



Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing  
Association canadienne des écoles de sciences infirmières

## **Nursing degrees are the gold standard for complex health-care demands**

**The Ottawa Citizen**

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Re: New rule worsens shortage of nurses, April 24.

Several letters have dealt with changes in nursing education. The Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing represents 91 baccalaureate nursing programs, 43 post-RN programs, 27 nurse practitioner programs, 28 master's programs and 13 PhD programs.

According to the national student and faculty survey of Canadian schools of nursing, 2003-2004, more than 25,919 students were enrolled in baccalaureate nursing programs, as compared to 8,283 students enrolled in diploma programs. Diploma nursing programs only remain in the provinces of Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta, with Quebec having the majority.

A post-RN program is an undergraduate nursing education program open to registered nurses who have a nursing diploma and who want a baccalaureate degree. The above survey reports that 5,535 diploma-prepared nurses were enrolled in post-RN programs; specifically, Quebec's joint university and CEGEP post-RN program reported 499 enrolled; and Ontario reported 1,625 enrolled. Post-RN programs show a consistent trend of enrolment in Ontario since 1999.

Other nursing programs prepare registered licensed practical nurses and internationally educated nurses to become baccalaureate nurses. A complete count of these programs and the total enrolled students is not yet available, as the options are new. Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Ontario are investing money in these programs to meet the demand of applicants.

The rationale for baccalaureate nursing programs lies in the increased complexity of Canadian health-care services and reform.

Our association and seven provinces believe that baccalaureate nursing programs are a gold standard for preparing professional nursing graduates. According to the Canadian Nurses Association fact sheet on nursing in Canada, 2003, the Atlantic provinces implemented baccalaureate as entry-to-practice in 1998, Ontario in 2005, Saskatchewan in 2000, British Columbia in 2006, and Alberta will meet the requirement in 2010; "The Northwest Territories Registered Nurses Association holds the position that the baccalaureate should be the required entry to practice"; and, "the Yukon has the highest percentage of baccalaureate graduates in the country."

Pat Griffin,

Executive director, Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing