



## Trends in Nursing Education in Canada

### 1. Brief Overview of Nursing Education Pathways

- In Canada, there are three main categories for nurses: Licenced Practice Nurses (LPNs), Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs). In addition, registered nurses can pursue further education to become Clinical Nurse Specialists and/or Nurse Practitioners.

**Table 1. Nursing categories in Canada and related education requirement**

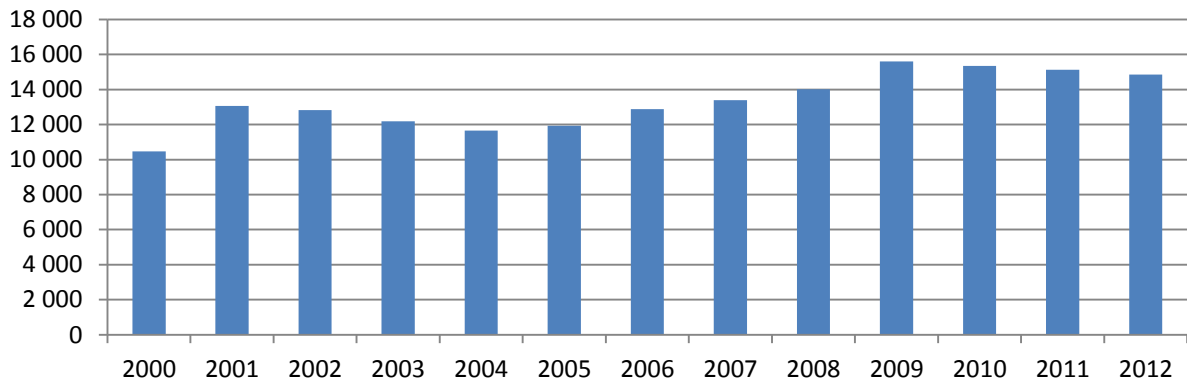
Nursing Education Level	Nursing Title	Education Requirement
Initial Nurse Education	Licensed Practice Nurses (LPNs)	2 year diploma programme in a recognised school
	Registered Nurses (RNs)	University Bachelor's degree  College Diploma in Quebec in 3 years (can further obtain a University Bachelor's degree in only 2 years)
	Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPNs)	University Bachelor's degree (these programs are available mainly in Western Provinces)
Advanced Nurse Education	Clinical Nurse Specialists	Masters and/or Doctoral degree in nursing
	Nurse Practitioner	Masters degree

Source: Canadian Nursing Association, <https://www.cna-aiic.ca/en>; Registered Psychiatric Nurse Regulators of Canada, <http://www.rpnc.ca/>.

### 2. Trends in Admissions to Nursing Schools

- Data on admissions in LPN and RPN programmes are not readily available. Figure 1 shows trends in admissions in RN programmes in Canada from 2000 to 2012. Over that period, there has been an increase of over 40% in admissions to RN education programmes, but all of the growth occurred between 2000 and 2009 in response to expected growing numbers of jobs in nursing and possible shortages. But the numbers have come down slightly since 2009.

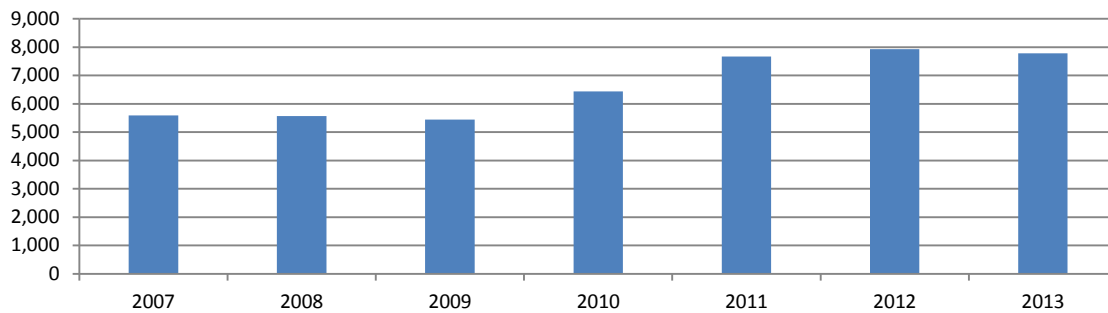
**Figure 1. Admissions to Registered Nurse Education Programmes, Canada, 2000-2012**



Source: Canadian Nurses Association/Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, Registered Nurses Education in Canada Statistics 2012-2013.

- Figure 2 shows the number of graduates from LPN education programmes in Canada over a shorter period, from 2007 to 2013. During that period, there was a 40% increase in the number of LPN graduates.

