentor a newly hired nurse; and
- Report every 6 months on the BEGIN grant recipient's employment status.

For more information about how to participate contact info@begin.werpn.com

begin.werpn.com

BEGIN is a partnership between:



We are advocates

With healthcare still in a state of crisis, post-pandemic, WeRPN undertook several key advocacy issues on behalf of Ontario's RPNs. WeRPN continued to advocate for ways to strengthen our health system.

We were active participants in Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission process, putting forward several recommendations for new staffing models, innovative ways to recruit and retain more nurses and plans to enhance excellence in long-term care.

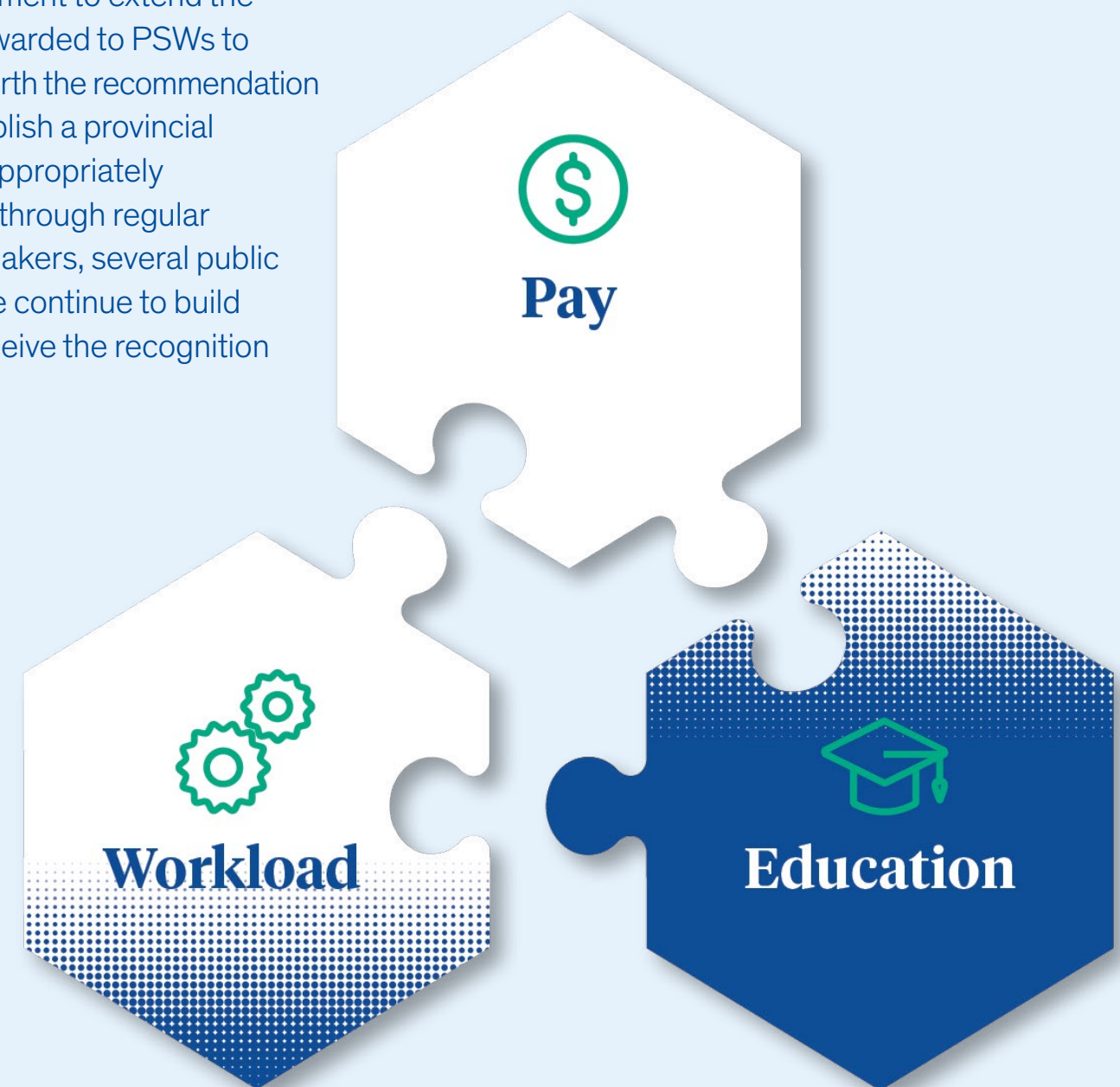
We have maintained active stakeholder roles on crucial government committees, including the Staffing Accelerator Working Group and Clinical Preceptor Working Group. We have also been urging for improved access to nursing education, professional development and streamlining bridging education for RPNs who are interested in laddering to the RN role.

