



periOperative Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
Registered Nurse First Assistant

Report to ORNAO Board
June 14, 2008

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There are currently 89 fully educated RNFAs in Ontario of which 80 are available to work. One full-time RNFA position, effecting two RNFAs was eliminated in 2007 at Trillium Health Centre, Mississauga. Both RNFAs have found employment as RNFAs, elsewhere. Currently 39 RNFAs are working either full or part-time.

The chair, continues ongoing discussion with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care(MOHLTC), regarding the RNFA Ministry initiative. Funding has been expanded to a second group of hospitals, effective April 1, 2008.

In October 2007, Dr. Joshua Tepper, the Assistant Deputy Minister (MOHLTC) sent out a letter and a second survey to hospitals. Money is being reallocated from the 1st round, where hospitals have not utilized the funding for RNFAs. The goal is to get a minimum of 43 working RNFAs in order to evaluate our effectiveness.

Good response was received from the 2nd survey sent to hospitals regarding the RNFA 50% funding proposal. Hospitals who received the 1st survey did NOT receive the 2nd survey. (If you declined during the first round, you were not eligible to participate in the 2nd round of funding).

13 additional hospitals will be using RNFAs for a total of 28 hospitals, plus those using RNFAs not involved in the MOHLTC initiatives (St. Mary's Hospital, Kitchener, Trillium Health Centre, cardiac RNFAs at Southlake Regional Health Centre, Newmarket)..

Funding can now be used to educate RNFAs and is no longer linked to orthopaedic wait times.

Below is a list of the original and the newly funded hospitals:

Round 1 Funded Organizations

Hôpital régional de Sudbury Regional Hospital
Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital, Windsor
Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital, Burlington
Kingston General Hospital
Lakeridge Health Corporation, Oshawa
Quinte Healthcare Corporation, Belleville
Southlake Regional Health Centre, Newmarket
St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto
The Royal Victoria Hospital of Barrie Inc.
University Health Network, Toronto
Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation
Sault Area Hospital
Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Toronto
The Brantford General Hospital
The Scarborough Hospital, Toronto

Round 2 Funded Organizations

Hanover & District Hospital
Headwaters Health Care Centre, Orangeville
Hôpital Général de Hawkesbury & District General Hospital
North Bay General Hospital
Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital
Riverside Health Care Facilities Inc., Fort Francis
Rouge Valley Health System, Toronto
Sensenbrenner Hospital, Kapuskasing
St. Joseph's Health Services Association of Chatham, Incorporated
The Credit Valley Hospital, Mississauga
Timmins and District Hospital
University of Ottawa Heart Institute

The RNFA positions will be evaluated after a period of two years to determine the role's effectiveness. At present, the MOHLTC has no formal mechanism for the evaluation, but is envisioning an evaluation process that looks at the following:

- Impact on OR cancellations
 - Readiness to conduct surgery
- Wait times for surgery
- Team effectiveness
 - Right person, right place, right time
 - Best support system to ensure quality patient care
- OMA wants impact on billing
- Resource allocation
- Organizations have a commitment not to replace MDs who wished to assist with RNFAs
- RNFAs are to augment the available assistant pool, not replace physicians
- Utilize similar criteria used in the evaluation of other new roles e.g. Nurse Practitioners (did not share what this was)

- Plan to create an advisory committee to create the evaluation criteria to be used in all 28 hospitals
- Plan to contract a researcher to formally evaluate the program

Mohawk College/McMaster University is starting an RNFA program with a start date for the fall 2008 or spring 2009. Susan Carver is the program head. Algonquin College in Ottawa has also expressed an interest in setting up a RNFA program.

Effective April 2008, US based RNFA programs recognized by the Competency & Credentialing Institute (CCI) and AORN will accept the Canadian CPN(C) in lieu of the US CNOR. Individuals wanting to become RNFAs in Ontario and not being able to find a RNFA -program in Canada with a start date that works for them, have been turning to US based RNFA programs to become educated.

The ORNAO RNFA website www.rnfa-ontario.ca continues to be an excellent resource for RNFAs and those interested in the role in Ontario, Canada and abroad. It is updated and maintained on a regular basis.

The ORNAO RNFA Interest Group continues to be an associate interest group of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario and had an exhibit displayed at the RNAO AGM in April 2008.

As chair of the group, I have been invited to numerous nursing student conferences and programs in the past year and have spoken about the RNFA role. In May 2008, I was invited by the MOHLTC to participate in an expert panel to estimate the impact of other health professionals on physician productivity.

The group continues to communicate predominantly via email with bimonthly meetings held at Trillium Health Centre, Mississauga, Ontario. Teleconferencing (courtesy of Trillium Health Centre) has been available to those not able to physically attend the RNFA Interest Group meetings.

The group continues to sell RNFA pins and lanyards to generate some income to help support the operational costs of the group and website. The group gratefully acknowledges any financial support that they have received from the ORNAO board in the past.

Respectfully submitted by
Grace Groetzsch
RN, BScN, MEd, CPN(C), CRNFA