



# Charting a Course: Strategies for Nurse Recruitment and Retention in Primary Care Amidst a Human Resource Crisis



Katie Hurst RN, MScN, BN, BA

## Background

- Nurses provide or support a large percentage of interprofessional care in primary care teams
- Ontario has had the lowest RN-to-population ratio for 9 consecutive years (CIHI)
- Wage disparities across sectors has made recruitment and retention of nurses in primary care roles increasingly challenging

## Purpose

Identify strategies for the recruitment and retention of nurses, including new graduates and experienced nurses, into primary care settings based on current evidence.

## Method: Rapid Literature Review

Search of ScholarsPortal, PubMed databases  
**Exclusion:** 'nurse practitioner' and studies done outside of the USA/UK/Australia and Canada

After abstract review  
**n= 20**

After full title review  
**n= 16**

## Results and Conclusions

What factors contribute to recruitment and retention of **new graduate** nurses in primary care?

What factors contribute to recruitment and retention of **experienced** nurses in primary care?

## Literature Review Themes

- Clinical placement experiences that are positive and realistic
- Understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Primary Care Nurses through comprehensive education
- **Orientation, support, and positive preceptor or mentorship experiences**
- **Opportunities for learning, career advancement and skill development or maintenance**
- **Positive employment conditions including fair wages and a welcoming workplace culture**

- **Orientation, support and positive preceptor or mentorship experiences**
- Fair, equitable remuneration and financial incentives
- Ability to maintain work/life balance
- **Opportunities for learning, career advancement and working to full scope of practice**
- Geography and/or location of work, fit with community/location
- **Positive workplace culture**

### Develop a structured orientation program

### Implement preceptorships and ongoing mentorship opportunities

### Create a positive workplace culture

### Ensure opportunity for skill and career advancement and ongoing learning

## Knowledge Translation to Strategies

Create an orientation guide with an organizational chart and workflow diagram to help orient new hires

Facilitate interactive opportunities for team member introductions and interprofessional shadowing opportunities

Schedule regular check-ins

Create a feedback loop for new hires to review the orientation process for continuous QI

Conduct a needs assessment interview to connect new hires with the right preceptor

Support preceptors in their journey so that both can be happy and successful

Facilitate preceptor movement to mentor role

Collect feedback for continuous QI

Make and take time to invest in a positive culture, through building core values, role clarity and psychological safety

Huddles, regular team meetings, check-ins and debriefs are supportive tools

Define and highlight internal career pathways, including opportunities for specialization or cross-functional work

Create learning opportunities through skills workshops, lunch and learns, collaborative learning and reverse mentoring

**Talk to your approaches in hiring!**

## Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank Dr. Karen Campbell of York University and Dr. Roya Haghiri-Vijeh my co-authors who supported me in my earlier research into undergraduate nursing curriculum in community health and primary care, which laid the foundation for this review.

## References

Baharum, H., Ismail, A., McKenna, L., Mohamed, Z., Ibrahim, R., & Hassan, N.H. (2023). Success factors in adaptation of newly graduated nurses: A scoping review. *BMC Nurs*, 22(1). DOI: 10.1186/s12912-023-01300-1

Harvey, C., Hegney, D., Tsai, L., McLellan, S., Chamberlain, D., Sobolewska, A., Wood, E., Hendricks, J., & Wake, T. (2019). Nurses' experiences of transition to community-based practice. *Clinical Nursing Studies*, 7(3). DOI: 10.5430/cns.v7n3p1

McInnes, S., Halcomb, E., Huckel, K., & Ashley, C. (2019). Experiences of registered nurses in a general practice-based new graduate program: A qualitative study. *Aust J Prim Health*, 25(4), 366-373. DOI: 10.1071/PY19089

Wakeman, J., Humphreys, J., Russell, D., Guthridge, S., Bourke, L., Dunbar, T., Zhao, Y., Ramjan, M., Murakami-Gold, L., & Jones, M.P. (2019). Remote health workforce turnover and retention: What are the policy and practice priorities? *Human Resources for Health*, 99.