

RPN NEWSLETTER



The OCHU-CUPE RPN Committee

Juliet Saunders recognized as RPN of the Year

OCHU's RPN Committee was proud to announce Juliet Saunders as this year's Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) of the Year at the recent OCHU-CUPE annual convention in Deerhurst. Juliet is a CUPE 6364 member working at Lakeridge Health in Durham.

The award celebrates Juliet's unwavering commitment to exceptional patient care, leadership, and advocacy in the workplace.

Juliet's nominator described her as the embodiment of what it means to be a successful RPN: bringing together clinical expertise, deep compassion, and an unshakable sense of professionalism.

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NATIONAL NURSING WEEK RUNS MAY 12 - 18

GET LIABILITY INSURANCE TODAY

Important update: Changes to CNO scope of practice standards for RPNs

The College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) recently updated (July 2023) its Scope of Practice Standard for Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs), moving away from the previous Three-Factor Framework.

This marks a significant shift in how scope of practice decisions are made and how we, as RPNs, assess our responsibilities in practice.

What's changing?

In the old framework, the scope of practice was guided by three key factors:

- The client
- The nurse
- The environment

In the **new approach**, the focus is now on the knowledge, skill, and judgment of the individual nurse.

This change recognizes the diversity of experience and education among RPNs and allows for more autonomy and flexibility in clinical decision-making.

What does this mean for RPNs?

You are personally accountable for evaluating your own competence before performing any activity or intervention.

You must reflect on whether you have the knowledge, skill, and judgment to:

- Deliver care safely and effectively
- Manage potential risks or complications
- Make appropriate clinical decisions based on current evidence and best practices

Collaboration and consultation remain essential - knowing when to seek support or refer to a colleague is part of sound judgment.

Advocacy for our role and patient safety

This shift emphasizes our professional autonomy, but it also underscores the need to advocate for:

- Clear role clarity in interprofessional teams
- Ongoing education and support to build competence
- Safe staffing and environments that allow us to meet our standards
- Recognition of our growing contributions in increasingly complex care settings

As RPNs, we play a critical role in safe, quality patient care. With these changes, it's more important than ever to speak up — for ourselves, our patients, and our profession. Know your limits, communicate clearly, and always lead with your judgment.

RPN of the year (cont. from p. 1)

Whether it's administering medications, performing wound care, or navigating complex patient needs, Juliet's skill and empathy leave a lasting impact on those she cares for.

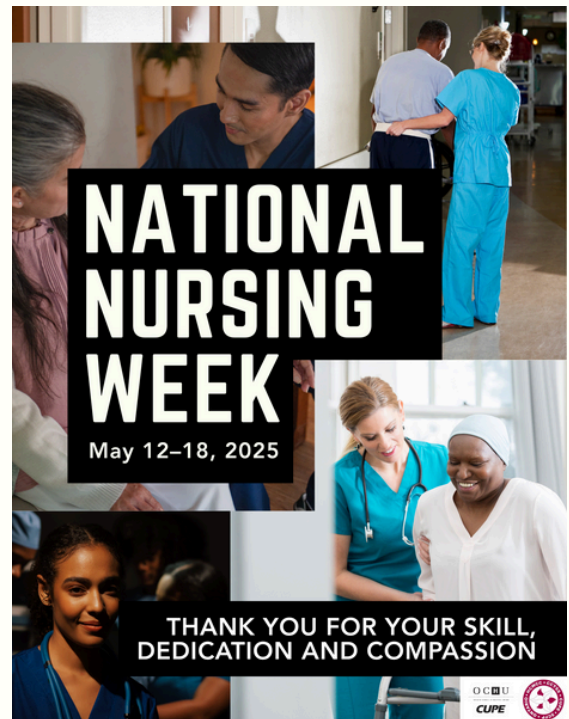
She stands out not only for her ability to adapt in fast-paced, ever-changing healthcare environments, but also for her role as a mentor and educator: sharing knowledge, fostering growth, and keeping her team and patients informed and empowered.

Juliet is known for going above and beyond, often in challenging conditions, and always with integrity and resilience. Her leadership, passion for lifelong learning, and dedication to holistic, patient-centered care make her a true inspiration.

Congratulations to Juliet Saunders! Your work speaks volumes, and this award is a reflection of the deep appreciation felt by all those lucky enough to work with and be cared for by you.

OCHU is campaigning for nurse-to-patient ratios

There is no mistaking the fact that Ontario's nurses are heavily exploited. Years of underfunding and understaffing have led to grueling workloads, increased rates of anxiety and stress, high rates of burnout and an explosion in vacancy rates for nurses.



