

RN Workforce Backgrounder:

RNs/Population and Full-Time Share Marginally Improving, But Ontario Needs Better

RNAO Vision backgrounder

November 2014

RNs/Population and Full-Time Share Marginally Improving, But Ontario Needs Better

Executive Summary

RNAO's vision for the future of nursing includes a sustainable workforce, with sufficient numbers of registered nurses (RNs) to ensure all Ontarians have access to nursing services. In the interests of continuity of care and care provider, it is important that the bulk of nurses work full-time. An essential component of sound nursing human resource (HR) policy is to attain the government goal of at least 70 per cent of nurses working full time.

Data from the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) reveal mixed progress toward these goals.

Registrations. There was a large drop in the number of RNs in the general class (RN(GC)) eligible to work in Ontario in 2014 (from 112,582 to 104,298). This was mainly due to a new requirement for nurses to have practised in Ontario within the past three years in order to renew their registration. This impacts nurses who reside in or near border communities. RNAO continues to oppose this new requirement because it needlessly reduces Ontario's RN supply. The CNO attributed 49 per cent of nursing losses to registration revocations and 23.3 per cent to movement to the non-practising class.

RNs/Population. In the 1990s, Ontario had a low and falling RN/population ratio, which is an indicator of declining access to RNs and rising nursing workloads. Concerted government action to restore nursing employment reversed that negative trend. In its first mandate (2003-2007), the current government met its nursing employment target. However, budgetary cutbacks in 2008 stalled that progress, and the government fell short in its second mandate. This contributed to Ontario lagging behind the rest of the country in its numbers of working RNs per population – a gap that would require more than 17,000 more RN positions to close. While RN employment growth lagged, Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) employment continued to grow steadily, resulting in a nursing workforce mix that shifted from 21.5 per cent RPN to 27.6 per cent between 2005 and 2014.

Full-Time Employment. On the matter of full-time employment, Ontario has reversed the downward trend of the 1990s. As of 1999, only half of all RNs were employed full time, but by 2012, almost 69 per cent were full time, very close to the government's promise of 70 per cent. This put Ontario well ahead of the rest of the country, which had a 54 per cent full-time share on average. The only negative for Ontario was a drop in full-time RN positions in 2013 that lowered the full-time share to below 67 per cent. The share then rose marginally in 2014. Data released for the first time by CNO in 2014 reveal that Ontario would easily surpass its 70 per cent full-time target if all nurses had their preferred employment status:

- 72 per cent of RN(GC)s would prefer full time vs. 66.6 per cent who actually worked full time,
- 76.8 per cent of RPNs preferred full time vs. 55.9 per cent who worked it, and
- 82.5 per cent of Nurse Practitioners (NP) preferred full time, while 82.7 per cent had full-time work.

Multiple Employment. The incidence of individual nurses holding multiple jobs is quite high for all classes of nurse: in 2014, 15.8 per cent of RN(GC)s, 25.7 per cent of NPs and 20.2 per cent of RPNs worked for at least two different employers at the same time. This figure rose for all three nursing categories in 2014. This has implications for continuity of care and care provider. It is also problematic during pandemics.

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Finally, it is a potential indicator that many nurses are cobbling together part-time and casual employment in order to secure the equivalent of a full-time position. It would be better to have enough full-time positions available so that nurses do not have to resort to multiple employment.

Age Distribution. The age distribution within the RN workforce tilts toward the upper age groups, with recent growth in the oldest cohorts. There was a very recent rise in the share for the youngest age groups, indicating some success in renewing the RN workforce. The largest cohorts are in the 40-59 year range, meaning that mid- to-late-career human resource (HR) strategies will remain important for retention. Even with solid retention of all age cohorts, significant retirements can be anticipated. Combined with the shortfall of RN positions, this puts a premium on RN education and recruitment.

Gender. The nursing workforce remains overwhelmingly female, meaning that efforts must continue to recruit more males to promote diversity.

Sector. The RN workforce works primarily (more than 60 per cent) in the hospital sector. Given that government is seeking to shift health services toward community and long-term care, it will necessitate equivalent compensation in those sectors. At present, nurses in primary care and home care are underpaid relative to the hospital sector, and this presents a problem for recruitment and retention.

Registered Nurse Backgrounder

This backgrounder provides an overview of Ontario’s Registered Nurse (RN) workforce, which is broken into RNs in the general class (RN (GC)s) and RNs in the extended class (RN (EC)s), also known as nurse practitioners or NPs. Unless otherwise specified, RN refers to both classes of RNs, while RPN refers to Registered Practical Nurses, except in national comparisons, when RPN refers to Registered Psychiatric Nurses. Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) are the national equivalent of Ontario’s RPNs. Employment figures are snapshots of data from the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO)¹ taken at registration renewal time, which takes place over several months around the beginning of each year.

Please note that cross-Canada comparisons are performed using the latest data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI),² which give slightly different figures for Ontario than CNO data (see notes at the end of the document). Data in this backgrounder are the latest available as of October, 2014. CNO data run to 2014 and CIHI data runs to 2013.

1. Numbers of Ontario Nursing Registrants

There has been a very large drop in the number of RN (GC)s eligible to practice in Ontario in 2014. As the CNO explained in its report, this was due to the introduction of a new requirement in 2013 that nurses must have practised in Ontario within the past three years. As a result, "Of the 12,273 losses [of RN (GC) registrants], 49 per cent were a result of revocations and 23.3 per cent were a result of members moving to the Non-Practising Class."³ Notwithstanding the change in regulations, the numbers of RPNs eligible to work in nursing in Ontario continued to climb.

1. Numbers of Nurses Registered to Practise in Ontario ⁴					
Nursing Category / Class	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
RN (GC)s	111,717	111,532	112,194	112,582	104,298
NPs	1,585	1,800	2,020	2,242	2,020
Non-Practising RNs					4,627
All RNs	113,302	113,332	114,214	114,824	111,287
RPNs	35,427	36,588	38,845	41,996	42,018
Non-Practising RPNs					742
All RPNs	35,427	36,588	38,845	41,996	42,760
All nurses	148,729	149,920	153,059	156,820	154,047

2. Size of Ontario Nursing Workforce

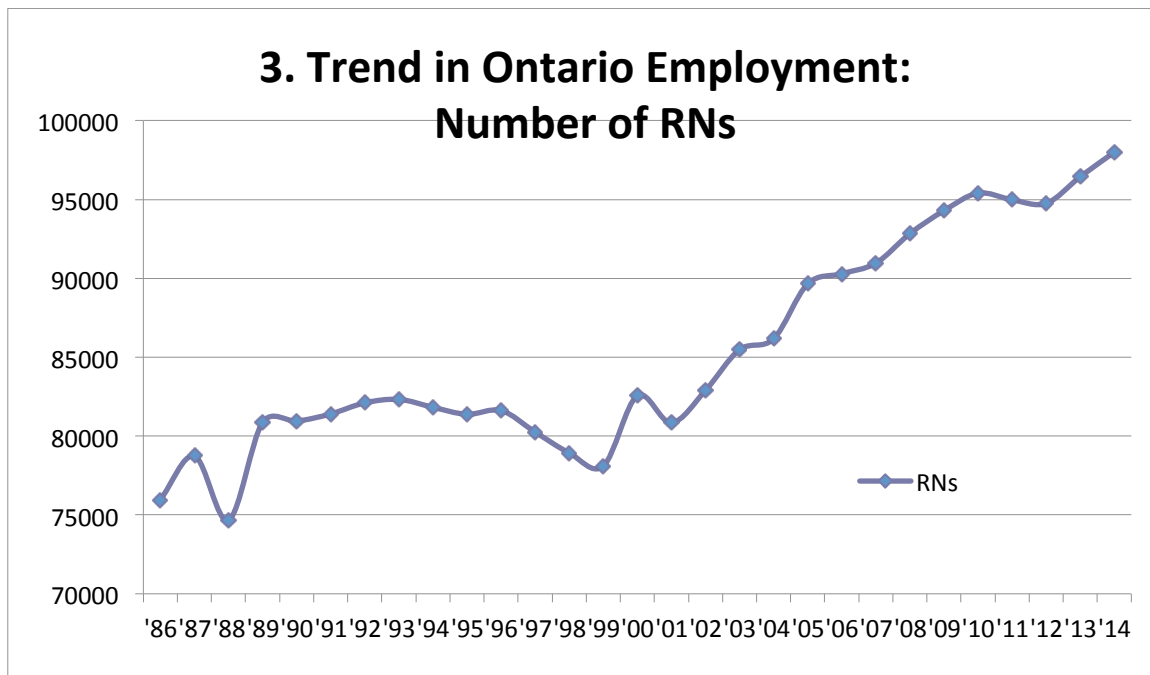
2.1 Recent Trends in Ontario Nursing Employment

RN (GC) employment dropped in 2012 but rose again in 2013 and 2014. RPN and NP employment continued to rise steadily.

