

RPNC

Registered Psychiatric Nurses Of Canada

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

Position

The Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada believes that the minimum requirement for initial registrants for entry to practice into the profession of psychiatric nursing must be a baccalaureate degree. 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 require baccalaureate preparation in psychiatric nursing.

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 are 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 are better prepared for expanded roles within the health service delivery system.