

2009 WORKFORCE PROFILE
of Registered Nurses in Canada

May 2011



This document has been prepared by the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) to provide information and to support CNA in the pursuit of its mission, vision and goals.

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© Canadian Nurses Association
50 Driveway
Ottawa, ON K2P 1E2

Tel.: 613-237-2133 or 1-800-361-8404
Fax: 613-237-3520
www.cna-aiic.ca

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Message from the CEO

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) is pleased to present *Workforce Profile of Registered Nurses in Canada*, our annual report that contains demographic, educational and employment data specific to Canadian registered nurses.

This report enables CNA and its members to provide sound workforce information to governments and stakeholders for health human resources planning. It also serves to complement *Regulated Nurses: Canadian Trends, 2005 to 2009*, the annual report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) – and draws data directly from the CIHI report. Furthermore, CNA extracts data from the CIHI registered nurses database to provide additional workforce information.

We look forward to hearing your comments about the report.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Bard, RN, M.A.Ed.
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Nurses Association

Demographic Profile

- In 2009, there were 284,690 **registered nurses** (RNs), including nurse practitioners (NPs), in Canada, with an average annual growth rate from 2005 to 2009 of approximately 1.9%. Of this number:
 - **93.6%** (266,341) were **employed in nursing**, an increase of 6% since 2005.
 - **1.8%** (5,090) were **employed outside of nursing**.
 - **2.9%** (8,195) were **not employed**.
 - **1.8%** (5,066) **did not state** their employment status.
- The **ratio of RNs employed in nursing to the Canadian population** in 2009 was one RN for every 127 persons.

The ratio of **RNs employed in nursing** by jurisdiction to the jurisdiction population in 2009 was as follows:

Jurisdiction	Number of RNs employed in nursing ¹	Population ²	Ratio of RNs to population ³
Canada	266,341	33,720,184	1:127
Newfoundland and Labrador	5,825	508,143	1:87
Prince Edward Island	1,406	141,097	1:100
Nova Scotia	8,929	939,124	1:105
New Brunswick	7,866	749,324	1:95
Quebec	66,055	7,828,357	1:119
Ontario	94,296	13,064,900	1:139
Manitoba	11,153	1,219,562	1:109
Saskatchewan	9,117	1,029,124	1:113
Alberta	29,405	3,670,742	1:125
British Columbia	30,900	4,460,292	1:144
Yukon	367	33,652	1:92
N.W.T. and Nunavut*	1,022	75,867	1:74

Sources:

¹ Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2010). *Regulated nurses: Canadian trends, 2005 to 2009*. Ottawa: Author.

² Population estimates from Statistics Canada (July 1, 2009).

³ Data produced by CNA.

Note:

* Northwest Territories and Nunavut data were combined for 2009.

- **Men represented 6.2% (16,475) of RNs** employed in nursing in 2009, with 38.7% practising in Quebec, 27.6% in Ontario, 11.6% in British Columbia, 8.2% in Alberta, and the rest distributed throughout the remaining provinces and territories.
- **Women represented 93.8% of RNs (249,866)** employed in nursing in 2009.

The **number of RNs** employed in nursing **by sex** by jurisdiction in 2009 and 2005 was as follows:

Jurisdiction	2009			2005		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Canada	249,866	16,475	266,341	237,668	14,007	251,675
Newfoundland and Labrador	5,533	292	5,825	5,252	244	5,496
Prince Edward Island	1,372	34	1,406	1,405	38	1,443
Nova Scotia	8,569	360	8,929	8,447	286	8,733
New Brunswick	7,513	353	7,866	7,201	306	7,507
Quebec	59,678	6,377	66,055	58,008	5,819	63,827
Ontario	89,753	4,543	94,296	85,553	3,876	89,429
Manitoba	10,456	697	11,153	10,645	618	11,263
Saskatchewan	8,699	418	9,117	8,255	294	8,549
Alberta	28,060	1,345	29,405	25,351	1,004	26,355
British Columbia	28,984	1,916	30,900	26,415	1,399	27,814
Yukon	328	39	367	276	26	302
N.W.T. and Nunavut*	921	101	1,022	860	97	957

Sources:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2010). *Regulated nurses: Canadian trends, 2005 to 2009*. Ottawa: Author.

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2006). *Workforce trends of registered nurses in Canada, 2005*. Ottawa: Author.

Note:

*Northwest Territories and Nunavut data were combined for 2009 and 2005.

