

May 2012

TO: Ontario Mayors

cc: Municipal Council Members

FROM: Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU)/Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

We are writing to you today about Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) in your municipality and the days that have been dedicated to these health care professionals.

The second week of May was proclaimed **National Nursing Week** in 1985 to coincide with Florence Nightingale's birthday. This year Nurses Week is May 7 - 13, 2012, and **RPN day is Friday May 11, 2012**. Ontario has the lowest nurse-to-population ratio in the country making Nursing Week especially important¹.

We are asking you to declare Friday May 11, 2012 RPN day in your municipality.

RPNs are a vital part of the nursing team. However, the extent to which RPNs work to their full scope of practice still varies greatly throughout the province. RPN day in your city or municipality would help bring RPNs the attention and recognition they deserve.

RPNs administer patient assessments and interventions. RPNs care for patients alone depending on the patient's acuity and/or complexity, patient predictability and the level of health care professional supports. RPNs provide elements of care for highly complex patients as part of a health care team. RPNs work in collaboration with RNs when patients are at medium-risk².

Approximately \$32 million in Ontario each year is invested in the education of RPNs³. RPNs now graduate with a two-year practical nursing diploma (and at some colleges 2.5 years)⁴.

Valuing RPNs and allowing them to work to their full scope in a variety of settings (including hospitals) will help to alleviate Ontario's nursing crisis. **Please declare Friday May 11, 2012 RPN day in your community.**

We would be very interested in arranging a time to meet with you. Please contact us to set a date and time at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your support in advance.

Sincerely,

OCHU/CUPE Representative

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¹ NHSRU (Nursing Health Services Research Unit) Supplement to The Annual Report 2004-05, *Research as a Vehicle for Knowledge Transfer and Influence*, p. 20.

² *RNs and RPNs – Working Together*, http://www.cno.org/prac/work_together.htm, College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), Summer 2005.

³ *Outcomes: Improved Patient and Fiscal Outcomes as a Result of Appropriate Use of Nursing Staff*, November 2004, RPNAO, p. 4.

⁴ *RNs and RPNs – Working Together*, http://www.cno.org/prac/work_together.htm, College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), Summer 2005.