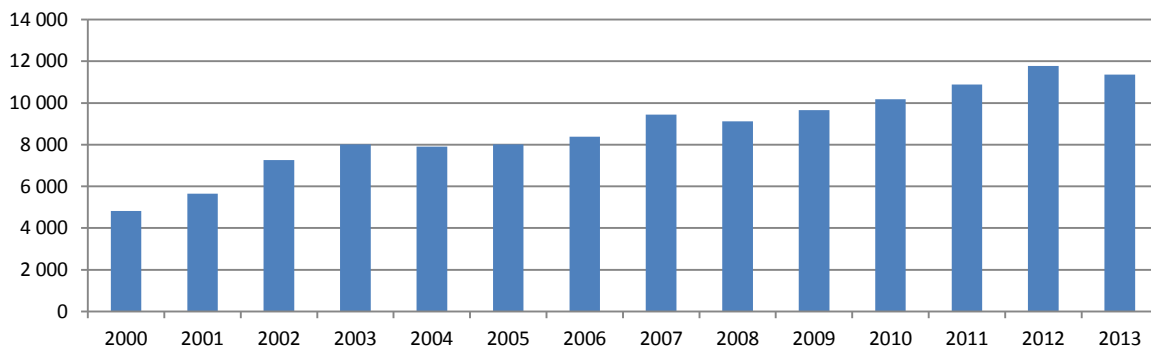
**Figure 2. Graduates from LPN Programmes, Canada, 2007 - 2013**



Source: Canadian Nurses Association/Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, Registered Nurses Education in Canada Statistics 2011-2012.

- Figure 3 presents trends in the number of graduates from RN education programmes in Canada from 2000 to 2013. Reflecting the increase in admission rates, the number of graduates from RN programmes increased from less than 5000 students in 2000 to over 10 000 per year since 2010.

**Figure 3. Graduates from RN Programmes, Canada, 2000-2013**

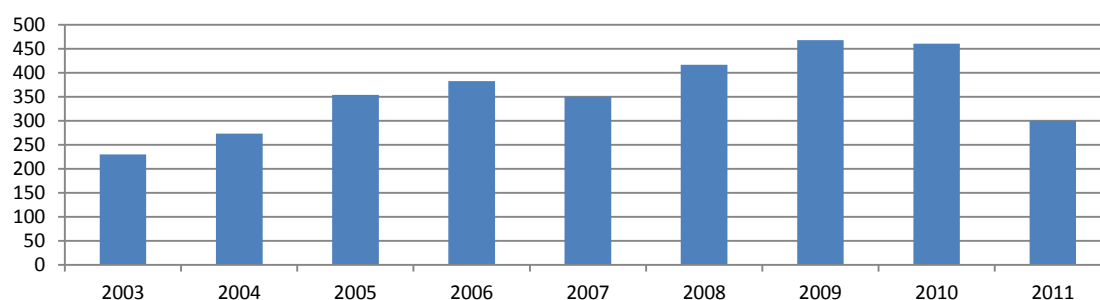


Source: Canadian Nurses Association/Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, Registered Nurses Education in Canada Statistics 2011-2013.

### 3. Advanced Nursing Education

- The role of Nurse Practitioner (NP) was established in Canada in the mid-1960s to address the shortage of doctors in rural and remote areas. In the 1990s, the role of acute care NPs emerged in hospitals to address similar shortages, respond to increased demand and improve the quality of services (Kaasalainen et al., 2010). In 2011, there were 23 Nurse Practitioner education programmes across Canada, with almost half of them (10) offered in Ontario.
- The number of students admitted in NP programmes increased rapidly between 2003 and 2009, from about 230 in 2003 up to 450 in 2009 and 2010. The number subsequently dropped in 2011, possibly linked to a re-organisation of education programmes at that time. While NP programmes used to be offered at three different levels (post-RN diploma, master's degree and post-master's degree), there was a move in 2011 to harmonise the educational requirement, with a master's degree becoming the norm. This may have prompted some students to delay their applications to see what would be the final arrangement regarding the educational requirement (Canadian Nurses Association and Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, 2013).

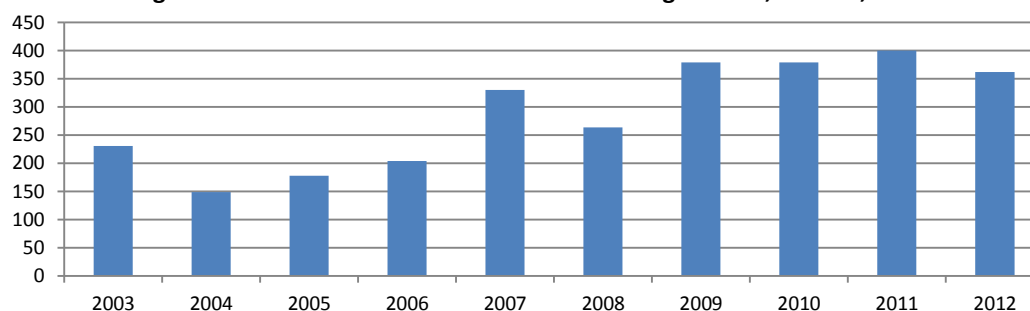
**Figure 4. Admissions to Nurse Practitioner Programmes, Canada, 2003 - 2011**



Source: Canadian Nurses Association/Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing.

- Consistent with the rise in admission rates, the number of graduates from NP programmes almost doubled between 2003 and 2011, rising from 231 graduates in 2003 to 400 in 2011, fuelling the growth in the number of NPs in Canada. There was a slight decrease in the number of graduates in 2012, probably linked to the changes in the education programmes in 2011.

**Figure 5. Graduates from Nurse Practitioner Programmes, Canada, 2003 - 2012**



Source: Canadian Nurses Association/Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing.

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<http://www.oecd.org/health/health-workforce-policies-in-oecd-countries-9789264239517-en.htm>

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