

Nurses' Health Program (NHP) Background



What is the Nurses' Health Program?

- The Nurses' Health Program (NHP) is a voluntary bilingual program for Ontario nurses. It is designed to encourage nurses to seek treatment for mental health and/or substance use disorders that may affect their ability to practice nursing safely.
- It is an evidence-based approach that focuses on early identification and referral for treatment.
- The program is modelled on similar ones used by other regulated health professions across the province.
- The program monitors the nurses' recovery so that they may be supported to practice safely or return to practice, which promotes professional accountability and protects the public.
- The new program does not replace the College of Nurses of Ontario's (CNO) [regulatory process](#) but provides an opportunity for nurses to self-refer and get the support and monitoring they need.

Who is NHP for?

- NHP is for Ontario nurses (RN, RPN and NP) with mental health and/or substance use disorders. It provides an opportunity for them to receive treatment and support to recover and practice safely.

Why have a Nurses' Health Program?

- No one is immune from mental health and/or substance use disorders. They can affect anyone regardless of age, ethnicity, gender or occupation – including nurses.
- Without appropriate treatment and monitoring, these disorders can impact a nurse's ability to practice safe nursing.
- Nurses benefit from specialized treatments that recognize their unique needs as health care professionals.
- There is significant research indicating that voluntary and confidential professional health programs are highly effective in supporting recovery while protecting the public.

How does it work?

- Nurses can enter the program voluntarily through self-referral or as an alternative to the current [regulatory process](#) of CNO.
- The program includes a dedicated case manager, a comprehensive assessment and an individualized treatment plan.

- NHP monitors the nurses' recovery, so that they may be supported to practice safely or return to practice.
- The program's focus reflects the balance between supporting nurses in recovery and protecting the public. With the right support nurses can continue or return to safe nursing practice benefiting both the nurse and the public.

Who runs the program?

- The Nurses' Health Program was developed by the [College of Nurses of Ontario](#) (CNO), the [Ontario Nurses' Association](#) (ONA), the [Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario](#) (RNAO) and the [Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario](#) (RPNAO).
- NHP is an incorporated not-for-profit organization overseen by a Board of Directors with equal representation from each of the four nursing organizations. This governance model demonstrates a shared commitment to the goals of the program.
- The program operations are administered by Lifemark Health Group.

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About the partners:

The [College of Nurses of Ontario](#) (CNO) is the regulatory body for the province's 175,000 Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses and Nurse Practitioners. Its mission is to regulate nursing in the public interest.

The [Ontario Nurses' Association](#) (ONA) is the union representing more than 65,000 registered nurses and health-care professionals, as well as 18,000 nursing student affiliates, providing care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community, clinics and industry.

The [Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario](#) (RNAO) is the professional association representing registered nurses, nurse practitioners, and nursing students in Ontario. Since 1925, RNAO has advocated for healthy public policy, promoted excellence in nursing practice, increased nurses' contribution to shaping the health-care system, and influenced decisions that affect nurses and the public they serve. For more information about RNAO, visit our website at RNAO.ca or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Founded in 1958, the [Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario](#) (RPNAO) is the voice of registered practical nursing in Ontario. There are approximately 43,000 RPNs working in Ontario, playing a vital role in the province's health care system. To learn more about RPNAO and how RPNs contribute to Ontario's health care system, please visit www.rpnao.org.