2. Ontario Nursing Workforce ⁵							
Nursing Category / Class	Nursing Employment				Net Change in Nursing Employment		
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011-2	2012-3	2013-14
RN (GC)s	93,315	92,879	94,386	95,787	(436)	1,507	1,401
NPs	1,666	1,874	2,056	2,209	208	182	153
All RNs	94,981	94,753	96,442	97,996	(228)	1,689	1,554
RPNs	31,419	32,850	35,286	37,284	1,431	2,436	1,998
All nurses	126,400	127,603	131,728	135,280	1,203	4,125	3,552

2.2 Longer Ontario Employment Trends for RNs

The 1990s saw stagnation in the growth of the RN workforce, with falling employment in the late 1990s. At the same time, the population of Ontario continued to grow rapidly and age. This meant the need for nursing services was growing while RNs were being laid off (see Figure 3 below). The 1999 Nursing Task Force report outlined these problems and their implications for the nursing profession and client outcomes. Since this time, concerted efforts by successive governments have reversed the downward trend in nursing employment. RN employment has been trending upwards, although it dropped in 2011 and 2012, as the loss of RN (GC) positions outweighed the gains by NPs. RN (GC)s lost 1,037 positions while NPs gained 388, for a net loss of 649 RN positions between January 2010 and January 2012. Between 2012 and 2014, there was a net gain of 3,243 RN positions.



2.3 Net Gains in Nursing Employment by Government Mandate

During the current government’s first mandate (October 2003 to October 2007), it promised to create 8,000 new nursing positions. In the corresponding CNO data period (2004-2008), 9,669 nursing positions were created. Thus, we can say that the government met its commitment. In its second mandate, the government promised to create 9,000 additional nursing positions. According to CNO data, the government fell short on its promise. Between the start of 2008 and 2012, Ontario gained just 7,346 nursing positions. Alarmingly, nursing gains slowed dramatically in the last two years of the second mandate, as the nursing workforce lagged behind population growth. Over that two-year period, Ontario lost 649 RN positions (RNs in the general class lost 1,037 positions), while RPNs gained 2,416 positions, for a net gain of 1,767 nursing positions. Overall, there was very little growth in RN positions in the general class during the provincial government’s second mandate.

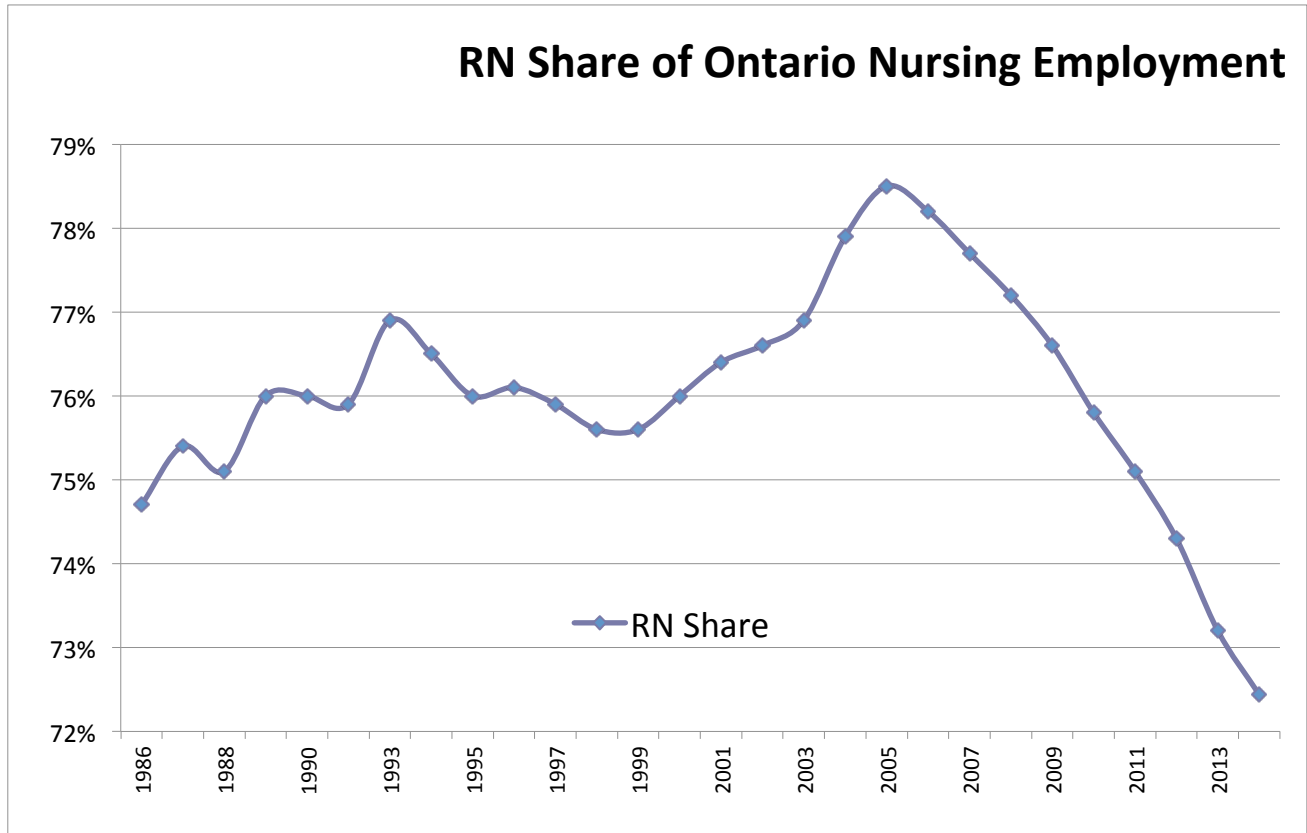
There was some growth in nursing employment between 2012 and 2014 in all categories, helping the government belatedly deliver on its promise of 9,000 positions. However, for RN (GC)s, the growth was almost entirely in part-time positions. RPN employment grew at a much faster rate than RN employment. As with RN (GC)s, the bulk of the RPN growth came in part-time positions (see section on working status).