One of the best ways to address the nursing staffing crisis is by implementing minimum nurse-to-patient ratios, which guarantee that staffing levels never dip below an established threshold.

Nurse-to-patient ratios have been introduced in multiple jurisdictions including California, British Columbia, and Queensland in Australia. The real world experience of staffing ratios has provided important insights about its benefits.

Improved patient outcomes

Studies have shown that nurse-to-patient ratios can lead to better patient health outcomes, reduced complications, and lower mortality rates.

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Our nurse-to-patient ratios campaign (cont. from p. 4)

Addressing the nursing shortage
Implementing ratios can help improve nurse retention and recruitment, as well as address the high workloads faced by nurses.

Better work environment for nurses

Ratios can help ensure that nurses have the time and resources they need to provide quality care, leading to a more positive and sustainable work environment.

A fair deal for RPNs

In the next round of central bargaining beginning in September, OCHU is proposing minimum nurse-to-patient ratios for each hospital unit. The union's proposed ratios will correspond to the special requirements and patient acuity levels of each unit.

OCHU will also table a special wage enhancement for RPNs in central bargaining in recognition of our skills, knowledge and commitment. In the last round of bargaining, the **Ontario Hospital Association refused to bargain RPN wages centrally.**



Our campaign

OCHU will continue promoting RPNs through a public campaign this year including a province-wide media tour releasing an upcoming study on nurse-to-patient ratios. We will also be holding rallies demanding more hospital funding to enable higher staffing levels for all classifications.

These campaigns are important in applying political pressure on a conservative government that has not shown the leadership required to address the hospital staffing crisis by improving funding and resolving concerns repeatedly voiced by staff.

Membership mobilizing will be critical in achieving our goals and we hope to see full participation from you.

Protect your nursing career: avail OCHU's membership insurance program

As RPNs, we dedicate our careers to providing compassionate, professional care in an increasingly complex healthcare environment. Despite our best efforts, unforeseen incidents and allegations of negligence or malpractice can arise, putting our professional and financial well-being at risk.

PROLINK and OCHU have partnered to develop a comprehensive Professional Liability Insurance program tailored to insure the unique risks you face as a nurse. Professional Liability Insurance will supplement your Employer's insurance policy and defend you from allegations of professional negligence, even if the claims made against you are groundless.

Why is professional liability insurance essential?

Professional liability insurance, often called malpractice insurance, is essential coverage designed to protect nurses like you against claims of professional negligence or malpractice. It provides:

- Legal protection: Covers legal fees, court costs, and settlements associated with malpractice allegations.

PROLINK and OCHU have partnered to develop a comprehensive Professional Liability Insurance program tailored to insure the unique risks you face as a Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) or Registered Nurse (RN). Professional Liability Insurance will supplement your Employer's insurance policy and defend you from allegations of professional negligence, even if the claims made against you are groundless.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

ERRORS & OMISSIONS COVERAGE	PROFESSIONAL LEGAL & HR ADVICE	PRIVACY & SECURITY BREACH COVERAGE
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- Financial security: Prevents substantial financial losses that could arise from lawsuits.
- Peace of mind: Allows you to focus on providing high-quality patient care without worrying about potential legal risks.

CNO requirements

The College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) mandates that all practicing nurses maintain adequate professional liability insurance as part of their professional accountability and regulatory compliance.

According to CNO regulations, nurses must:

- Ensure appropriate professional liability insurance coverage at all times.
- Provide proof of liability insurance upon request from the College.
- Understand the scope and terms of their liability coverage to ensure full compliance.

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Protect your nursing career (cont. from p. 5)

Why choose Prolink Insurance?

Prolink is specifically tailored for healthcare professionals and recognized for their comprehensive coverage and expertise.

- **Specialized Support:** Offers specialized guidance and claims support for nurses.
- **Comprehensive coverage:** Covers a wide range of potential liabilities specific to RPN practice.
- **Affordable premiums:** Competitive rates make essential protection accessible to all RPNs.

Professional responsibility and accountability

Having liability insurance is also a mark of professionalism. It demonstrates your commitment to accountability and provides assurance to your patients, colleagues, and employer.

Secure your future today

Ensure you're protected against the unpredictable nature of nursing practice. Prolink Professional Liability Insurance offers RPNs the security needed to practice confidently, knowing your career and financial health are safeguarded.

For more information or to enroll with Prolink Insurance, visit ochu.on.ca/nursing.

If you have any questions or concerns related to RPN issues please reach out to a member of our committee.



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