

**Leadership/Clinical Practice
Fellowship Program**

Prospective Fellow/Mentor Information

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Overview

Nurses who are evolving in their roles and are assuming new challenges require support at a foundational level. (CPNA 2003) Acknowledging that nursing must continuously integrate policy changes, healthcare needs, new knowledge and evolving practice requirements, nurses must be supported to continuously grow as professionals.

The Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (RPNAO) has responded to requests from Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) who are interested in participating in mentoring relationships to highlight their nursing expertise and leadership.

The essence of the LCPF is a nurse mentoring experience aimed at developing and promoting nursing knowledge and expertise. The nurse, working together with a mentor will identify a gap in service or care delivery within his/her workplace and will develop a learning plan and budget targeted at addressing the gap. The result will impact on patient care with knowledge shared with through out the workplace for maximum results.

The length of the fellowship is 10 weeks and a total for a total of 400 hours. Each Fellowship awarded is for \$15,000. (two instalments of \$5,000 from RPNAO and \$5,000¹ from the sponsoring organization/employer).

The fellowship program administered by RPNAO aims to improve client care and outcomes in Ontario, with clients defined as individuals, families, groups or communities. It contributes to the retention of nurses by valuing expert knowledge and experience, and by providing professional development opportunities.

Various models of mentorship between the mentor and the fellow may be considered. Mentors and fellows can be from the same organization, or from different health care agencies. The Fellowship experience can be held at the fellow's organization, the mentor's organization, or a combination of both. Distance mentoring strategies can also be developed and incorporated into the fellowship.

¹ This may be an in-kind contribution.

How to Become a Fellow

Fellows must clearly identify, based on the best available evidence, a need for or gap in, clinical expertise development and outline how the development of the specific clinical expertise will positively affect patient/client care and outcomes.

Fellows must locate a suitable mentor who will contribute to development of clear and achievable learning goals, learning plan and, establish a budget outlining sponsor organization funding and support. Fellows are responsible for obtaining consent and financial support from an employer sponsor. This sponsor will typically be their current employer.

Education:

- Evidence of current registration as a Registered Practical Nurse with the College of Nurses of Ontario.
- Evidence of continuing education in the specific clinical area. This could be in the form of specialized education or certification in the chosen focus area.

Additional Qualifications:

- Documented recognition from supervisor and or, colleagues of potential to serve as a clinical expert resource
- Excellent verbal and written skills
- Computer literacy
- Team player
- Willingness to share experiences and pass on learning's to others

Experience:

- Must be currently employed, and employed for the duration of the fellowship
- At least 3-5 years of experience as an RPN
- At least 1 year of recent practice in the relevant clinical area
- Professional presentations within or, external to agency an asset
- Experience with evidence-based practice or research utilisation an asset

Deliverables

Nurses participating in the Fellowship will be expected to:

- participate in obtaining/developing background research to support development of the proposal and budget
- provide two written reports citing progress outlined in the learning plan (templates are available)
- share learning with colleagues within the workplace and,
- participate in follow up evaluations with RPNAO.

How to Become a Mentor

Mentors are a key component to the success of the Fellowship. Their insight into the overall impact of the initiative is critical. For some mentors, having the fellow working with them provides the opportunity for projects to be completed that they might not otherwise have been able to do. Examples included literature searches, educational packages, implementation of best practices etc. The mentor will be accountable to the employing organization, the RPNAO and, the fellow.

Mentor Responsibilities:

- Participation and involvement with proposal development and strategy
- Educating the fellow about his/her speciality area of clinical practice
- Providing supervised opportunities to gain speciality knowledge and skills
- Monitoring the fellow's progress and creating conditions for success
- Participating in evaluation of the fellow
- Participating in data collection for evaluation of the fellowship program

Qualifications:

- Post-basic educational preparation
- Recognised expert in the speciality area of practice
- Masters degree in nursing (or equivalent specific to the topic area) or, has equivalent clinical expertise within a health care discipline.
- Current registration with the College of Nurses of Ontario, or comparable governing body in province/country of the primary mentor
- Knowledge and experience of adult education strategies
- Experienced practitioner with leadership and motivational skills

Accountability:

The Mentor will be accountable to the individual clinical fellow, employer organization and the RPNAO.

Targeted Outcomes

Fellows

The direct impacts on nurses who are successful in obtaining a Fellowship include enhanced skills, knowledge, professionalism, and self-esteem and, in some cases, opportunities for enhanced nursing roles.

Opportunity exists for the fellow to:

- Be re-energized to further pursue continuing professional development
- Gain recognition from co-workers and employer
- Experience greater job satisfaction
- Have a greater impact on positive patient outcomes
- Develop enhanced critical thinking
- Experience organizational change
- Having a greater impact in patient care and the development of evidence based practice by bringing forward direct care experience and expertise and be viewed through opening eyes of research

Mentors

Mentors have the potential to bridge the gap between theory and nursing practice and provide guidance for transformational leadership. Mentoring experiences also allow for improved patient care, job satisfaction and increases risk taking. (RNAO Practice Page, July 2003)

Employer Sponsors

Employers that have sponsored fellows open the door to many benefits from involvement. These include having nurses with increased leadership skills and job satisfaction. The Fellows are able to teach new skills and share newfound expertise to their peers both formally and informally having further benefit and impact on patient care.

Examples of Past LCP Fellowships

SCO Health Service – Promoting RN-RPN Collaboration When There is a Change in Patient Condition

Sunnybrook & Woman’s College Health Sciences Centre - Post Discharge Pain

Niagara Health System - Clinical Nursing Expertise in the Care and treatment of Mental Health Clients with Concurrent Disorders

Hamilton Health Sciences - Perioperative Circulating Role For the RPN

Hamilton Health Sciences - Research Focused Fellowship; Improved Care of Stroke Patients

Niagara Regional Health - Clinical Focus; Expanded role of the RPN in Medical Surgical Units

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre– The Registered Practical Nurses as Practice Consultant and Educator

SCO Health Service - Understanding Multicultural Practices and Beliefs at End of Life

Niagara Regional Health - Developing the Role of the RPN in the ER Setting

Others examples exist and will be considered if they are presented to RPNAO for consideration and, are directly linked to leadership and/or clinical practice.

Proposal Review

A panel of nurses' reviews all proposals based on the following key criteria:

- Direct links from the Fellowship and skills acquired to improved client/patient care and client outcomes
- Clarity, comprehensiveness, and feasibility of learning goals and learning plan
- Established need for clinical expertise development by the applicant and employer, and impact on the Fellow's practice
- Evidence of commitment from sponsor organization, in the form of two detailed letters of support,
- Clearly established and detailed budget contributions
- Detailed substantive involvement outlined for sharing and sustaining the newly acquired learning after completion of the fellowship
- Confirmation of a suitable mentor(s) with appropriate expertise and evidence of support from the primary mentors health care organization in the form of a detailed letter of support

How to Make a Submission

If after reading about the fellowship program, you are interested in submitting a proposal, it is advised that you contact RPNAO at rhernandez@rpnao.org or phone at 905-602-4664 x 230. Please be prepared to describe initial details of the fellowship. A copy of the proposal can be found online at www.rpnao.org.