

January 2010

BACKGROUNDER ON ONTARIO RNS 2009

Overview of the RN workforce, which is broken into RNs in the general class and RNs in the extended class (“Nurse Practitioners” or “NPs” here). Unless otherwise specified, “RN” refers to RN in the general class. Nursing data are from College of Nurses of Ontario Membership Statistics Report 2009. All figures are for January 1 of each calendar year.

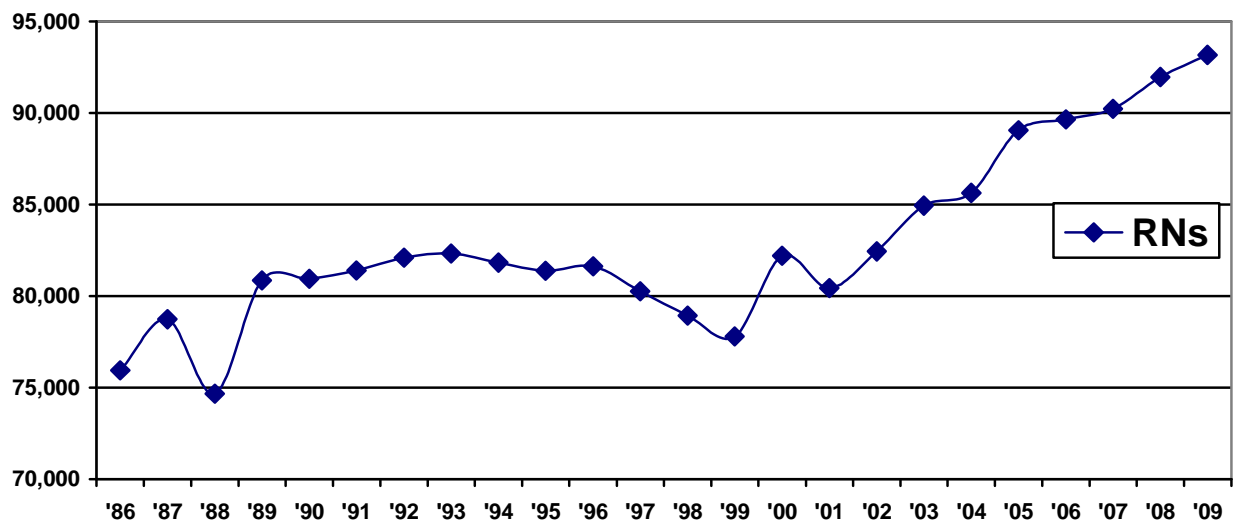
Number of RNs registered to practise in 2009 (2008 in brackets):

- 111,014 (109,823) RNs in general class
- 1,206 (938) Nurse Practitioners
- 112,220 (110,761) all RNs

Number of RNs working in nursing in Ontario in 2009 (2008 in brackets):

- 93,171 (91,965) RNs in general class
- 1,120 (868) Nurse Practitioners
- 94,291 (92,833) all RNs

Trend in Ontario Employment: RN (General Class)



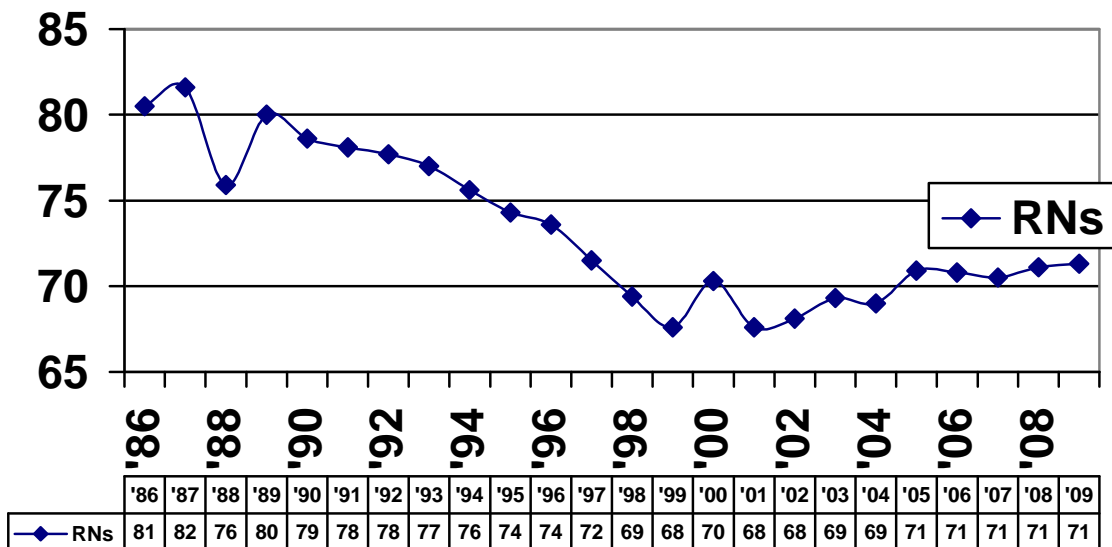
Ontario employment for RNs (general class)

