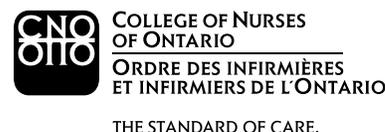


Most grads passing new nursing exam and becoming RNs



Ontario's nursing graduates are passing the regulators' new entry-to-practice exam and becoming Registered Nurses, with 84% having passed by the end of 2015.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2016 (Toronto) — Last year, more than 4,000 graduates of registered nursing (RN) educational programs in Ontario wrote the new exam needed to begin working as a nurse. By the end of 2015, almost 84% of these graduates had passed the exam. Of those who had not yet been successful, many still had attempts remaining.

In Ontario, nursing graduates must pass an exam approved by the province's nursing regulator, the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO). Known as the NCLEX-RN, the exam is one of several requirements graduates must meet to ensure they have basic knowledge, skill and judgment to provide safe care to the public.

Some of the areas the exam tests include the graduate's ability to:

- assess and respond to changes in vital signs
- perform comprehensive health assessments
- assess a client's need for pain management
- perform calculations needed to safely administer medications
- maintain client confidentiality and privacy.

The NCLEX-RN was implemented in 2015, replacing a previous pen-and-paper exam. The exam uses an approach to exam writing that is new to most graduates. While there was a drop in the pass rate on the first attempt of the new exam in 2015, the pass rate on the second attempt was higher than previous years. As writers gain confidence and become familiar with the exam's new format, the country's nursing regulators expect to see more writers passing on their first attempt.

The Ontario pass rate of 83.7% of writers is in line with the national pass rate of 84.1%. Ontario-educated graduates account for about 44% of the country's exam writers.

As the regulator, CNO is confident the new exam is meeting its obligation to ensure new nurses are able to provide safe care to Ontarians. It is also confident in the province's universities and colleges that are providing the nursing education graduates need. The exam's content is covered by the Ontario curriculum.

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“As expected, in Ontario we continue to see differences in the pass rates between schools, as we did with the previous pen-and-paper exam,” says Anne Coghlan, Executive Director and CEO of CNO. “There are many reasons for these differences, and we’ve been working with schools to share what is working best to prepare students to write this high-stakes exam.”

In 2015, 54 graduates of an Ontario program chose to write the exam in French. As with the previous exam, the pass rate for writers of the French version of the NCLEX-RN is lower than for those writing the English version. While the French version of the exam has gone through extensive review and found to be accurately translated, CNO is working with government and educators to determine the causes of the lower pass rates and to monitor these outcomes.

In Ontario, CNO is accountable for choosing and monitoring the exam, and is the source for information on its results. Each year, CNO publishes a comprehensive report of exam pass rates for the three types of nurses in the Ontario: Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses and Nurse Practitioners. The 2015 Ontario data, released today along with a report on Canada-wide results, shows how many writers passed on their first, second or third attempt at the exam (in Ontario, applicants have three attempts at a registration exam).

The 2015 Canada-wide report on the exam for registered nurses is available at www.ccrnr.ca. The 2015 Ontario report on results of all nursing exams, including those for Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses and Nurse Practitioners, is available at www.cno.org/stats.

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About the College of Nurses of Ontario

The College of Nurses of Ontario is the regulatory body for the province’s 160,000 Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses and Nurse Practitioners. Its mission is to regulate nursing in the public interest.

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