Due in part to our advocacy, the government has expanded nursing programs in Ontario colleges, committed to growing the number of seats available for nursing students and begun providing financial support to qualifying students through the BEGIN program.

We know wages have been top of mind for many RPNs. For months, we urged the government to extend the \$3/hour pandemic pay top-up awarded to PSWs to nurses as well. We have also put forth the recommendation that the government should establish a provincial minimum wage for RPNs that is appropriately proportioned to RNs. We did this through regular engagement with key decision-makers, several public statements and media pieces. We continue to build bridges and push for RPNs to receive the recognition they deserve.

"I am so very proud to be an RPN and to be a part of the growing community of RPNs, especially amid a pandemic."

SUE STRUTH, RPN



We are listening

In May 2022, WeRPN conducted a comprehensive survey entitled “The State of Nursing in Ontario: A 2022 Review.” In total, over 760 RPNs across the province were polled. As a follow-up to a December 2020 survey, this study measured the conditions of provincial healthcare systems through the eyes of those caring for the public on the front lines every day.

The findings capture the declining situation for nursing professionals in Ontario. Nurses are working more hours, taking on more responsibilities and handling more patients, all without appropriate adjustments to their wages.

Alarming, 68% of nurses said they do not have enough time or resources to adequately care for patients and 66% reported that they’ve had to take on more patients as a result of increasing nurse-to-patient ratios. Additionally, many nursing professionals are having to work outside of their scope of practice. In fact, 87% said they’ve had to take on more responsibilities in their role and 84% have been asked to take on additional shifts or work overtime hours.

A staggering 86% of nurses admitted that their mental health has been adversely affected by the work they do. To compensate for growing workloads, 83% of respondents reported regularly missing breaks and

meals. Shockingly, 4 in 5 nurses have experienced moral distress on the job, an emotional state that arises from situations where nurses feel that the ethically correct action differs from what they are tasked to do. This figure has risen considerably from 68% in 2020.

Almost half of the surveyed RPNs are considering leaving this critical profession. 79% of respondents admitted that they’ve experienced a breaking point related to their job. In December 2020, amidst the first waves of the pandemic, this figure was lower at 71%. An important catalyst for this dissatisfaction is wage stagnation. An overwhelming majority of RPNs, 91% in fact, believe that they are unfairly compensated for their work.

In 2020, 67% of RPNs said they had never been prouder to be a nurse. Less than two years later, this statistic has tragically plummeted to just 36% — an undeniable reflection of the present-day realities in nursing.

WeRPN has released these findings to the public and participated in numerous radio, TV and print interviews, calling for action from government leaders and policymakers.



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We are professionals

Nursing Week

To celebrate the strength and resilience of the nursing profession, this year's Nursing Week highlighted *"The Heart and Science of Nursing"* to honour the dedication that RPNs display to their craft with presentations inspired by art, science and well-being. We organized a series of presentations by industry experts on a variety of topics including diabetes, foot care and art therapy, with more than 500 attendees. The week's events also included the annual *Nursing Now Ontario* awards, in partnership with the Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO), and an article entitled *"Healing nurses amid the pandemic: bringing the 'art' back to the profession we love,"* written by Dianne Martin and published in the Canadian Nurse online journal.

Mentorship Program

We were proud to offer meaningful opportunities for nursing professionals to connect in our Mentorship Program. This year, our program allowed experienced and new nurses to exchange knowledge and foster professional relationships, bringing our Mentorship Program to a total of 177 participants.

Ambassador Program

Our Ambassador program has continued to grow. It has proven to be a great initiative that continues to serve members in various ways; it allows our team to connect with, and disseminate information to, RPNs. This year, we were thrilled to welcome our dedicated roster of workplace and student ambassadors to the program. We appreciate their support in raising awareness about our programs and resources.

"I became a nurse because I wanted to make a difference and I love that as an RPN I have been given so many opportunities to do so."

RPN MEMBER



“

I am so very proud to be an RPN and to be a part of the growing community of RPNs, especially amid a pandemic. I have been a part of WeRPN (formerly RPNAO) since I received the RPNAO's Excellence Award at my pinning ceremony in 2009.

