

# OUR VISION

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## OUR VISION

No one lives in poverty.

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## OUR VISION

Our environment is free of toxics.

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## OUR VISION

The health system helps people stay healthy - physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively.

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## OUR VISION

Our publicly funded, not-for-profit health system includes pharmacare and home care.

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## OUR VISION

Everyone has same day access to a primary care provider working within an interprofessional team.

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## OUR VISION

RNs can diagnose, treat minor illnesses and write prescriptions.

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## OUR VISION

NPs can admit, treat and discharge patients across all sectors of the health system.

Nurses know what it will take to achieve a better, more responsive and sustainable health system. Above all, it means putting you first. And it means changing the way we think about health care. How we deliver care. Where we deliver that care. And who delivers it. The changes we envision will lead to a stronger health system that is focused on helping you to stay healthy, and is there for you when you are sick. This is what Ontarians need and deserve and this is what nurses are committed to achieving.

## GET INVOLVED

RNAO wants to hear from you. We plan to organize public consultations so you can help us make sure our health system delivers what you need.

Interested in learning more about our vision for the future of the health system and nursing in Ontario?

Check out [www.vision.RNAO.ca](http://www.vision.RNAO.ca)



# OUR VISION covers every part of our health system

What will Ontario's health system look like in five, 10 or 15 years from now? What kind of care will you and your loved ones need in the future?

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) believes it's important to look down the road today and begin planning for tomorrow's health system.

This is why Ontario's nurses have developed a bold vision.

## WHY DO WE NEED A VISION?

It's easy to take the "business-as-usual" approach. But the reality is that our population is growing, our communities are changing and technology is rapidly evolving. That's why we need to act now.

## WHAT IS OUR VISION?

We see a health system that has shifted its focus from illness care to one that emphasizes what it means to be and stay healthy. A health system that ensures you and your family have timely access to a health professional when you need one, whether it's for advice, a regular check-up, to help you manage your diabetes or asthma, or to treat a serious illness. When we look into the future, we see a health system that does a better job of putting people first.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

Nurses who work in public health play a key role in the health of individuals and communities. They help young mothers keep their babies healthy, make sure older people are well cared for and can manage chronic diseases. They also help communities cope with infectious diseases and outbreaks and promote overall health and well-being. Good health also depends on the environment around you. Access to nutritious food, clean water, good sanitation practices, and safe cities are essential too. Living in decent housing, having enough income to live on and access to child care also affect your health. RNAO's vision is to make sure these social and environmental determinants of health are given greater attention so we can decrease social inequities and sustain our future.

### PRIMARY CARE

Primary care is your first encounter with a health professional. If you get the care you need at this stage, in a timely way, chances are you will get better and be on your way. In an international comparison, a 2013 survey ranked Canada last when it comes to access to a primary care provider. Only 41 per cent of Canadians can get a same-day or next-day appointment with a primary care provider. RNAO believes we can do much better. That's why we think the role of registered nurses (RN) should be expanded so they can do what nurses in other countries are already doing, such as diagnosing and treating minor illnesses and prescribing medications. This will free up doctors and nurse practitioners (NP) to look after people with more complex needs. Our vision is one where everyone in Ontario has same-day access to interprofessional care.

### HOSPITAL CARE

When you're very ill or when you need surgery, you need the expert care that only hospitals can provide. We must do better to ensure hospitals put you at the centre. By strengthening community care, our hospitals will function even more effectively. Our vision includes matching the right care provider with your needs. It also means making full use of RNs and NPs so you can get better faster.

### HOME CARE

Everyone in Ontario deserves to live in their home and with dignity. Studies show people can live longer, happier lives if they can 'age in place'. We can help seniors and others living with chronic conditions or mental illness live in a safe home, with access to the proper health services. Our vision means home care services are provided universally and 24/7.

### REHAB, COMPLEX & LONG-TERM CARE

Maybe you don't need to be in a hospital and, yet, you can't live at home on your own. Perhaps you need rehabilitation or another type of specialized care. Our vision is one where your needs are matched with the appropriate care provider in the most appropriate setting.

## HOW DO WE MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

The changes we propose are needed throughout the health system. But they can't happen unless we make sure the following provisions are in place:

### Investing in social and environmental determinants of health

Keeping people healthy requires an investment by our government. Being able to earn a living wage, having access to affordable housing, adequate social assistance, and an environment that is clean and free of toxics are essential for people's health and well-being.

### Strengthening our publicly funded, not-for-profit health system

A lot of naysayers spread fear about the future of our health system. They say it can't be sustained. And that privatizing our system is the only way people can get the care they need. RNAO knows this isn't true because the research shows public funding and not-for-profit health services deliver more, better and faster care. It also costs less. This is why we should expand Medicare to include pharmacare and home care.

### Promoting evidence-based practice

For years, nurses have been on the leading edge of evidence-based patient care. In fact, RNAO has developed over 40 clinical and 10 healthy work environment best practice guidelines that are used all over the world. These guidelines focus on disease prevention and cure. Widespread adoption of these guidelines will benefit you, and will help to make our health system more responsive, efficient and cost effective.

### Ensuring we have an adequate number of RNs

Did you know that Ontario has the second-worst RN-to-population ratio in the country? We need 17,600 additional RNs to catch up with the national average. The government has the power to reverse this trend. That's why our vision includes a concerted focus by government and employers to retain and hire additional RNs and NPs, and to offer wage parity to begin closing the gap. This will help provide the kind of care you and your family need.

### Making sure all RNs practise to their full and expanded scope

RNs are an essential part of our health system, and there is clear evidence linking the care they provide with higher quality health outcomes, fewer complications, and lower rates of death. Their contribution to the health system would be even greater if the barriers that prevent RNs from realizing their true potential were lifted and their roles were expanded. This would lead to faster and better care for you. That's why we are urging the government to deliver on its promise to expand the scope of practice of RNs so you can benefit from their knowledge and expertise.

### Fostering interprofessional, person-centred teamwork

Health professionals don't work in isolation. We believe the best health system is one where all health providers work together, in full partnership with you and your loved ones. This is how we envision timely, high-quality, person-centred care.