

Increasing the Scope of Practice of RPNs working in Home Health Care: Practice Based Evidence and Action

*When there's
a need for care,
we're there.*

Carefor
HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES & SOINS
SERVICES DE SANTÉ COMMUNAUTAIRES

Caring for our community / Au service de notre collectivité

Carefor Implementation Team

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Carefor Nurses

Funding received from Health Force Ontario

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Who Are we?

- a not-for-profit charitable health care organization that offers a wide variety of services to meet the diverse health care needs of the community
- provide services to residents throughout the Champlain district
- 750 staff and 1000 volunteers
- existing contract with the Champlain CCAC to provide visit and shift nursing, allied health, and personal support services to clients in Ottawa

Visit Nursing Service

- End of life care
- Chemotherapy home infusion program
- IV therapy (peripheral/central venous access/infusion pumps)
- Wound Care/ET/Specialty Leg Ulcer Service

Visit Nursing Service

- On average provide between 2200-2400 nursing visits per week
- Prior to the initiation of the project, 28 – 30 % of the visits were provided by RPNs

Issues Related to Nurses Working in Home Care

- Increasing demands for home care nursing services
- Aging workforce/lost expertise/retirement/nurses moving to casual part time
- Challenges around providing continuity of care provider (nursing)
- Lower salaries in comparison with hospital sector
- Perception that home care nurses are less skilled than hospital nurses

Staffing Issues (Con't)

- Nurses working in isolation
- Resources not always immediately available (medication, oxygen)
- Challenges of the environment (safety, weather, dogs)
- Increased acuity of clients in home setting
- Nurses not working to the full scope of their practice

Benefits of Working in Home Health Nursing

- Increased autonomy
- Unique relationship with clients
- Working with clients on a one-on-one basis
- Working in a home/clinic environment
- Increased focus on home care as an alternative to hospital care
- Increased use of technology/new treatment modalities in the home environment

Focus of Increased Scope of Practice for the RPN

- Initiation and maintenance of peripheral IV lines
- Maintenance and dressing changes for Peripherally Inserted Central Catheters (PICC)
- Programming infusion pumps/bag and tubing changes
- Application of elastic and inelastic compression bandages
- Admission Assessments

Strategies



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Strategies to Increase the RPN Scope of Practice

1. Applied for and received funding support from Health Force Ontario
2. Updates policies and procedures to reflect current best available evidence
3. Identified criteria for RPN selected for the initial training (including self-selection)
4. Provided and IV course (12 hours) contracted through the local community college

Strategies (Continued)

5. Interactive small group sessions that include both a theoretical and hands-on component
6. One-on-one visits with a nurse/Supervisor (modeling best practices) to observe the RPN perform the skill with a client until competency and confidence are achieved
7. On-going support available on short notice to meet the nurse in the community.

Strategies (Con't)

8. Pre - post test prior to and after initial education/training with follow-up at 6 months
9. Follow up visit with supervisor after one month
10. Follow-up session (6 months after initiation of the project) to review PICC dressing and flush
11. Participation in our local CVAD association

Outcome Measures

- Attitude, Practice, and Satisfaction Survey
- Pre-post testing (Repeat post test x 2)
- Number of visits completed by RPN using new skills (compare over time)
- RPN Utilization rate (compare over time)
- Continuity of Care

Challenges

- Bus strike x 2 ½ months that strained our resources
- Amount of Supervisor time to provide required support
- Scheduling supervised visits around days off, vacation and sick time
- Resistance of some RPNs, high anxiety level

Challenges (con't)

- RNs fear their job will be replaced with the RPN
- RN resistant to transferring or sharing clients with the RPN
- Fluctuating Caseloads
- Dependency on office staff to schedule visits

Demographics

n = 18	Mean (median, range)
Years employed:	
• in nursing	18.6 (19, 4-37)
• for Carefor	12.4 (12, .25-33)
Education	
•Certificate	12
•Diploma	6

Attitude and Practice Survey

I received sufficient training and support to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to:

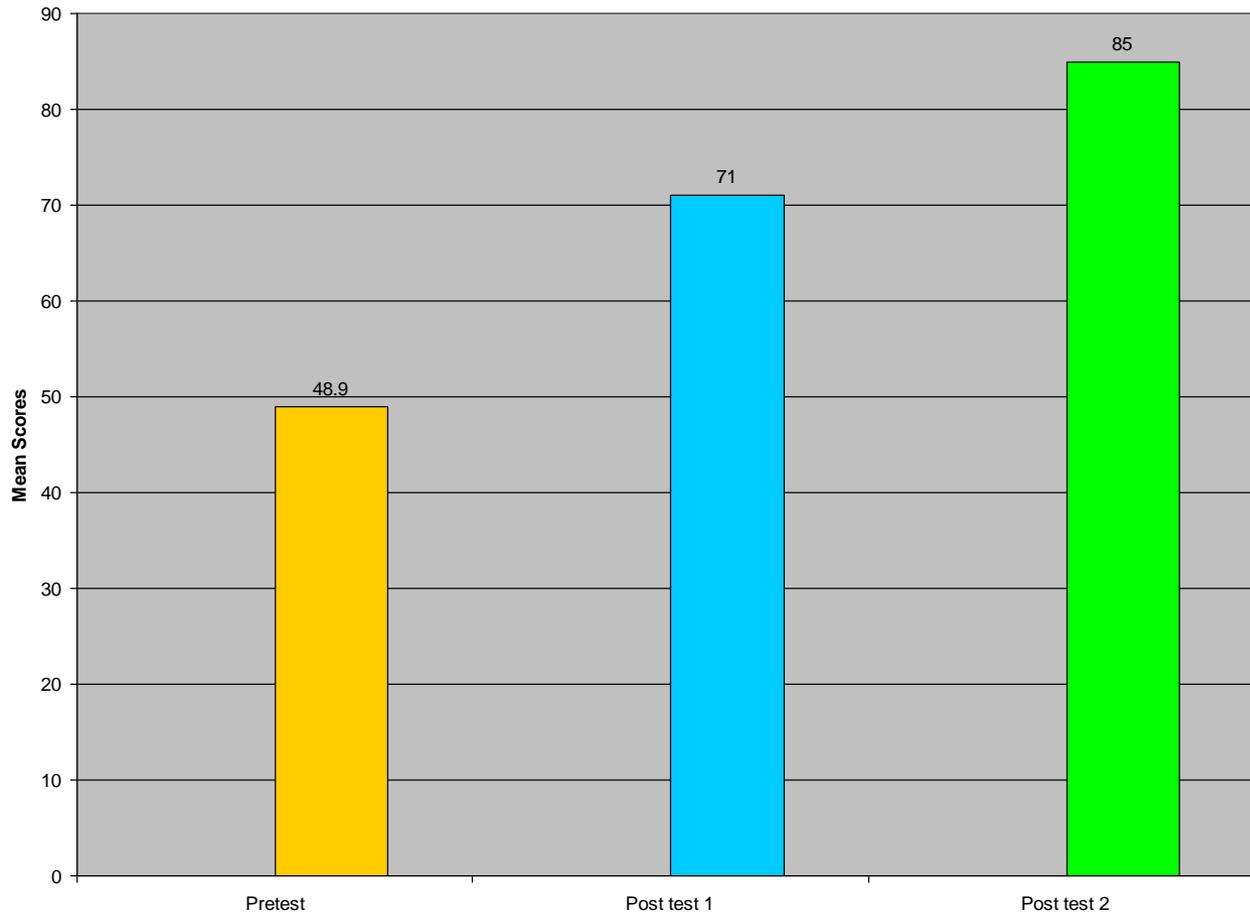
0= not at all 1= minimally 3= somewhat 5= to a large extent

Mean (median)

	6 months (n=11)	12 months (n=13)
•change an IV bag and program the pump	3.8 (5)	3.4 (4)
•change a PICC dressing	3.4 (4)	4.0 (5)
•start a peripheral IV	3.1 (4)	3.5 (4)
•Compression Bandages		5.0 (5)

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Pre-post Vascular Access Test



Confidence with Increased Scope of Practice (n = 11)

I am confident when providing care to a client requiring:

0= not at all 1= minimally 3= somewhat 5= to a large extent

Mean (median)

	6 months (n=11)	12 months (n=13)
•change of an IV bag and program the pump	3.3 (4)	3.1 (4)
•change of a PICC dressing	3.5 (4)	3.5 (5)
• a peripheral IV start	2.6 (4)	1.1 (4)
•Compression Bandages		5.0 (5)

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Pleased with Increased Scope of Practice

I am pleased to acquire the new skills of providing care to a client requiring:

0= not at all 1= minimally 3= somewhat 5= to a large extent

Mean (median)

	6 months (n=11)	12 months (n=13)
•change of an IV bag and programing the IV pump	3.9 (5)	4.2 (5)
•change of a PICC dressing	3.8 (4)	4.6 (5)
• a peripheral IV start	3.8 (4)	3.5 (4)
•Compression Bandages		5.0 (5)

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Job Satisfaction

I have increased job satisfaction as a result of acquiring new skills:

0= not at all 1= minimally 3= somewhat 5= to a large extent

Mean (Median)

6 Months	3.2 (3.5)
12 Months	4.5 (5)

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Number of Visits Requiring Increased Scope of Practice Skills

	January 2009	September 2009
IV bag change and pump programming	33	100
PICC flush and dressing change	29	59
IV initiation and maintenance	6	4
Compression bandages		122

* Some clients require more than one skill

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Lessons Learned:

- Importance of the one-on-one coaching and support to acquire skills and confidence
- Importance of readily available support
- Importance of adequate time given to learn and become comfortable with the skills
- lead to improve collaboration between RN/RPN
- Appropriate use of limited resources

In Summary:

Increasing the Scope of Practice of our RPNs has resulted in the following outcomes:

- increased ability for a timely response to the needs of the population requiring home nursing care
- improved continuity of care, as the RPN is able to provide more of the client care, reducing the number of nurses visiting any one client

In Summary:

- increased our agency's ability to respond to more clients with complex needs as the Registered Nurses (RNs) have more capacity to see these clients (e.g. end of life care, chemotherapy)
- increased job satisfaction for the RPN (rated as on a Likert scale 0 to 5)
- the RPNs' acceptance of their increased scope of practice