4. Net Changes in Ontario Nursing Employment By Government Mandate, 2004-2014

Nursing Category / Class	Nursing Employment				Net Gains in Nursing Employment			
	2004	2008	2012	2014	2004-08 First mandate	2008-12 Second mandate	2004-12 First 2 mandates	2012-14
RN (GC)s	85,638	91,965	92,879	95,787	6,327	914	7,241	2,908
NPs	530	868	1,874	2,209	338	1,006	1,344	335
All RNs	86,168	92,833	94,753	97,996	6,665	1,920	8,585	3,243
RPNs	24,428	27,432	32,858	37,284	3,004	5,426	8,430	4,426
All nurses	110,596	120,265	127,611	135,280	9,669	7,346	17,015	7,669

3. Changing Skill Mix

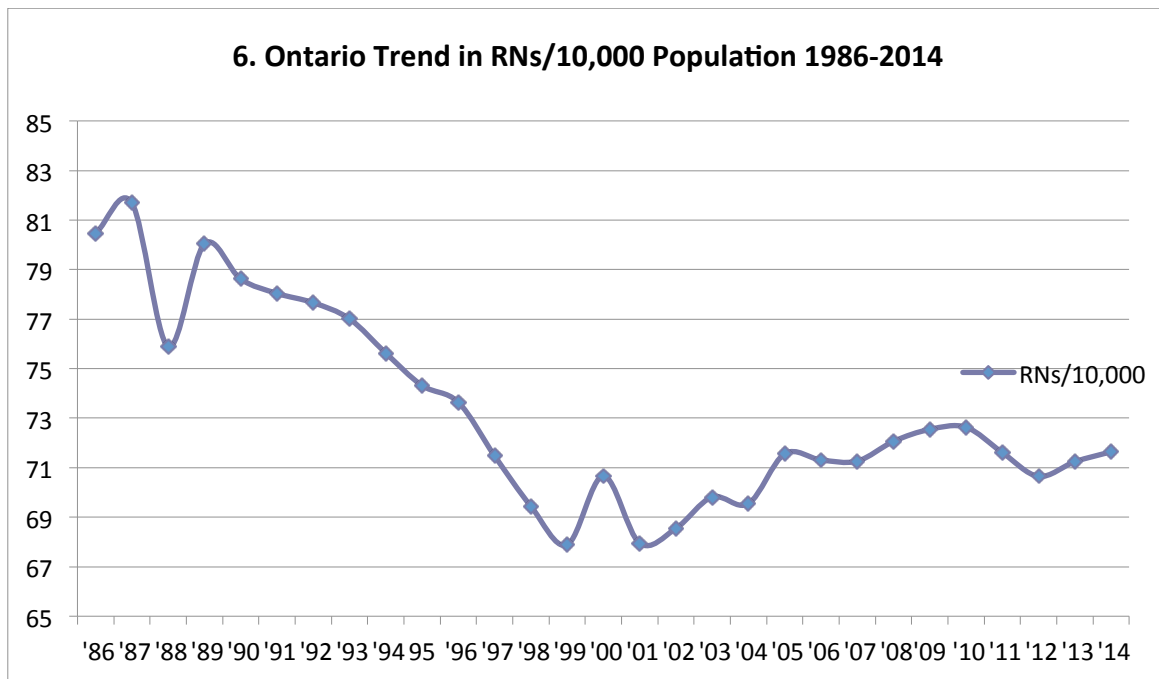
The slow growth in RN employment since 2005, and its ultimate decline from 2010 to 2012 occurred in tandem with a rapid growth in RPN positions over the same period. Accordingly, the skill mix in the nursing workforce has shifted, with RNs' share of nursing employment falling since 2005 from 78.5 per cent to a new low of 72.4 per cent.



4. Nurse-to-Population Ratios

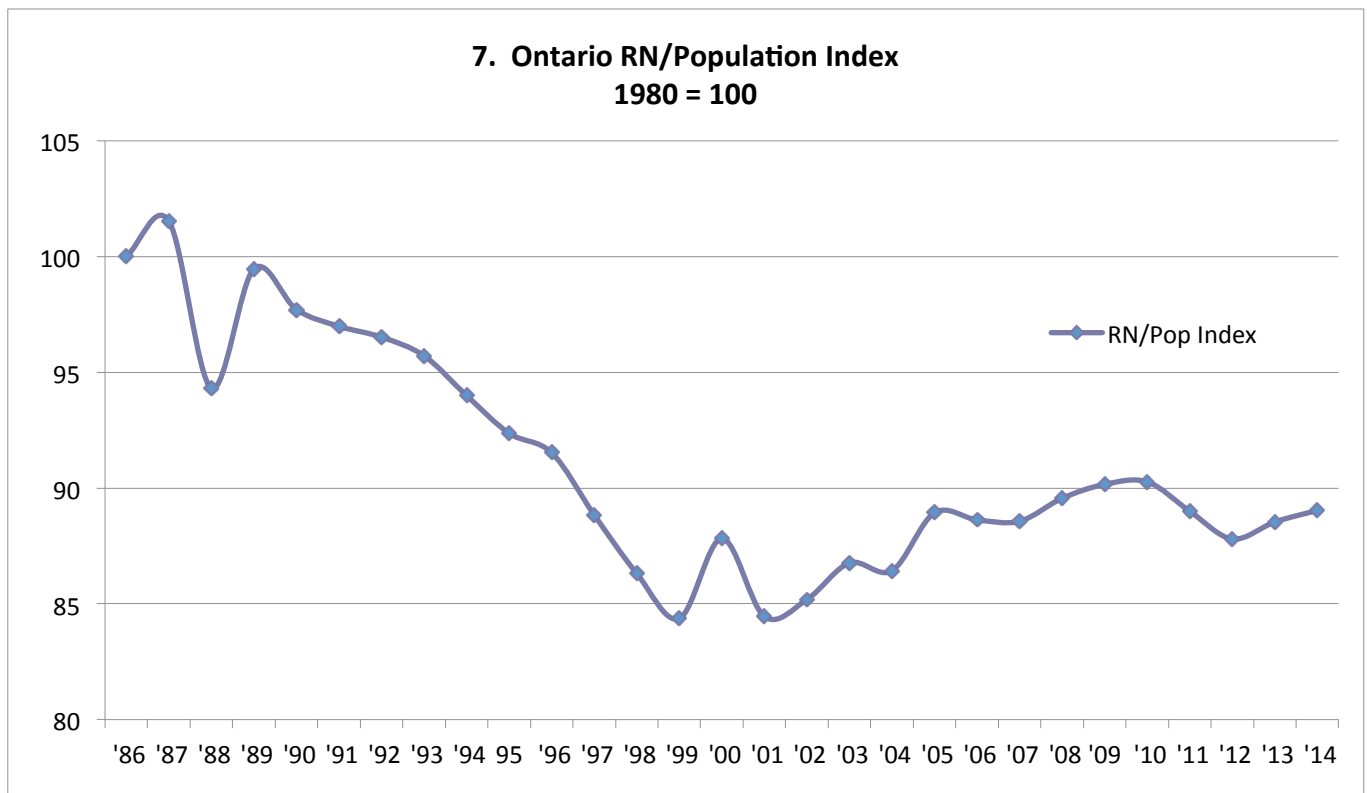
4.1 Ontario RN-to-Population Ratio (Working RNs / 10,000 Ontarians)⁶

Ontario's plunging RN-to-population ratio provides a direct measure of access to nursing services. As the ratio falls, the number of people each RN must care for increases. Figure 6 shows a striking pattern from 1986 to 2014: the nursing workforce first plummeted from more than 80 per 10,000 people to below 70 in 1999 and again in 2001. After that, it trended upward, peaking at 72.6 in 2010. The sharp drop was caused by a declining nursing workforce and a rising population. This trend was reversed when the growth in RN employment exceeded population growth. The biggest nursing gains under the current government occurred during the first year of its first mandate, when the ratio reached 71.6. Since that time, the ratio has fluctuated in that range. It rose again in 2013 and 2014, with virtually all of the gains coming as part-time employment (2,842 of 3,243 net positions gained).



