

Advanced Clinical Practice Fellowship: Fact Sheet for Mentors

The *Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario* (RNAO), through funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, has developed an innovative and highly successful initiative aimed at developing and promoting nursing knowledge and expertise, and improving client care and outcomes in Ontario. The Advanced Clinical Practice Fellowship (ACPF) is designed to provide a Registered Nurse (RN) with a focused self-directed learning experience to develop clinical, leadership or best practice guideline implementation knowledge and skills, with support from a mentor(s), the organization where the RN is employed, and the RNAO.

Mentors are a key component to the success of the ACPF initiative. Their insight into the overall impact of the initiative is critical, and many reflect on the personal satisfaction they get from facilitating the development of skills and expertise in their fellow nurses. Mentors, in addition to being a master's prepared nurse, play a critical role in developing the proposal and learning plan as well as providing feedback, monitoring progress and creating conditions for a successful fellowship. Mentors also acknowledge the benefit to them - the knowledge they've gained as a result of their mentoring experience.

For some Mentors, having the Fellow working with them provides the opportunity for projects to be completed that otherwise may not have been possible. Examples include literature searches, development of educational resources, policy development, etc. There are also examples where the Fellow's agenda furthered the strategic priorities of the Mentor's organization. In other words, the ACPF benefits the Fellow, the Mentor(s) and their respective organization. Mentors and their organizations are also being impacted by their involvement in the ACPF.

Here are some comments from past mentors in the ACPF:

- *We were able to establish effective community teams with local CCACs approximately 6 months to 1 year earlier because of the ACPF. Now I am able to do what I am supposed to do because the Fellows in their sponsoring organizations are more skilled/trained and making the appropriate referrals to my unit. All the way around, it was win-win.*
- *...Worthwhile tenfold- difficult in home care to get nursing questions answered because everyone is stretched and working at 150%. When questions impacting on the profession come up, this is a great way to tackle it.*
- *...Increased expertise right on the unit so that nurses are doing better assessments and referring to the rest of the Palliative Care Team Consultants more appropriately.*
- *I was thrilled to be a part of this project. The Fellow was a superb professional and very interested in improving client outcomes. I am happy to have her now as part of my network when trying to implement clinical challenges related to wound care. I taught her and also learned myself - that is the best outcome. It was an equal partnership.*

Additional information can be obtained on the RNAO website <http://www.rnao.ca/acpf>. Application template and RFP document will only be posted during an open RFP period.