

RN Prescribing

Question to MPP: Will you support amendments to the Nursing Act and subsequent regulations/standards that create an enabling framework for RN prescribing?

A key enabler of health system effectiveness involves utilizing all health-care professionals, including nurses, to their full competencies, knowledge and skills. In 2012, RNAO led an expert provincial task force which identified the opportunity to expand the role of RNs to include the ability to prescribe medication, order diagnostic testing and communicate a diagnosis (referred to as RN prescribing).¹ This recommendation was based upon a mountain of evidence demonstrating the success of RN prescribing in the United Kingdom. We believe that Ontarians are ready for RNs to play an expanded role in the delivery of their care. RN prescribing supports professional practice and can improve health system access and alleviate wait times. RN prescribing will be a key enabler of the government's commitment to producing access to 24/7 primary care by 2018.

At RNAO's 88th Annual General Meeting, Premier Kathleen Wynne recognized that nurses want their scope of practice to match their expertise. She committed to working with the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and RNAO to identify opportunities to expand their scope, including an exploration of RN prescribing.² This was followed by a formal commitment towards RN prescribing in May 2014.³

RNAO recommends that RN prescribing be based on an enabling framework that improves access to care by recognizing the broad depth of RNs' expertise. A key learning from the U.K. experience is that prescribing lists are restrictive and unintentionally present barriers to achieving care. Instead, there must be recognition that RNs are self-regulated professionals with the duty to understand the limits of our practice. Appropriate standards can be established that utilize this duty, while advancing access to care for Ontarians.

References:

- ¹ Primary solutions for primary care: Maximizing and expanding the role of the primary care nurse (June 2012). *Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario*. Retrieved from: http://rnao.ca/sites/rnao-ca/files/Primary_Care_Report_2012_0.pdf
- ² Enhancing the role of Ontario nurses. (2013, April 12). Government of Ontario. Retrieved from: <http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2013/04/enhancing-the-role-of-ontario-nurses.html>
- ³ More nursing powers, better care. (2014, May 16). *Liberal Party of Ontario*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ontarioliberal.ca/newsblog/NewsDetails.aspx?id=More+Nursing+Powers+%2C+Better+Care>