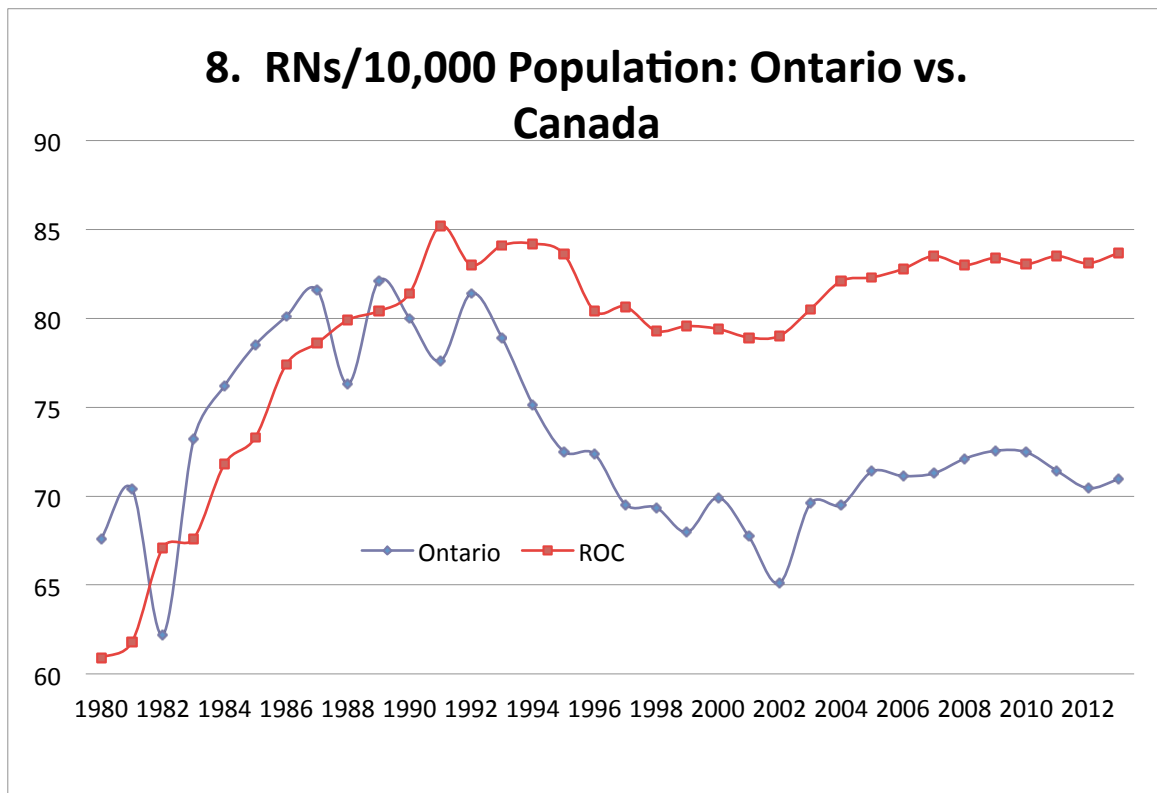
4.2 Ontario RN/Population Ratio: Index Comparing to 1986 Levels

The chart below represents an index of RN-to-population ratios with the starting year, 1986, set to 100. It provides a vivid statistical picture to explain the sharp rise in workloads reported by many RNs. In percentage terms, the ratio deteriorated to 15 per cent below 1986 levels in 1999 and again in 2001. It recovered to about 10 per cent below 1986 levels by 2009, but dipped again to 12.2 per cent below by 2012 before recovering to 11 per cent below in 2014 (see Figure 7). We have not recovered to the ratios that prevailed in the 1980s, but the reversal in the early 2000s was important, and the improvement was significant. A deterioration in the RN-to-population ratio followed spending restraints announced in October 2008 as part of the government's attempt to deal with a recession-driven deficit.⁷ RNAO continues to hear concerns about workload, and data show that ratios are considerably less favourable than they were in the late 1980s, when the provincial client base was younger and its health-care needs were less complex. As noted above, the ratio started to improve again after 2012.



4.3 Trend in RN Employment per 10,000 Population: Ontario vs. the Rest of Canada⁸

Ontario's RN-to-population ratio ranks significantly below the rest of the country, with a gap that opened up in the early 1990s. As of 2013, Ontario had 71 RNs per 10,000 people (a decline from 72.2 in 2009), compared to 83.7 for the rest of the country. Only British Columbia has a lower RN-to-population ratio than Ontario. This inevitably has significant implications on workload and patient outcomes.^{9 10 11 12 13 14 15} For Ontario to catch up with the rest of Canada (ROC), it would have to add an estimated 17,239 more RNs to its workforce, an increase of 17.9 per cent. In response to this growing concern, RNAO is recommending that the government seek to close the gap as quickly as reasonably possible, while continuing to advance policy that focuses on utilizing the most effective care provider for each patient and advancing continuity of care and caregiver.



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Figure 9 shows provincial RN-to-population ratios for 1994 and 2013. Between those two periods, B.C.'s ratio dropped the most, leaving it with the lowest ratio in the country. Ontario's ratio dropped the second most, giving it second-last place in the country, well below the average for the rest of the provinces. The third data column is an index (Ontario = 100) that shows proportional differences. For example, Newfoundland had 62 per cent more RNs per capita than did Ontario. The ratio for Canada outside of Ontario was 17.9 per cent above Ontario's, which is a huge discrepancy. Only B.C.'s ratio was lower than Ontario's, by 2.2 per cent.

9. Comparison of RN Workforce per 10,000 Population Across Canada			
All RNs			
Province / Territory	1994	2013	2013 Index: Ontario = 100
N.L.	90.1	114.9	162.0
P.E.I.	87.1	108.0	152.2
N.S.	98.8	97.0	136.8
N.B.	101.4	108.4	152.8
Que.	85.1	83.3	117.4
Ont.	75.1	71.0	100.0
Man.	89.8	96.2	135.6
Sask.	84.1	92.7	130.7
Alta.	80.9	80.1	112.9
B.C.	75.0	69.4	97.8
Y.T.	68.4	106.4	150.0
N.W.T./Nun	85.4	144.7	203.9
Rest of Canada	84.2	83.7	117.9
Canada	80.8	78.8	111.0

4.4 Canadian NP Workforce-to-Population Ratios

Figure 10 shows the number of NPs per 100,000 population for each province from 2007 to 2013.¹⁶ In 2013, Ontario had 58.9 per cent of all the NPs in Canada, and the number of NPs continues to grow quickly in Ontario. Accordingly, Ontario has substantially more NPs per 100,000 population (15) than Canada as a whole (10) (If Ontario is excluded, the Canadian ratio would be 7). Newfoundland, however, has a higher ratio than Ontario with 23 NPs per 100,000 people. Note that Newfoundland also has the highest RN-to-population ratio. Nunavut/Northwest Territories have a much higher ratio of 77. Unfortunately, we are unable to calculate ratios for the Yukon due to data suppression for privacy concerns.

10. Comparison of NPs/100,000 Population Across Canada							
Province / Territory	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
N.L.	19	20	18	19	21	23	23
P.E.I.	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
N.S.	8	9	9	11	12	14	14
N.B.	4	7	7	9	10	14	13
Que.	0	0	0	1	1	2	2
Ont.	6	7	9	11	12	14	15
Man.	3	4	5	8	8	8	8
Sask.	10	10	11	12	12	13	14
Alta.	5	6	7	7	7	8	8
B.C.	1	2	3	3	3	4	4
Y.T.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
N.W.T./Nun.	56	69	61	73	65	69	77
Rest of Canada	3	4	4	5	5	6	7
Canada	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* Indicates small cell size or data suppressed to meet CIHI privacy standards or data does not exist.

