



# **The Nature of Nursing Practice in Rural and Remote Canada**

Martha MacLeod, PhD, RN

University of Northern British Columbia

Rural and Remote Recruitment and Retention Steering Team

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## **Aim of the Study:**

- to examine and articulate the nature of registered nursing practice in primary care, acute care, community health, continuing care (home care) and long term care settings within rural and remote Canada

## **Study Components:**

- **Survey**
- **Registered Nurses Data Base (RNDB)**
- **Narrative Study**
- **Documentary Analysis**



# Principal Investigators and Decision-maker

- **Martha MacLeod**  
**University of Northern  
British Columbia**
- **Judith Kulig**  
**University of Lethbridge**
- **Norma Stewart**  
**University of Saskatchewan**
- **Roger Pitblado**  
**Laurentian University**
- **Marian Knock**  
**B.C. Ministry of Health  
Planning (to 2003)**



# Co-Investigators

- **Ruth Martin-Misener**  
**Dalhousie University**
- **Ginette Lazure**  
**Université Laval**
- **Jenny Medves**  
**Queen's University**
- **Michel Morton**  
**Lakehead University**
- **Carolyn Vogt**  
**U. Manitoba**
- **Gail Remus**  
**U. Saskatchewan**
- **Debra Morgan**  
**U. Saskatchewan**
- **Dorothy Forbes**  
**U. Saskatchewan**
- **Barbara Smith**  
**U. Saskatchewan**
- **Carl D'Arcy**  
**U. Saskatchewan**
- **Kathy Banks**  
**BC Women's Hospital**
- **Elizabeth Thomlinson (to 2004)**
- **Lela Zimmer**  
**UNBC**



# Advisory Team Members

- **Cathy Ulrich, BC**
- **Anne Ardiel, BC**
- **Debbie Phillipchuk, AB**
- **Cecile Hunt, SK**
- **Donna Brunskill, SK**
- **Marlene Smadu, SK**
- **Marta Crawford, MB**
- **Sue Matthews, ON**
- **Suzanne Michaud, QC**
- **Roxanne A. Tarjan, NB**
- **Adele Vukic, NS**
- **Barb Oke, NS**
- **Elizabeth Lundrigan, NF**
- **Joyce England, PEI**
- **Barbara Harvey, NU**
- **Madge Applin, NWT**
- **Elizabeth Cook, NWT**
- **Fran Curran, YT**
- **Jan Horton, YT**
- **Francine Anne Roy, CIHI**
- **Kathleen MacMillan, FNIHB – Health Canada**
- **Maria MacNaughton, FNIHB - Health Canada**
- **Lisa Dutcher, Aboriginal Nurses Ass'n**
- **Lisa Little, CNA**





# Funding Partners

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- **Nova Scotia Health Services Research Foundation**
- **British Columbia Rural and Remote Health Research Institute**
- **Saskatchewan Industries and Resources**
- **Provincial and Territorial Nurses Associations**
- **Government of Nunavut**
- **Canadian Institute for Health Information**