The **distribution of RNs** employed in nursing in Canada **by age and employment status** in 2009 was as follows:

Age cohort (years)	Numbers of RNs and percentage*	Employment status**		
		Full time	Part time/casual	Not stated
≤ 24	6,222 (2.4%)	3,473	2,746	3
25-29	23,774 (9.3%)	14,687	9,074	13
30-34	24,713 (9.7%)	14,872	9,827	14
35-39	28,541 (11.2%)	16,668	11,854	19
40-44	32,581 (12.8%)	18,940	13,610	31
45-49	37,848 (14.8%)	23,297	14,531	20
50-54	39,201 (15.4%)	25,844	13,343	14
55-59	35,591 (13.9%)	22,297	13,270	24
60-64	18,680 (7.3%)	8,852	9,807	21
65+	8,037 (3.1%)	1,985	6,037	15

Source:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2009). Registered nurses database.

Notes:

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

* In 2009, distribution of RNs by age is missing for all RNs registered in Manitoba (n=11,153, 4.2% of RN workforce), for whom date of birth was not provided to CNA.

** In 2009, distribution of RNs by employment status is missing for all RNs registered in Manitoba (n=11,153, 4.2% of RN workforce), for whom date of birth was not provided to CNA.

Four generations are now found in the workplace, as described by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions¹:

- **Generation Y (born 1981-2000)** – Self confident, highly educated and technologically savvy, they value work flexibility and collaborative team approach with constant positive reinforcement.
- **Generation X (born 1965-1980)** – Because they entered the labour market at a time of significant hospital restructuring and large-scale layoffs of nurses, many were unable to find full-time employment, and were forced to take several part-time positions or leave Canada in order to pursue a career in nursing.
- **Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)** – Prepared to work long hours in return for rewards, they define themselves through their jobs and work performance.

¹ Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. (2009). *From textbooks to texting: Addressing issues of intergenerational diversity in the nursing workplace* (pp. 7-8). Ottawa: Author.

- **Veterans (born 1925-1945)** – They tend to be respectful of authority and disciplined in their work habits; they are averse to risk and less likely to question organizational practices.

The **average age** of an RN employed in nursing in 2009 was **45.2 years**; the average age in 2005 was 44.7.

Jurisdiction	Average age (years)*	Minimum age	Maximum age*	Difference from Cdn. average (years)
Canada	45.2	21	75	-
Newfoundland and Labrador	42.9	22	72	- 2.3
Prince Edward Island	47.3	24	74	+ 2.1
Nova Scotia	46.7	22	75	+ 1.5
New Brunswick	45.0	22	75	- 0.2
Quebec	43.4	21	75	- 1.8
Ontario	46.3	22	75	+ 1.1
Manitoba**	46.2	-	-	+ 1.0
Saskatchewan	45.8	22	74	+ 0.6
Alberta	44.6	21	75	- 0.6
British Columbia	46.3	22	75	+ 1.1
Yukon	44.5	22	70	- 0.7
N.W.T. and Nunavut†	45.3	22	75	+ 0.1

Source:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2009). Registered nurses database.

Notes:

* For the purpose of calculating mean age, the workforce is restricted to those under the age of 76 years.

** Data pertaining to Manitoba average age (in years) taken directly from above-cited source. CNA is unable to provide maximum and minimum age for Manitoba as breakdown by age for Manitoba was not provided to CNA.

† Northwest Territories and Nunavut data were combined for 2009.

Educational Profile

The **highest level of nursing education** reported by RNs employed in nursing in Canada in 2009 and 2005 was as follows:

Education level	2009		2005	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Diploma	160,111	60.1%	166,004	66.0%
Baccalaureate	97,651	36.7%	79,306	31.5%
Master's	8,058	3.0%	5,954	2.4%
Doctorate	518	0.2%	394	0.2%
Not stated	3	0.0% ³	17	0.0%

Sources:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2009). Registered nurses database.

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2005). Registered nurses database.

Note:

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The **location of graduation** reported by RNs employed in nursing in 2009² was:

- **91.7%** (243,054) **educated in Canada**
- **8.3%** (22,023) **educated internationally**

Employment Profile

The **distribution of RNs** employed in nursing **by primary area of responsibility** in 2009 and 2005 was as follows:

Area of responsibility	2009		2005	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Direct patient care	234,031	87.9%	214,549	85.2%
Administration	17,039	6.4%	16,028	6.4%
Education	9,098	3.4%	8,595	3.4%
Research	1,995	0.7%	1,707	0.7%
Not stated	4,178	1.6%	10,796	4.3%
Total	266,341	100%	251,675	100%

Sources:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2010). *Regulated nurses: Canadian trends, 2005 to 2009*. Ottawa: Author.

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2006). *Workforce trends of registered nurses in Canada, 2005*. Ottawa: Author.

² Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2010). *Regulated nurses: Canadian trends, 2005 to 2009*. Ottawa: Author.