4.5 National Nurse-to-Population Ratios ¹⁷

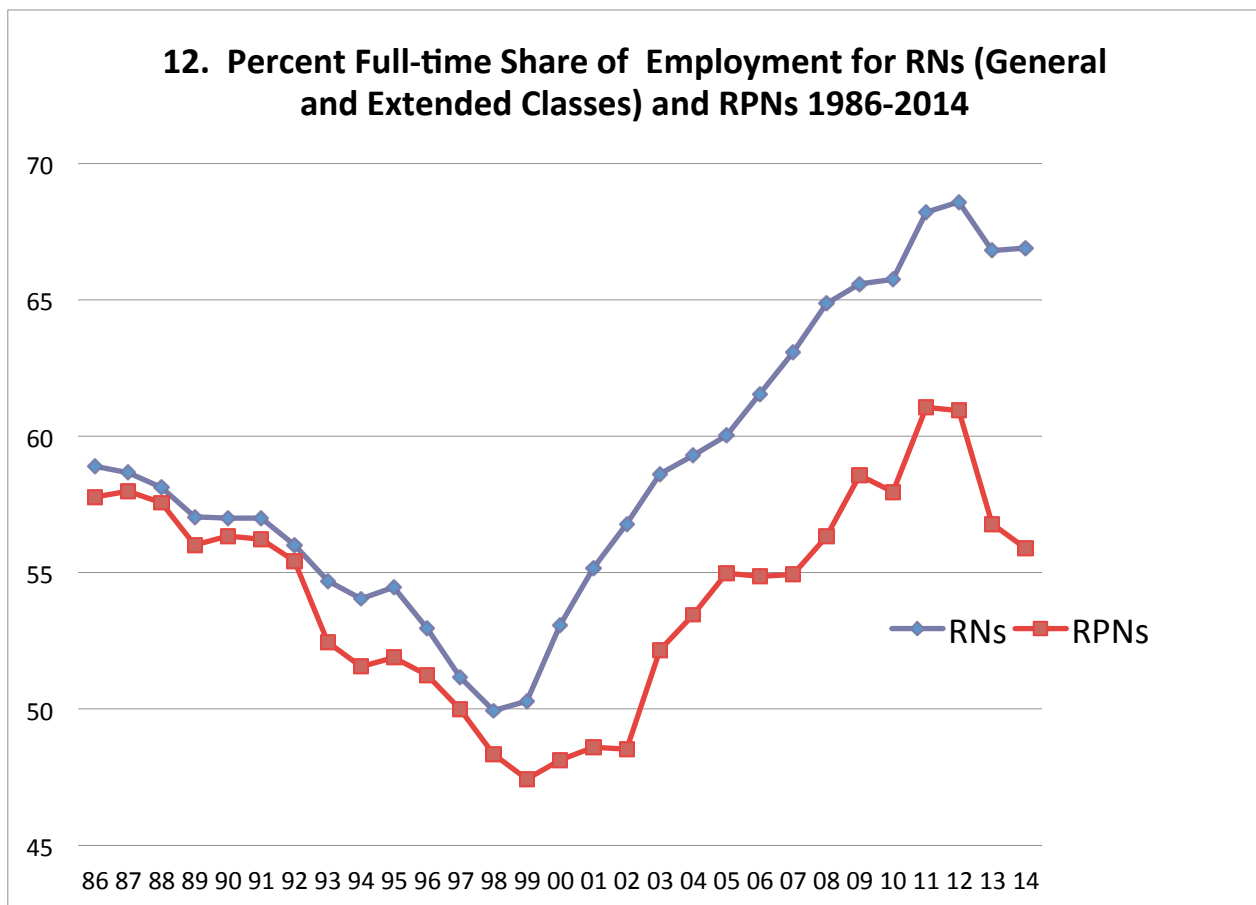
Ontario also fares worse in comparison with the other provinces in terms of overall nurse-to-population ratios. For 2013, Ontario’s ratio was 97 per 10,000, versus 113.1 for the rest of the country. Again, only B.C.’s ratio was lower, at 96. The other jurisdictions had substantially higher ratios. In the final column of Figure 11, all ratios are compared via an index with Ontario set to 100. The rest of Canada had a 16.6 per cent higher ratio, ranging from one per cent less for B.C., up to 61.9 per cent more for Newfoundland. Ontario has been catching up with respect to numbers of RPNs/LPNs (RPNs in Ontario are the equivalent to licensed practical nurses (LPNs) in the rest of the country. Ontario RPNs are not to be confused with the registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) of western Canada.)

11. 2013 Comparison of Nurses/10,000 Population Across Canada					
Province / Territory	RNs	LPNs ¹⁸	RPNs ¹⁹	All Nurses	Index Ontario = 100
N.L.	114.9	42.1	0	157.0	161.9
P.E.I.	108.0	41.9	0	149.8	154.5
N.S.	97.0	39.3	0	136.4	140.6
N.B.	108.4	39.6	0	148.0	152.6
Que.	83.3	29.3	0	112.6	116.1
Ont.	71.0	26.0	0	97.0	100.0
Man.	96.2	23.3	7.4	127.0	130.9
Sask.	92.7	25.7	7.6	126.0	129.9
Alta.	80.1	22.3	3.2	105.6	108.9
B.C.	69.4	21.8	4.8	96.0	99.0
Y.T.	106.4	27.5	0.0	133.9	138.1
N.W.T.	144.7	11.5	0.0	156.2	161.0
Rest of Canada	83.7	27.0	2.4	113.1	116.6
Canada	78.8	26.6	1.5	106.9	110.2

5. Working Status

5.1 Ontario RN and RPN Full-Time Ratios

The measured share of full-time employment for RNs rose from 59.3 per cent to 68.6 per cent between 2004 and 2012. 2013 saw a drop to 66.8 per cent followed by a modest recovery to 66.9 per cent in 2014. This 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. RPN employment followed a similar pattern, falling to 47.4 per cent full-time in 1999, but hitting a new high of 61 per cent in 2011. After that, the full-time share for RPNs has fallen steadily to 55.9 percent. Until 2012, Ontario was well on the way to achieving its objective of 70 per cent full-time status for RNs and RPNs, as requested in RNAO’s previous election platform²⁰ and as committed to by the government. It will require renewed commitment to get back on track.



5.2 Ontario Preferred vs. Actual Working Status for RNs and RPNs

For the first time, CNO has published data comparing nurses' stated preference for work status with their actual work status. While most nurses are working their preferred status, a significant minority are not, and the bulk of those are part-time or casual nurses who would prefer full-time employment.

- 72 per cent of RN (GC)s would prefer full time, while just 66.6 per cent have it (Table 13)
- 76.8 per cent of RPNs would prefer full time, versus 55.9 per cent who have it (Table 14)
- 82.5 per cent of NPs would prefer full time, and 82.7 per cent work full time (not shown)

If all nurses had their preferred work status, Ontario would easily surpass its 70 per cent full-time objective for nurses.

13. RN (GC)s: Preferred vs. Actual Work Status										
Preferred	Actual Work Status						Preferred		Actual	
	Full-time		Part-time		Casual		#	%	#	%
	#	%	#	%	#	%				
Full-time	61,565	95.1	7,460	29.4	944	13.4	69,969	72.0	64,745	66.6
Part-time	2,711	4.2	17,331	68.2	1,008	14.3	21,050	21.7	25,405	26.1
Casual	469	0.7	614	2.4	5,115	72.4	6,198	6.4	7,067	7.3
Total	64,745	100	25,405	100	7,067	100	97,217	100.0	97,217	100.0

14. RPNs: Preferred vs. Actual Work Status										
Preferred	Actual Work Status						Preferred		Actual	
	Full-time		Part-time		Casual		#	%	#	%
	#	%	#	%	#	%				
Full-time	20,235	96.4	7,144	54.1	1,454	43.3	28,833	76.8	20,984	55.9
Part-time	604	2.9	5,938	44.9	651	19.4	7,193	19.2	13,217	35.2
Casual	145	0.7	135	1	1,254	37.3	1,534	4.1	3,359	8.9
Total	20,984	100	13,217	100	3,359	100	37,560	100.0	37,560	100.0

5.3 How Progress on Ontario Full-Time Was Achieved: Workforce Changes by Work Status

Tables 15 to 19 estimate how the progress in the full-time employment was achieved over time with a focus on recent government mandates.²¹ In the present government's first mandate (2004-8),²² the number of full-time RN positions rose very sharply (+9,109 positions), while part-time positions dropped significantly (-2,466) and casual positions were virtually unchanged (+22) (Figure 5). Thus, numerator and denominator effects worked in the same direction to raise the combined full-time ratio. Overall RN positions rose by 6,665.