# **Rural and Remote Nursing**

**Access to Care**

**Quality of Care**

**Sustainability of Care**





# Access to Care

- **Supply and Distribution of Nurses**
- **Education of Nurses**

# Supply and Distribution of Registered Nurses in Rural and Small Town Canada



**How many  
Registered Nurses  
are there in rural  
and remote  
Canada?**



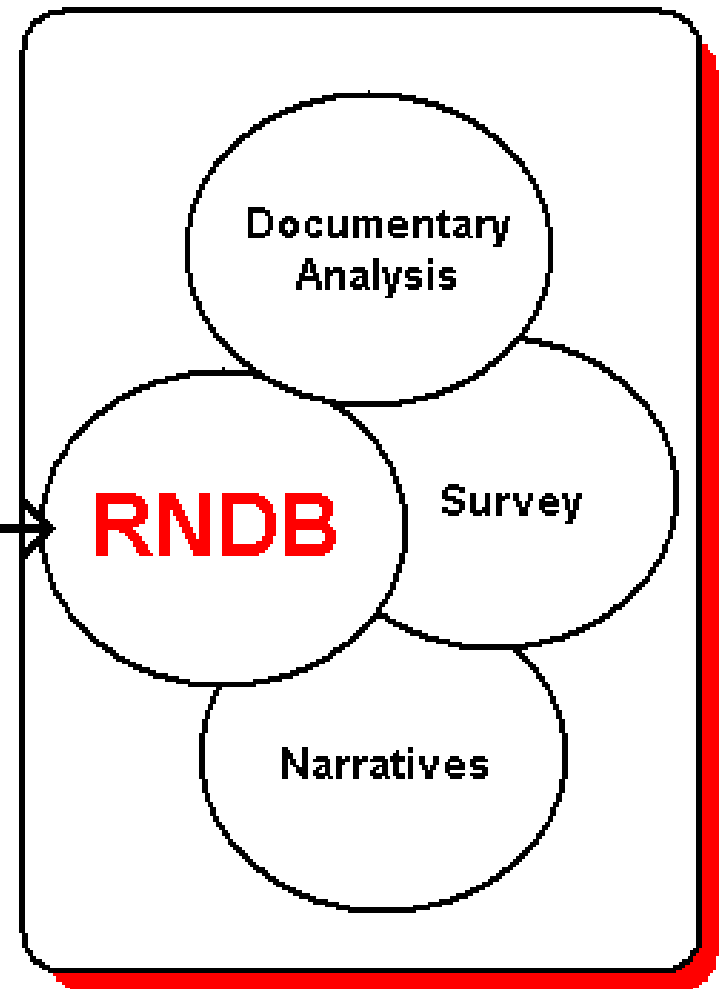
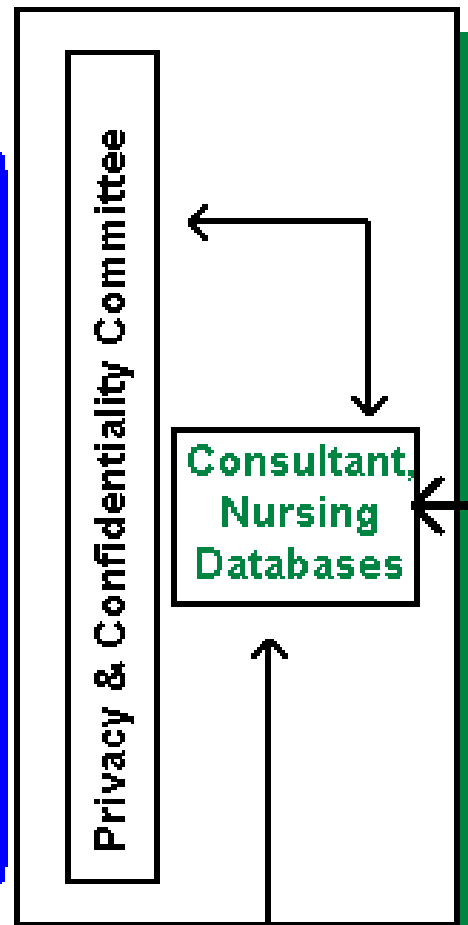
Canadian Institute  
for Health Information  
Institut canadien  
d'information sur la santé



Provincial/  
Territorial  
Registrars

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Nursing Practice in  
Rural & Remote Canada



**Registered Nurses Database**

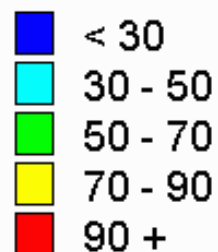
Year	Number of rural (RST) RNs	% of all RNs	Rural (RST) % of total Canadian/ <b>NS</b> population
1994	42,303 <i>2577</i>	18.0 <i>28.1</i>	22.3 <i>38.9</i>
2000	41,502 <i>2584</i>	17.9 <i>29.7</i>	21.7 <i>38.1</i>
2002	40,648	17.6	20.6