The period of the 1990s saw stagnation in the growth of the RN workforce, with falling employment in the latter 1990s. At the same time, the population continued to grow rapidly and age, so the need for nursing services was growing at the same time as nurse were being laid off (see above chart). The 1999 Nursing Task Force report outlined these problems and their implications for the profession and for client outcomes. Concerted efforts by successive governments since that time have reversed the downward trend in nursing employment. RN employment has been trending upwards since that time, as the above chart shows.

Number of Working RNs/10,000 People (general class)

The plunging RN/population ratio provides statistical evidence to explain the sharp rise in workloads reported by many RNs (dropping from over 80 per 10,000 people to 68: second chart). After 1999, successive governments sought to undo the damage from shrinking the nursing workforce. The result has been a rise in the RN employment (above chart) and a reversal in RN/population trend (after dropping from over 80 per 10,000 people to 68, it has recovered to over 71: second chart). We have not recovered to ratios that prevailed in the 1980s, but the reversal is important, and the improvement is significant.

Trend in RNs/10,000 Population (General Class)



Trend in RN Employment per 10,000 Population: Ontario vs. Rest of Canada (ROC)

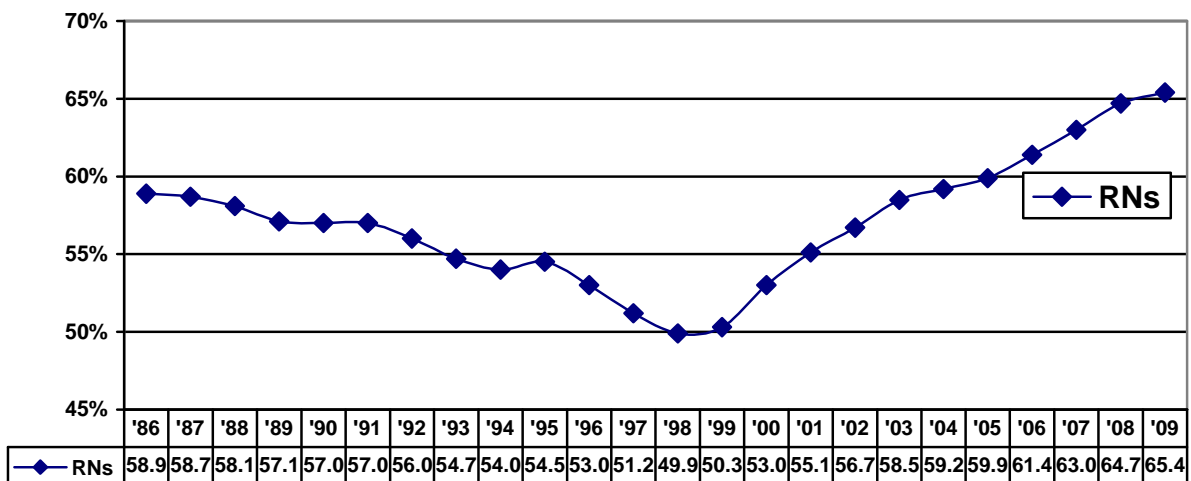
Even though Ontario's RN-to-population ratio is improving, the province consistently ranks below the rest of the country. Only British Columbia has the distinction of having a lower RN-to-population ratio than Ontario. The latest data available for national comparison (2008) show that Ontario is well below the national ratio with 71.8 RNs per 10,000 population,ⁱ compared with the rest of Canada at 82.9 per 10,000 population. The difference works out to 13.4 per cent. This inevitably has significant workload implications. In order for Ontario to catch up with the rest of Canada, it would have to add 14,320 more RNs to its workforce.