In the second mandate (using CNO data for 2008-2012, Figure 5), there was very little growth in RN positions (+1,920) and more than half were NPs (1,006) (Figure 4). Much of the gain in full-time positions (+4,780) was offset by drops in part-time (-2,568) and casual (292) positions. Again numerator and denominator effects worked to raise the full-time ratio. The first two years of the third mandate (2012-2014) saw a reversal in the pattern: RN employment grew by 3,243 positions, though the vast majority (2,842) were part-time. The burden is falling particularly on new Ontario RNs, 53.6 per cent of whom had full-time employment in 2014.²³

Over the entire 1999-2014 period (from the low point to the most recent data; Table 5), RN full-time employment rose by an estimated 26,292 positions, but a loss of over 6,394 part-time and casual positions brought the net gains to approximately 19,899 positions. Over the same time period, the combination of a rise in full-time positions and the drop in part-time/casual positions resulted in a dramatic hike in the share of full-time employment from about 50 per cent to 68.3 per cent in 2012 before it fell back to 66.9 per cent.

15. Estimated Workforce Changes: Ontario RNs in the General Class					
	First Mandate 2004-08	Second Mandate 2008- 12	Third Mandate 2012-14	2004-14	1999-2014
Full-Time	8,812	3,890	348	13,050	24,636
Part-Time	(2,510)	(2,671)	2759	(2,422)	(2,926)
Casual	25	(305)	(199)	(479)	(3,718)
Total	6,327	914	2908	10,149	17,992

16. Estimated Workforce Changes: Ontario NPs

	First Mandate 2004-08	Second Mandate 2008- 12	Third Mandate 2012-14	2004-14	1999-2014
Full-Time	294	890	236	1,420	1,656
Part-Time	46	103	83	232	255
Casual	(2)	13	16	27	(4)
Total	338	1,006	335	1,679	1,907

17. Estimated Workforce Changes: All Ontario RNs

	First Mandate 2004-08	Second Mandate 2008- 12	Third Mandate 2012-14	2004-14	1999-2014
Full-Time	9,109	4,780	584	14,473	26,292
Part-Time	(2,466)	(2,568)	2,842	(2,192)	(2,671)
Casual	22	(292)	(183)	(453)	(3,723)
Total	6,665	1,920	3,243	11,828	19,899

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By contrast, RPNs steadily gained employment through this entire period. Over all three recent mandates, RPNs gained full-time, part-time and casual positions, but the numerator effects dominated the denominator effects in the first two mandates, meaning that the ratio improved during that period. In the third mandate, they gained more part-time and casual positions, meaning that the full-time ratio deteriorated. They didn't get the same hike in full-time share as RNs (47 per cent to 61 per cent from 1999 to 2011, before dropping off), but their full-time share of total nursing employment hit a record high in 2011.

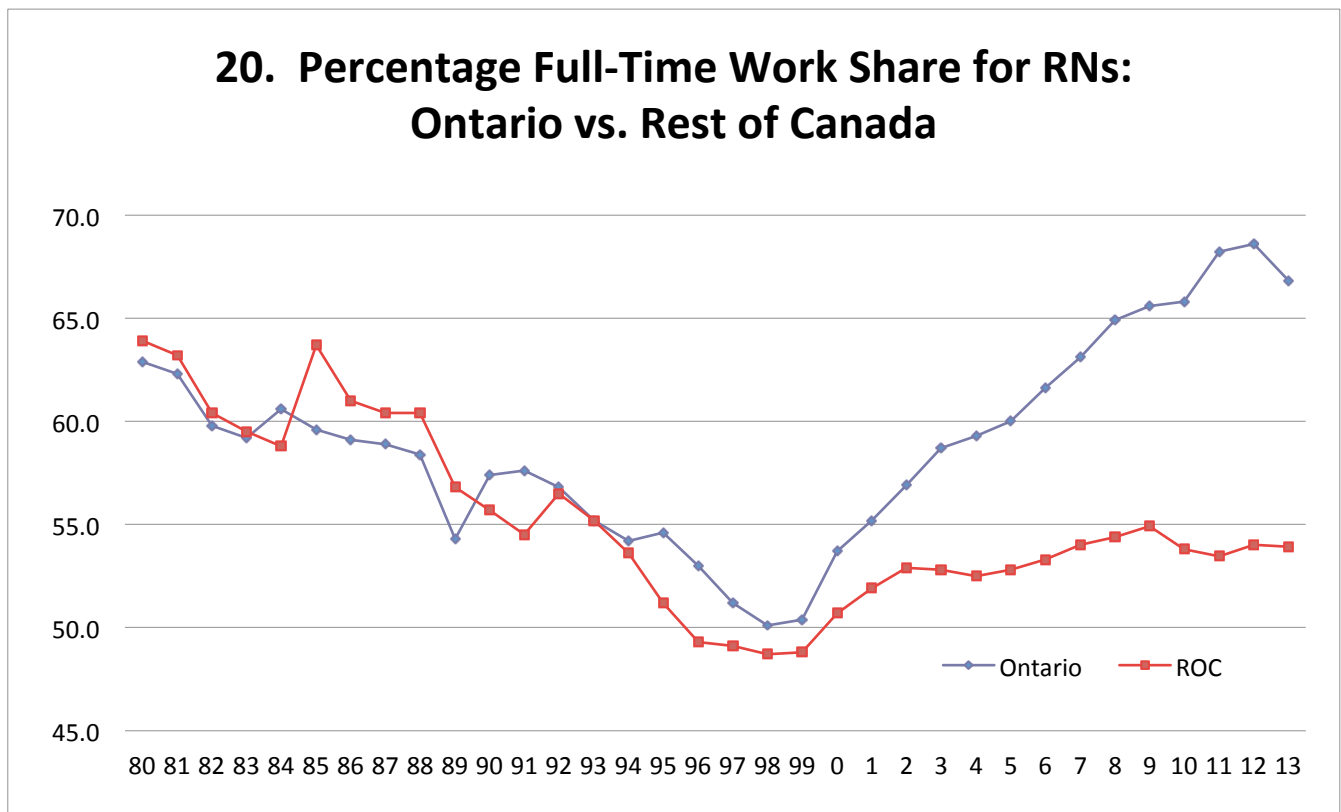
18. Estimated Workforce Changes: Ontario RPNs					
	First Mandate 2004-08	Second Mandate 2008-12	Third Mandate 2012-14	2004-14	1999-2014
Full-Time	2,390	4,576	814	7,785	8,915
Part-Time	475	458	3,049	3,984	3,919
Casual	139	384	571	1,095	(686)
Total	3,004	5,418	4,434	12,864	12,149

When RN and RPN employment are added together, an estimated 35,207 full-time nursing positions have been added from 1999 to 2014. The total employment gain is lower due to the drop in part-time and casual positions, however both factors worked together to raise the full-time share of nursing employment. Recently, rapid growth in RPN employment has exceeded the loss in RN positions.