The **distribution of RNs** employed in direct care nursing **by area of responsibility in 2009** was as follows:

Direct care nursing area of responsibility	Number	(%)
Medicine/Surgery	44,409	16.9%
Geriatrics/Long-term Care	25,573	9.8%
Critical Care	19,096	7.3%
Emergency Care	17,262	6.6%
Maternity/Newborn	14,969	5.7%
Psychiatry/Mental Health	13,862	5.3%
Community Health	13,478	5.1%
Operating Room/Recovery Room	12,883	4.9%
Several Clinical Areas	8,916	3.4%
Home Care	7,411	2.8%
Pediatrics	7,352	2.8%
Public Health	7,017	2.7%
Ambulatory Care	6,216	2.4%
Rehabilitation	4,024	1.5%
Oncology	3,488	1.3%
Occupational Health	2,898	1.1%
Telehealth	1,232	0.5%
Other Direct Care	23,945	9.1%
Total Direct Care	234,031	89.3%

Source:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2010). *Regulated nurses: Canadian trends, 2005 to 2009*. Ottawa: Author.

The **distribution of RNs** employed in nursing **by position** in 2009 and 2005 was as follows:

Position	2009		2005	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Staff or community health nurse	205,069	77.0%	192,816	76.6%
Manager or assistant manager	13,790	5.2%	12,868	5.1%
Instructor/professor/educator	9,923	3.7%	8,347	3.3%
Consultant	7,892	3.0%	7,590	3.0%
Director or assistant director	3,930	1.5%	3,389	1.3%
Clinical specialist	2,313	0.9%	2,279	0.9%
Researcher	1,508	0.6%	1,638	0.7%
Nurse practitioner	1,839	0.7%	825	0.3%
Chief nursing officer or CEO	826	0.3%	1,226	0.5%
Nurse midwife	20	0.0%	6	0.0%
Other	16,345	6.1%	12,268	4.9%
Not stated	2,886	1.1%	8,423	3.3%
Total	266,341	100%	251,675	100%

Sources:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2009). Registered nurses database.
Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2005). Registered nurses database.

Note:

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

A total of 266,341 RNs were employed in nursing in Canada in 2009. Canadian RNs employed in nursing in 2009³ and 2005⁴ reported their **employment status** as follows:

- **58.6%** (156,178) worked **full time** in 2009 versus 54.4% (137,028) in 2005.
- **30.6%** (81,442) worked **part time** in 2009 versus 32.7% (82,222) in 2005.
- **10.7%** (28,533) worked on a **casual** basis in 2009 versus 11.1% (28,043) in 2005.
- **0.1%** (188) did not report their status in 2009 versus 1.7% (4,382) in 2005.

³ Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2010). *Regulated nurses: Canadian trends, 2005 to 2009*. Ottawa: Author.

⁴ Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2006). *Workforce trends of registered nurses in Canada, 2005*. Ottawa: Author.

The **distribution of RNs** employed in nursing **by employment status** in 2009 was as follows:

Jurisdiction	Total	Full time		Part time		Casual	
	Number	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Canada	266,153**	156,178	58.7%	81,442	30.6%	28,533	10.7%
Newfoundland and Labrador	5,825	4,362	74.9%	835	14.3%	628	10.8%
Prince Edward Island	1,406	747	53.1%	525	37.3%	134	9.5%
Nova Scotia	8,929	5,797	64.9%	2,216	24.8%	916	10.3%
New Brunswick	7,866	5,127	65.2%	2,135	27.1%	604	7.7%
Quebec	65,883**	37,458	56.8%	21,403	32.5%	7,022	10.7%
Ontario	94,296	61,840	65.6%	24,795	26.3%	7,661	8.1%
Manitoba	11,139**	5,263	47.2%	4,884	43.8%	992	8.9%
Saskatchewan	9,117	5,350	58.7%	2,591	28.4%	1,176	12.9%
Alberta	29,405	12,119	41.2%	13,221	45.0%	4,065	13.8%
British Columbia	30,900	17,353	56.2%	8,734	28.3%	4,813	15.6%
Yukon	365**	185	50.7%	103	28.2%	77	21.1%
N.W.T. and Nunavut*	1,022	577	56.5%	0	0%	445	43.5%

Source:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2010). *Regulated nurses: Canadian trends, 2005 to 2009*. Ottawa: Author.

Notes:

* Northwest Territories and Nunavut data were combined for 2009.

** Employment status unknown: n = 188 (Quebec: 172, Manitoba: 14, Yukon: 2)

Multiple Employers

The **distribution of RNs by multiple employment status** in Canada for 2009 and 2005 was as follows:

Multiple employment status	2009		2005	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Single employer in registered nursing	229,945	86.3%	216,480	86.0%
Multiple employers in registered nursing	34,822	13.1%	34,039	13.5%
Not stated	1,574	0.6%	1,156	0.5%
Total	266,341	100.0%	251,675	100.0%

Sources:

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2009). Registered nurses database.

Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2005). Registered nurses database.

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