As an RPN and Practice Application Specialist at Conestoga College, I have the unique experience to have a part in facilitating and mentoring our PN students in both the lab and clinical environments as they move through their journey in the Practical Nursing Program. I also work in an LTC home and understand the complexity of the ever-growing scope of the RPN in LTC. I became a nurse because I wanted to make a difference and I love that as an RPN I have been given so many opportunities to make a difference. When I received the opportunity to work alongside Dr. Boscart in the research project funded by WeRPN, “Exploring the Role of the Registered Practical Nurse in Long-Term Care Homes”, I jumped at the idea. To be a part of a project that could impact RPNs who work in LTC Homes on how to optimize training and essentially provide them with the tools to succeed in their career is an honour and is so very exciting. Imagine how much of a difference we can make in the lives of the residents who call LTC their home with the appropriate training focused on the unique specialty of working in LTC. I am working with an amazing team, and I can't wait to see where these results take us and the impact it will have in the future for RPNs working in LTC.”

SUE STRUTH, RPN

We are innovators

Research

This year, we developed and implemented the first of a three-year strategic research plan. We were proud to begin by developing the inaugural Research Advisory Council, which includes representation from university and college academics, RPNs, patient/family representatives, WeRPN board members and staff. This contributed to the creation of an inquisitive culture for WeRPN staff and members. Other initiatives include three quarterly research webinars, with a total of 138 registrants, and the development of a new course — **“Demystifying research — An introduction to research for RPNs”** — in June 2022.

The focus of the research reflected the current trends across sectors and emphasized the value, impact and optimization of the RPN role, which was realized through nationally funded studies, WeRPN-funded small-phase academic research studies and WeRPN research fellowships. WeRPN partnered with Western University and received national funding for three

research studies, the first through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) with a value of \$25,000 plus a \$15,000 Mitacs Accelerate Internship Award. The second award of \$150,000 was received from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). The third was an additional SSHRC Partnership Engagement Grant received this year, in association with St. Elizabeth Health Services and VHA Home Healthcare, for the project entitled, **“Resiliency on the job as a home care nurse: experiences of Registered Practical Nurses to inform recruitment, retaining and revitalizing this workforce”**.

“When I was first asked to take part in this amazing research project, I immediately felt emotions of interest, enthusiasm and excitement. I am honoured to be invited to this amazing research team.

Many thanks to WeRPN for this extraordinary opportunity.”

LYRA, WeRPN FELLOW



We are recognized

Grants and Awards

Each year, WeRPN recognizes the dedication, passion and tenacity of Ontario's RPNs and their employers. Six RPNs were recognized for their outstanding contributions to nursing and one organization.

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital ***Employer Award of Excellence***

This award recognizes an employer that has demonstrated outstanding achievement in 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 **Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital** for its dedication to the preceptorship and mentorship of RPN students and new hires. To date, Holland Bloorview has 30-trained RPN preceptors who help support nursing student placements each year.

Cheryl Latondress, RPN ***Preceptor Award of Excellence***

This Preceptor Award honours an RPN who has contributed in a significant way as a role model for a



practical nursing student. Cheryl Latondress, an RPN at Hospice Simcoe, is recognized for her dedication to her students and her ability to create an open, welcoming, positive learning environment.

Samantha Diceman, RPN ***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. Samantha Diceman, RPN is described by colleagues as a warm and caring advocate, who is dedicated to excellent patient care and committed to innovation in telemedicine. Samantha holds a leadership role at the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre as the Manager of Resident Care for the Rideau Building. She is a strong advocate for excellence in nursing and empowers nurses to be champions of evidence-based practice.



Cassondra Kahrs, RPN

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. Cassondra Kahrs, this year's winner, is described by colleagues at VHA Home Healthcare as caring and sensitive. She is an asset to the palliative care team.

Kimberlee Newman

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

The Excellence in the Care of Older Ontarians Award celebrates the dedication of an RPN who provides exceptional care to older adults in a manner that is respectful, compassionate and professional. Kimberlee Newman is a thoughtful, hard-working RPN who is dedicated to providing excellent patient-centered care at Victoria Hospital. Her personalized approach-to-care has a tremendous impact on the quality of life of her patients and their families.

Leigh Chapman

President's Award

This award honours an individual, group, or organization that demonstrates outstanding commitment to furthering the utilization and recognition of RPNs in Ontario. This year's recipient, Leigh Chapman, respects and values RPN knowledge in palliative care. She is being recognized for her collaborative work to develop competencies that reflect nurses' specialized expertise and contributions to end of life care for patients and families.

Dr. Isaac Bogoch

Honorary Member Award

This award is given on occasion to individuals who go above and beyond to support RPNs and the broader nursing community. This year, we recognize and celebrate Dr. Isaac Bogoch with a WeRPN Lifetime Membership Award. In 2021, as Ontario managed one of the largest vaccination campaigns in our province's history, Dr. Bogoch highlighted nurses' voices and recognized the pivotal role that nursing professionals would play in ensuring the success of the vaccination plan.



Board and staff

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