19. Estimated Workforce Changes: All Ontario Nurses					
	First Mandate 2004-08	Second Mandate 2008-12	Third Mandate 2012-14	2004-14	1999-2014
Full-Time	11,479	9,356	1,398	22,238	35,207
Part-Time	(1,972)	(2,110)	5,891	1,811	1,249
Casual	162	92	388	643	(4,408)
Total	9,669	7,338	7,677	24,692	32,048

5.4 Full-Time Working Status: Ontario RNs vs. the Rest of Canada RNs

CIHI statistics show that Ontario and the rest of Canada experienced similar patterns with respect to shares of full-time employment over time. Both started well above 60 per cent in 1980, and both followed a general downward trend over time, falling below 50 per cent by 1999. After that, both trended upwards, with Ontario rising much more quickly than the rest of the country. As of 2013, 66.8 percent of Ontario RNs were working full time as compared to only 53.9 percent of RNs in the rest of Canada. Full-time shares in the rest of the country deteriorated after 2009, widening the gap with Ontario.



5.5 Full-Time Working Status: Ontario vs. Other Provinces

The percentage of RNs working in full-time positions across the country varies considerably from province to province. Percentages range from 40.5 per cent in Alberta to 72.4 per cent in Newfoundland. Joining Ontario in the 60-67 per cent range are Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. The Yukon and three western provinces had less than 50 per cent full-time employment: Alberta, Manitoba and B.C. (which also had the lowest RN-to-population ratio, meaning it unequivocally has the least access to nursing services). The rest of Canadian provinces and territories fall within the 50-59 per cent range. Newfoundland demonstrates that a goal of 70 per cent full-time employment is certainly achievable. Newfoundland also has the highest RN-to-population ratio, which is a strong indication its residents have access to more hours per capita of RN services than the rest of the country.

21. Percent Shares of RN Full-Time Employment, 2013 Across Canada	
Province/Territory	Full-time Share
N.L.	72.4%
P.E.I.	53.0%
N.S.	64.4%
N.B.	64.8%
Que.	59.0%
Ont.	66.8%
Man.	46.9%
Sask.	59.4%
Alta.	40.5%
B.C.	48.0%
Y.T.	45.5%
N.W.T./Nun	58.2%
Canada	58.4%
Rest of Canada	53.9%

6. Multiple Employment

A significant number of nurses work for more than one employer: 15.8 per cent of RN (GC)s, 25.7 per cent of NPs and 20.2 per cent of RPNs. Between 2013 and 2014, the incidence of multiple job holding rose for nurses in all three categories.

22. Percentage of Nurses with Multiple Employers									
Number of Employers	RN (GC)s			NPs			RPNs		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
One nursing employer	84.4	84.5	84.2	75.9	75.3	74.3	80.4	80.3	79.8
Two nursing employers	13.8	13.6	13.8	19	20.3	20.9	17.4	17.5	17.8
More than two nursing employers	1.8	1.9	2.0	5.1	4.4	4.8	2.2	2.2	2.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

7. RN (General Class) Employment by Sector in 2014

By numbers of positions, hospitals remain the largest employer of RN (GC)s. Between 2013 and 2014, there was a slight increase in the share of employment in community and other settings. Please note that these are counts of RN positions, which are more numerous than the number of RNs. A significant number of RNs were counted at least twice as they had multiple employers.

23. Employment Sectors for RN (GC)s				
Sector	2013		2014	
	#	%	#	%
Hospital	67,520	61.2	68,322	60.8
Community	21,956	19.9	22,647	20.1
Long-Term Care	10,104	9.2	10,139	9.0
Other	10,725	9.7	11,303	10.1
Not Specified	1	0	0	0
Total	110,306	100	112,411	100

8. Age of Nurses

8.1 Average Age of Nurses

The average age of RNs fell in 2014 after trending upwards in previous years. This reflects gains at the lower end of the age spectrum. The average age of an RPN resumed its decline in 2014 after being unchanged in 2013. That decline is consistent with expanding RPN employment.

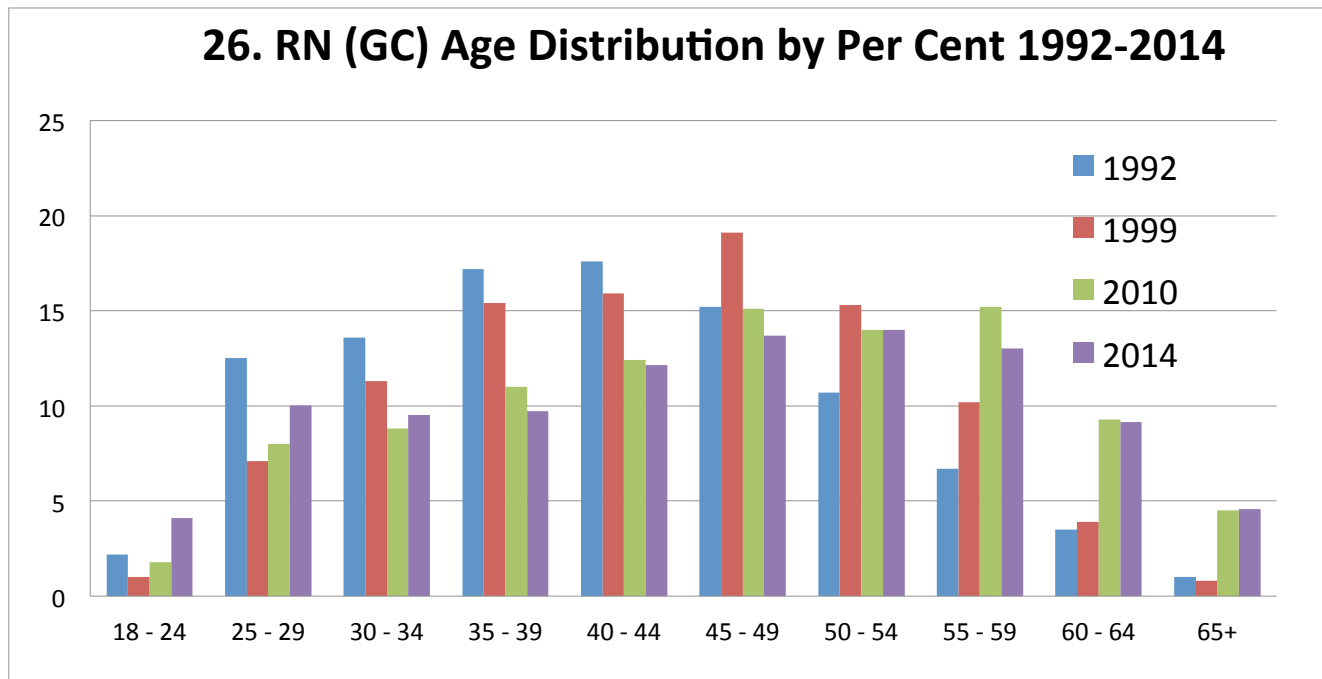
24. Average Age of Nurses					
Nurse Category / Class	2002	2011	2012	2013	2014
RN (GC)	44.8	46.7	45.5	45.5	45.4
NP	43.5	45.8	44.6	44.5	44.6
RPN	44.2	44.1	42.5	42.5	41.9

8.2 Age Distribution

In 2014, the proportion of RN (GC)s under 25 and over 49 was higher than it was in 1992, while it was much lower in the 25 to 49 age range. Although the greying of the RN workforce has reversed somewhat in the last two years, the age distribution remains skewed to the higher end. The recent rise in the share of younger RNs indicates that the effort to recruit and educate new RNs is already yielding tangible gains. The dramatic decrease over time in the share of RN (GC)s ages 25 to 44 suggests a possible need to develop a mid-career nursing strategy to retain mid-career nurses. The rise in the share over 55 may indicate that efforts to retain late-career RNs are bearing fruit, but further recruitment and retention efforts are needed to ensure sufficient replacements for the many RNs who will retire over the next ten years.