2002 – based on CIHI figure generated without Quebec data

Source: RNDB

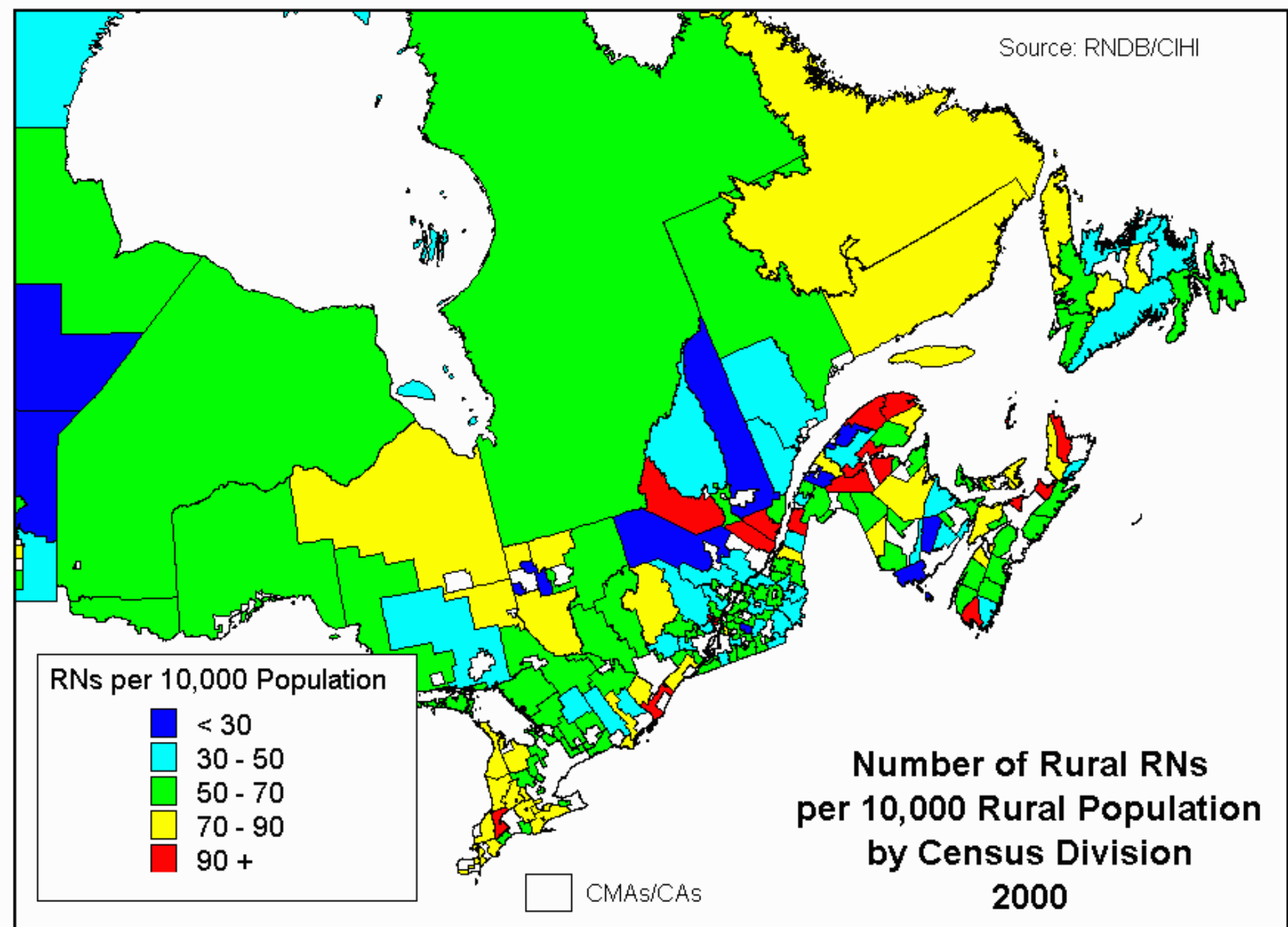
Source: RNDB/CIHI

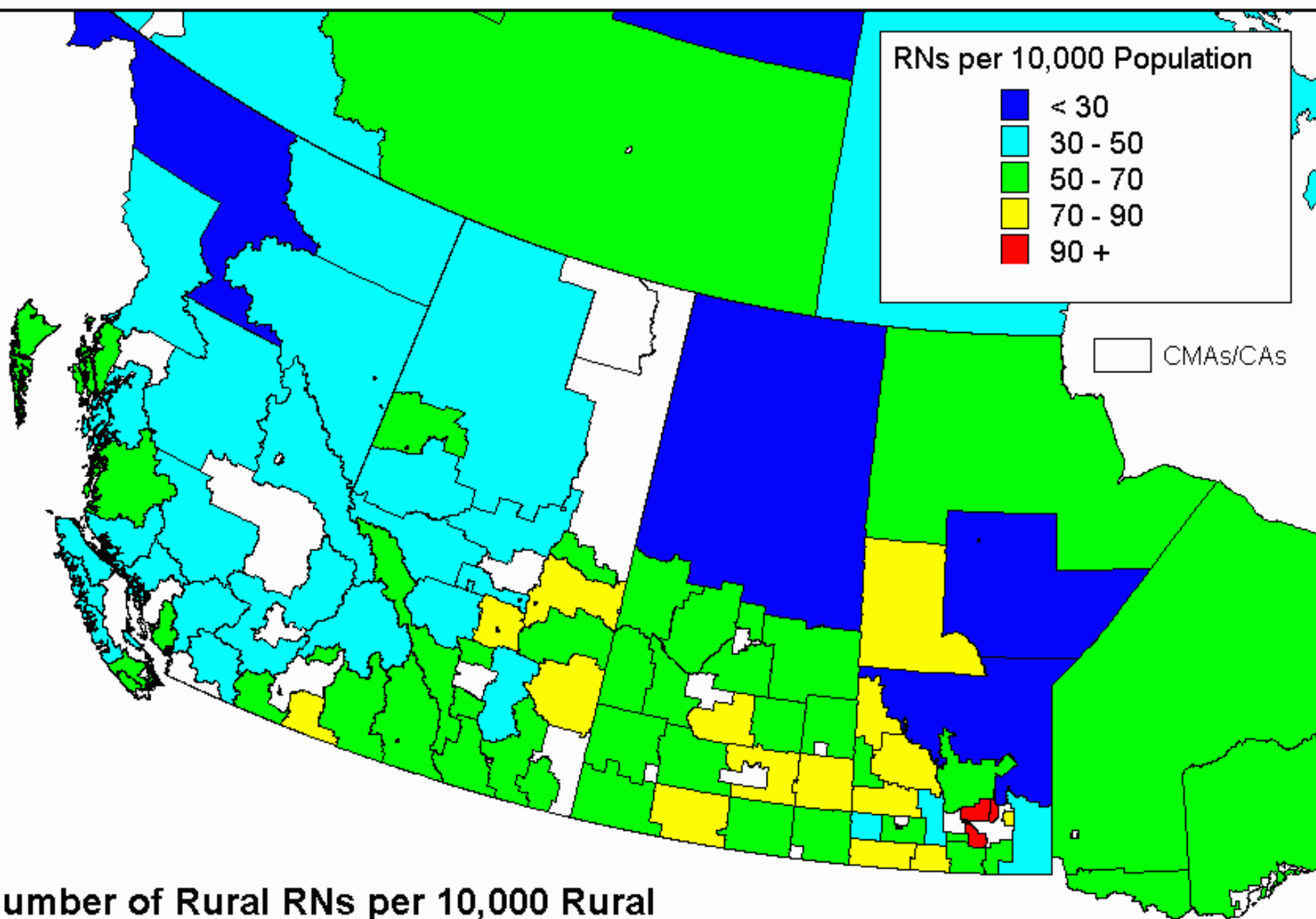
RNs per 10,000 Population



 CMAs/CAs

**Number of Rural RNs  
per 10,000 Rural Population  
by Census Division  
2000**





**Number of Rural RNs per 10,000 Rural Population by Census Division, 2000**

Source: RNDB/CIHI

# .. an aging workforce

- **Rural RNs -Canada/NS**
  - 1994 average age: 40.6 years/**41.0**
  - 2000 average age: 42.9 years/**43.4**
- **Urban RNs**
  - 1994 average age: 41.6 years/**40.0**
  - 2000 average age: 43.5 years/**42.7**
- **All RNs**
  - 1994 average age: 41.5 years/**40.2**
  - 1998 average age: 42.6 years
  - 2000 average age: 43.4 years/**42.9**
  - 2002 average age: 44.2 years
  
  - source: RNDB



# Access to Care Education of Nurses

## **Documentary Analysis Methods:**

- conducted to achieve a contextual understanding of the policy and practice environment
- systematic collection and analysis of relevant documents according to the policy cycle: policy formulation, policy implementation and policy accountability (Rist, 1994)
- using this cycle, developed a guide to examine the materials
- located 200+ documents with input from advisory board - over 150 analyzed





# Highest Education Level of RNs in Rural Canada/NS, 2000

(Source: RNDB)

Diploma	81.4%	79.6%
Bachelor's	18%	19%
Master's/Doctorate	0.6%	1.4%



# Educational Preparation of RNs in Rural and Remote Areas

source: Doc. Analysis

- Little information in available reports
- No government documents located that discuss the need to provide educational opportunities for students in rural sites
- Most nursing associations equate rural with accessibility issues regarding education
