

**Ministry of Health**

Office of the Chief of Nursing  
and Professional Practice and  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
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**Ministère de la Santé**

Bureau du chef des soins infirmiers  
et de la pratique professionnelle et  
sous-ministre adjoint  
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Toronto ON M7A 2J3



Dearest Colleagues,

As Chief of Nursing and Professional Practice and Assistant Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Health, it is my profound honour to extend heartfelt gratitude to our Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) who serve communities across Ontario with exceptional skill, compassion, and dedication.

Your role in our healthcare system is absolutely vital. RPNs are at the forefront of care in hospitals, long-term care homes, community health centres, and many other settings. You are not only caregivers but advocates, educators, and leaders who bring a deep understanding of both the clinical and emotional needs of patients. Your contributions are foundational to delivering high-quality, accessible care to Ontarians, and Ontario knows the strength of its healthcare system is reflected in the strength of its nursing workforce. Since 2018, nearly 100,000 additional nurses have registered to work in Ontario. In 2023, Ontario welcomed over 18,000 new nurse registrations – a record achievement – while another 30,000 nursing students are actively studying in Ontario colleges and universities.

To further strengthen its workforce, Ontario's "As of Right" rules empower out-of-province nurses already registered in other provinces and territories to immediately begin working in Ontario without awaiting registration with the College of Nurses of Ontario. Ontario will also begin consultations to allow American nurses to be included under these "As of Right" rules. These measures are designed to ensure that Ontario meets the evolving healthcare needs of its people swiftly and efficiently.

The Ministry of Health has several initiatives in place to help maintain a strong nursing workforce for the benefit of patients and the health system.

In 2024/25, we launched targeted initiatives to boost recruitment in Northern and rural communities, fostering local partnerships to create tailored and agile solutions. This investment underlines our shared commitment to ensuring that every Ontarian has access to quality healthcare.

As well, the Bridging Educational Grant in Nursing (BEGIN) is jointly offered by the Ministry of Health and the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (WeRPN) which provides tuition support to Personal Support Workers (PSWs) and RPNs to pursue further education to become RPNs and Registered Nurses, respectively, in exchange for a return of service in-home and community care, acute care and primary care.

As we celebrate nurses across the province this week, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you. You have shown unwavering commitment and professionalism, and Ontario is committed to supporting you at every step. Thank you for your service, your compassion, and your ongoing commitment to excellence in nursing. You are truly the heart of Ontario's healthcare system, and I am deeply proud to work alongside you in advancing the future of care in our province.

With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karima Velji".

Dr. Karima Velji  
Chief of Nursing and Professional Practice  
Assistant Deputy Minister of Health