25. Trends in Distribution of Age Groups among RNs (General Class)

Age Group	1992		1999		2012		2013		2014	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
18 - 24	1,801	2.2	810	1.0	3,240	3.5	3,240	3.5	3,935	4.1
25 - 29	10,246	12.5	5,548	7.1	8,476	9.1	8,476	9.1	9,598	10.0
30 - 34	11,129	13.6	8,809	11.3	8,467	9.1	8,467	9.1	9,114	9.5
35 - 39	14,086	17.2	12,002	15.4	9,867	10.6	9,867	10.6	9,309	9.7
40 - 44	14,427	17.6	12,379	15.9	11,395	12.3	11,395	12.3	11,643	12.2
45 - 49	12,480	15.2	14,823	19.1	13,836	14.9	13,836	14.9	13,128	13.7
50 - 54	8,771	10.7	11,902	15.3	12,619	13.6	12,619	13.6	13,419	14.0
55 - 59	5,512	6.7	7,905	10.2	13,281	14.3	13,281	14.3	12,486	13.0
60 - 64	2,835	3.5	3,019	3.9	7,964	8.6	7,964	8.6	8,767	9.2
65+	806	1.0	597	0.8	3,734	4.0	3,734	4.0	4,388	4.6
Not Specified	12	0	1	0	100	0.1	100	0.1	0	0.0
Total:	82,105	100	77,795	100	92,879	100	92,879	100	95,787	100.0



9. Gender of Nurses in 2014

The gender ratio of Ontario nurses working in nursing has been fairly stable over time, and heavily balanced toward females, with a slow trend towards an increasing number of males. There was a recent modest reversal of that trend for RPNs.

- RN (GC)s: 93.9 per cent female (96.3 per cent in 2002, 94.6 per cent in 2012))
- NPs: 94.4 per cent female (95.4 per cent in 2002, 94.5 per cent in 2012)
- RPNs: 93.9 per cent female (94 per cent in 2002, 92.6 per cent in 2012)

10. RN (General Class) Employment by Region

RN (GC) employment shares between regions show modest shifts. The counts from 2011 and later are not comparable to those in previous years because they consist of the total number (or per cent) of positions and not the total number (or per cent) of RNs, as in previous years. See endnotes for each year.

27. Comparison of RN (GC) Employment by LHIN								
LHIN Region	2005		2012 ²⁴		2013 ²⁵		2014 ²⁶	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Central	6,596	7.4	9,012	8.3	9,307	8.4	9,637	8.6
Central East	7,704	8.7	9,274	8.5	9,325	8.5	9,392	8.4
Central West	2,506	2.8	3,447	3.2	3,614	3.3	3,702	3.3
Champlain	9,637	10.8	11,752	10.8	11,894	10.8	11,961	10.6
Erie St. Clair	4,252	4.8	4,993	4.6	5,053	4.6	5,148	4.6
Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant	10,330	11.6	11,689	10.8	11,832	10.7	12,105	10.8
Mississauga Halton	5,104	5.7	7,244	6.7	7,474	6.8	7,677	6.8
North East	4,968	5.6	5,974	5.5	6,005	5.4	6,104	5.4
North	2,971	3.3	3,609	3.3	3,743	3.4	3,776	3.4
North West	2,344	2.6	2,880	2.7	2,897	2.6	2,900	2.6
South East	4,379	4.9	5,031	4.6	5,128	4.6	5,181	4.6
South West	8,361	9.4	9,794	9	9,375	8.5	9,808	8.7
Toronto Central	14,840	16.7	18,852	17.4	19,128	17.3	19,717	17.5
Waterloo Wellington	3,884	4.4	4,856	4.5	4,949	4.5	5,117	4.6
Not Specified	1,178	1.3	211	0.2	9,307	8.4	186	0.2
Total	89,054	100	108,618	100	110,306	100	112,411	100

RNAO VISION

A Note on the Data: Ontario-specific data was obtained from the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO).²⁷ National RN data for interprovincial comparisons was obtained from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) RN database. The population data used to help generate the RN-to-population ratios come from Statistics Canada Table 051-0001. The calculations, analyses, conclusions, opinions and statements expressed herein are those of RNAO, and are not necessarily those of CNO or CIHI.

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¹ College of Nurses of Ontario. *Nursing Statistics*. Retrieved November 4, 2014 at <http://www.cno.org/what-is-cno/nursing-demographics/>

² Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2014). *Regulated Nurses, 2013*. Retrieved November 4, 2014 at <https://secure.cihi.ca/estore/productFamily.htm?locale=en&pf=PFC2646>.

³ College of Nurses of Ontario. (2014). *Membership Statistics Highlights 2014*, p. 10.

⁴ Based on Data from Table 3.1 of College of Nurses of Ontario. (2014). *Membership Statistics Highlights 2014*.

⁵ Based on data from Tables 4.7, 6.7, and 8.4 of College of Nurses of Ontario. (2014). *Membership Statistics Highlights 2014*.

⁶ Ratio calculated by RNAO using CNO RN employment data and Statistics Canada population data (Table 051-0001 Estimates of population, by age group and sex for July 1, Canada, provinces and territories, annual (persons)(1,2,6,7)).

⁷ The government anticipated \$50 million in savings for 2008-09 alone by delaying the completion of the promise to hire 9,000 more nurses. Ontario Ministry of Finance. (2008). *Managing Expenditures*. Retrieved November 4,, 2014 from <http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2008/10/managing-expenditures.html>

⁸ The figures comparing Ontario with the rest of the country are based on CIHI statistics, which as slightly different than those from CNO, as CIHI adjusts statistics from each jurisdiction for nurses registered in multiple jurisdictions.

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¹⁵ Tourangeau, A. (2006). *Nurse staffing and work environments relationships with hospital-level outcomes*. Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Health Services Research Foundation.

¹⁶ Calculations by RNAO using CIHI nursing employment statistics and Statistics Canada population figures. CIHI has ceased to report nurse/population ratios.

¹⁷ CIHI has ceased to report nurse/population ratios. 2012 is the latest data for these ratios

¹⁸ LPNs = licensed practical nurses, called registered practical nurses in Ontario (RPNs).

¹⁹ RPNs = registered psychiatric nurses in this table, not to be confused with the registered practical nurses in Ontario.

²⁰ Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. (2010). *Creating Vibrant Communities*. Retrieved November 4, 2014 at <http://rnao.ca/policy/reports/creating-vibrant-communities>

²¹ Work status figures prior to 2005 were estimated, due to the fact the CNO only started to make reporting of those figures mandatory in 2005. Before that time, many RNs did not report their work status (almost 11,000 in 2004). The estimation was done by assuming that those whose status was unknown had the same proportions of full-time, part-time and casual employment as those whose employment status was known.

²² CNO data for 2004-2008 is counted from January 1 of each year and closely maps to the first mandate that ran from October 2003 to October 2007

²³ Statistic for RNs in the general class. College of Nurses of Ontario (2014). *New Members in the General Class 2013*. p. 10. Retrieved November 4, 2014 at http://www.cno.org/Global/docs/general/43011_TrendsNewMembers.pdf.

²⁴ 2011 counts in this section are not comparable to those in the previous years because the 2011 counts are for positions while the earlier counts are for RNs. Due to multiple job holding, there were 107,625 positions but only 93,315 RNs.

²⁵ 2012 counts in this section are not comparable to years prior to 2011 since they are counts for positions while the earlier counts are for RNs. Due to multiple job holding, there were 108,618 positions but only 92,879 RNs.

²⁶ 2013 counts in this section are not comparable to years prior to 2011 since they are counts for positions while the earlier counts are for RNs. Due to multiple job holding, there were 110,306 positions but only 94,386 RNs.

²⁷ College of Nurses of Ontario. *Nursing Statistics*. Retrieved November 4, 2014 at <http://www.cno.org/what-is-cno/nursing-demographics/>.