

RPNC

*Registered
Psychiatric
Nurses
Of Canada*

POSITION STATEMENT ON BACCALAUREATE PREPARATION AS ENTRY TO PRACTICE IN PSYCHIATRIC NURSING

The competencies required of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN) to meet the changing health care needs of Canadians and the demands of the health care delivery system will be met most efficiently and effectively through baccalaureate preparation in psychiatric nursing. The Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada asserts that the minimum requirement for initial registrants for entry to practice into the profession of psychiatric nursing will be a baccalaureate degree by the year 2012.

Background

In Canada, there are over 5,000 Registered Psychiatric Nurses registered with the four regulatory bodies. Increasingly Registered Psychiatric Nurses are prepared at the baccalaureate level. The context of psychiatric nursing practice responds to demands and trends related to the delivery of health care services and the implementation of new service delivery models from in-patient to community-based care in Canada, including primary health care models. Registered Psychiatric Nurses working within the context of new healthcare delivery systems will be increasingly involved in working autonomously and collaboratively with interdisciplinary team members, and referring clients to other components of the health care service system as necessary. The increasing complex health challenges and increasing levels of acuity require RPNs to have an enhanced theoretical base and additional clinical learning experiences than can be delivered within the context of a diploma program.

Given the increasing complexities and challenges associated with Canada's health care system in which new psychiatric nursing graduates practice, advanced knowledge and application of skills commensurate with baccalaureate preparation are needed. A need also exists within the profession for RPNs with preparation at the baccalaureate level in psychiatric nursing to act as psychiatric nurse clinicians, psychiatric nurse educators, psychiatric nurse leaders, and as autonomous practitioners. Registered Psychiatric Nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level in psychiatric nursing will be better prepared for expanded roles within the health service delivery system.

Approved by the Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada

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