Interprovincial Comparison of RN Workforce per 10,000 Population		
Jurisdiction	1994	2008
N.W.T./Nunavut	64.6	281.9
N.L.	90.1	112.7
P.E.I.	87.1	105.8
N.B.	101.4	103.8
Y.T.	68.4	100.8
N.S.	98.8	94.5
Man.	89.8	90.3
Sask.	84.1	86.8
Que.	85.1	84.6
Rest of Canada	84.2	82.9
Alta.	80.9	79.5
Ont.	75.2	71.8
B.C.	75.0	68.2

Employment Status

The measured share of full-time employment for RNs in the general class rose from 59.2 per cent to 65.4 per cent between 2004 and 2008, while the figures for all RNs (including Nurse Practitioners) are a bit higher, rising from 59.3 per cent to 65.6 per cent. The trend has been very positive since 1998, when the share of full-time employment for RNs in the general class was below 50 per cent, and we are well on the way to achieving our objective of 70 per cent full-time for RNs.

Trend in Full-time Share of RN Employment (General Class)



RN Employment Sector in 2009 (2008 in brackets)

- 65.0 per cent (60,609) work in hospitals
- 18.7 per cent (17,397) work in the community
- 8.0 per cent (7,417) work in long-term care facilities
- 6.9 per cent (6,448) work in other places (such as education, government, physicians' offices etc)
- 1.4 per cent (1,300) not specified

Age of RNs:

Average age = 46.3 years

The share of RNs under 30 and over 55 is rising. The rise in the share under 30 indicates that the effort to recruit and educate new nurses is already yielding tangible gains. The dramatic decrease in the share of nurses ages 30 to 49 points to the need to develop a mid-career nursing strategy to retain mid-career nurses. The rise in the share over 55 indicates that further recruitment and retention efforts are needed to ensure sufficient replacements for the many nurses who will retire over the next 10 years and meet the need for additional nurses.

Trends in Distribution of Age Groups among RNs (General Class)						
	1992		1999		2009	
Age Group	#	%	#	%	#	%
18 - 24	1,801	2.2	810	1.0	1,667	1.8
25 - 29	10,246	12.5	5,548	7.1	7,076	7.6
30 - 34	11,129	13.6	8,809	11.3	8,188	8.8
35 - 39	14,086	17.2	12,002	15.4	10,597	11.4
40 - 44	14,427	17.6	12,379	15.9	12,047	12.9
45 - 49	12,480	15.2	14,823	19.1	14,171	15.2
50 - 54	8,771	10.7	11,902	15.3	13,676	14.7
55 - 59	5,512	6.7	7,905	10.2	13,950	15.0
60 - 64	2,835	3.5	3,019	3.9	8,063	8.7
65+	806	1.0	597	0.8	3,736	4.0
Not Specified	12	0.0	1	0.0		
Total:	82,105	100.0	77,795	100.0	93,171	100.0

Gender of Nurses in 2009

The gender ratio has been fairly stable over time, and heavily balanced toward females.

- RNs: 95.2% female
- NPs: 95.2% female
- RPNs: 93.6% female

RN Employment by Region

LHIN Employment Regions 2007 to 2009						
	2007		2008		2009	
LHIN Region	#	%	#	%	#	%
Central	6,936	7.7	7,082	7.7	7,362	7.9
Central East	7,607	8.4	7,748	8.4	7,683	8.2
Central West	2,559	2.8	2,652	2.9	2,709	2.9
Champlain	9,819	10.9	10,114	11	10,300	11.1
Erie St. Clair	4,346	4.8	4,480	4.9	4,537	4.9
Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant	10,338	11.5	10,387	11.3	10,466	11.2
Mississauga Halton	5,488	6.1	5,573	6.1	5,677	6.1
North East	5,065	5.6	5,122	5.6	5,179	5.6
North Simcoe Muskoka	3,022	3.3	3,096	3.4	3,123	3.4
North West	2,318	2.6	2,343	2.5	2,406	2.6
South East	4,378	4.9	4,462	4.9	4,431	4.8
South West	8,520	9.4	8,665	9.4	8,737	9.4
Toronto Central	15,239	16.9	15,612	17	16,128	17.3
Waterloo Wellington	4,014	4.4	4,056	4.4	4,066	4.4
Not Specified	584	0.6	573	0.6	367	0.4
Total	90,233	100	91,965	100	93,171	100

A Note on the Data

The Ontario nursing data come from the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO). The national RN data come from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). The population data used to help generate the RN/population ratio come from the CIHI National Health Expenditure data set. The analyses, conclusions, opinions and statements expressed herein are those of RNAO, and are not necessarily those of CNO or CIHI.

¹ The CIHI ratio for Ontario is slightly different than the CNO ratio because CIHI adjusts CNO and other provincial RN workforce numbers for RNs who work on both sides of the provincial border.
