



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, November 14, 2013

Niagara Health System receives prestigious RPNAO Employer of Excellence Award

The Niagara Health System (NHS) is honoured to be selected as the recipient of the 2013 Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (RPNAO) Employer of Excellence Award for its leadership development and engagement of nurses at the hospital.

This award recognizes employers who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in a number of areas, including innovative and creative use of the knowledge and skills of registered practical nurses (RPNs), creating an interdisciplinary team environment and maintaining a safe, respectful and empowering work environment.

“RPNAO felt that of this year’s nominations, Niagara Health System most clearly demonstrated these important characteristics in an environment that supports leadership development of all nurses,” says Dianne Martin, Executive Director, RPNAO. “Therefore, it has been our pleasure to present the RPNAO Employer of Excellence for 2013 to Niagara Health System, an organization with a strong culture of shared governance and one who embraces change to empower and engage nurses.”

RPNs are integral members of the professional healthcare team at the NHS; they combine nursing skill, knowledge and judgment in providing expert nursing care. The NHS has close to 550 RPNs working at programs and sites across the organization.

“We are honoured to be selected as the recipient of the RPNAO Employer of Excellence Award,” says Dr. Sue Matthews, Interim President and CEO and Chief Nurse Executive, NHS. “RPNs are critical to providing the best care possible to our patients, and we have benefitted tremendously from their active involvement in helping to make continual improvements to the way we deliver care.”

About the role of the RPN and the NHS

- RPNs at the NHS are valued members of our healthcare team. We increasingly practice in an interprofessional environment, and our RPNs work hand in hand with our Registered Nurses (1,300 at NHS).
- RPNs at NHS are actively involved at all levels of the organization, from planning to bedside patient care.
- The role enhancement of RPNs working in the Emergency Department is a new initiative that has helped to improve access to care for patients and also inspired continuous learning and growth for the nurses involved.

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- RPNs are supported in various career hiring and continuing education programs, including the New Graduate Guarantee, Late Career Initiative and the RPNAO Clinical Practice Fellowship Program.
- To help support RPN leadership development, a mentorship program was created to support new RPNs joining the organization.
- RPNs participate and co-chair a number of corporate and professional councils at the NHS, including the Nursing Professional Development Council and the Fiscal Advisory Committee.

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