

What is a nurse practitioner?



Nurse practitioners (NP), also known as registered nurses (RN) in the extended class, are RNs who have additional graduate education, practice experience and exam requirements set by the College of Nurses of Ontario. They are authorized to: admit, transfer and discharge from hospital; diagnose, order and interpret diagnostic tests; prescribe medications and other treatments, and more!

How is the scope of practice broader for NPs than RNs?

NPs can, for example:



independently diagnose and treat illnesses



order and interpret diagnostic tests including X-rays, ultrasound, blood tests, point-of care-testing, MRIs and CT scans



prescribe a broader range of medications, including controlled substances



set and cast fractures and dislocated joints

A select history of the NP role and RNAO's leading advocacy:

1800s - 1900s

Rural and remote "outpost nurses" in place of physicians.

1960s: NP role emerges in primary health care.



1997

The Expanded Nursing Services for Patients Act, 1997 formalizes the NP role in Ontario.



2007 - 2008

2007: The first NP-led clinic (NPLC) opens its doors in Sudbury.

2008: At an RNAO media conference, the Ontario government commits to opening 25 additional NPLCs.



2010

NPs are able to enroll in Canada's first Anesthesia Care program at the University of Toronto.



2011 - 2012

Advocated by RNAO, amendments to Regulation 965 of the Public Hospitals Act, 1990 expanded NP scope of practice to admit, treat, transfer and discharge hospital inpatients.



2014

Ontario commits to hire 75 attending NPs in long-term care.

2017 - 2018

NP authority is expanded to prescribe controlled substances.

2019

RNAO continues to call for greater numbers of NPs and role expansion to increase access to health care for all.

2022

NP authority expanded to include point of care testing, MRIs, CT scans.

What is the status of NPs in Ontario today?

NPs add value to the health system and advance the goals of the Quadruple Aim

- Patients report high satisfaction with NP care.

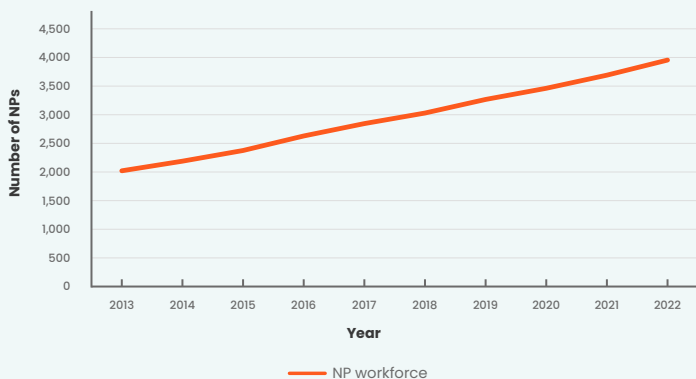
- NPs report higher satisfaction when working to full practice scope.
- RNs, RPNs and other health-care workers report high satisfaction when working with NPs.



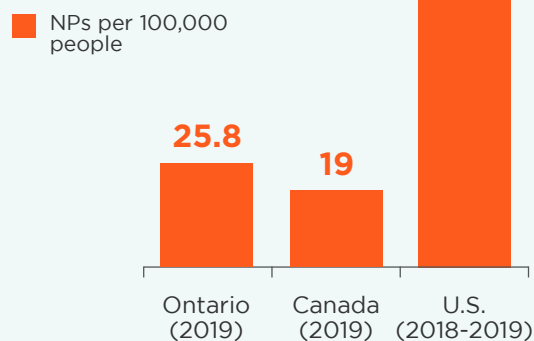
- NPs provide primary care as safely and effectively as physicians.
- NPs improve timely access to care and patient outcomes across all settings.
- NPs are leaders in advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

- NPs deliver high quality outcomes for less.
- NPs save health dollars by increasing primary care access, reducing need for ER and hospital care.

NP workforce in Ontario, 2013 - 2022



Per capita comparison of NPs in Ontario, Canada and the U.S.



Optimizing NP utilization



Ontario needs more NPs to meet the higher demands for NP expert services in our transforming health system.



More NP student placement opportunities are needed within marginalized and underserved populations and communities, including rural and remote areas.



Legislative and practice changes are needed to enable NPs to work to full scope and capacity and expand their scope of practice.



We need to raise awareness about NP roles and capabilities through public education that reflects the high level of satisfaction people have with their NPs.



NP remuneration and benefits must be equitable and fair within and across sectors.



Public funding is needed for more NP clinics and more roles for NPs to practice autonomously.