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## **Where Do Nurses in Rural and Small Town Canada Come From?**

### **Abstract**

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International studies contend that health professionals with rural backgrounds are more likely to practice in rural areas. The evidence is strong for physicians, but is not as robust for nurses. In Canada, a growing number of studies address the retention of rural and remote nurses, but few studies have focused on factors that contribute to the recruitment of nurses to rural or remote practice. In this presentation, we will describe the nursing workforce in rural and remote Canada, and will examine factors contributing to nurses' recruitment.

The national survey of the Nursing Practice in Rural and Remote Canada II project, examines the roles, work settings and practice modes of Registered Nurses (RNs), Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Licensed or Registered Practical Nurses (LPNs), and Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) in rural and remote communities across the country. This cross-section survey was sent to over 9,000 RNs, NPs, LPNs and RPNs in 2014-2015 with the assistance of the nursing regulatory bodies in every province and territory in Canada. The survey was available in English and French, online or paper form. Over 3,500 nurses have responded (response rate 39%) from the full range of practice settings including primary care, acute care, community health, home care, mental health and addictions, and long-term care.

The survey data will be available in early September. For this presentation, preliminary findings will be examined in order to describe characteristics of the nursing workforce. In addition, findings on variables related to the size of the community in which the nurses grew up and what drew them to work in the community will be explored in relation to type of nurse (RN, NP, LPN, RPN). The presentation will conclude with a discussion of the early findings, and implications for the recruitment of nurses to rural, remote and small town Canada.