- Entry-level competencies focus on generic requirements
- Education for remote practice links it with First Nations health issues
- Education documents discuss programs with rural focus at locations such as UNBC, University of Saskatchewan, First Nations University of Canada



- No indication of any telehealth education occurring within nursing programs
- Nursing programs prepare graduates to be computer-literate but technology not always available or feasible in rural and remote settings
- Extended mentoring or orientation programs need consideration (documentary analysis) but do not replace basic education with employment mentoring (narrative)



### **Advice for Educators (source: Narratives)**

- Need for reality-based education
- Part of curriculum offered in rural settings
- Educators who are specialized and experienced in rural practice

### **General Comments from Rural Nurses (source: Naratives)**

- Most basic education does not prepare new grads for rural and remote practice
- Rural health nursing needs to part of all basic nursing programs



# Quality of Care

- **Community as Shaping Practice**
- **Practice Components**
- **Working on the Edges of Practice**



# Quality of Care Community Shaping Practice

## Narrative Approach:

- 152 Nurses (11 Francophone)
- [NS- 9;Atlantic-36](#)
- Areas of Practice: Acute, Long-term Care, Public Health, Home-care, Community, Primary Care
- Telephone Interviews
- Analysis: interpretative phenomenology & thematic analysis



# Community Shaping Practice

source: Narratives

- Size, distance, demographics
- Expectations of communities
- Knowing the client in the context of community; the community in the context of the client



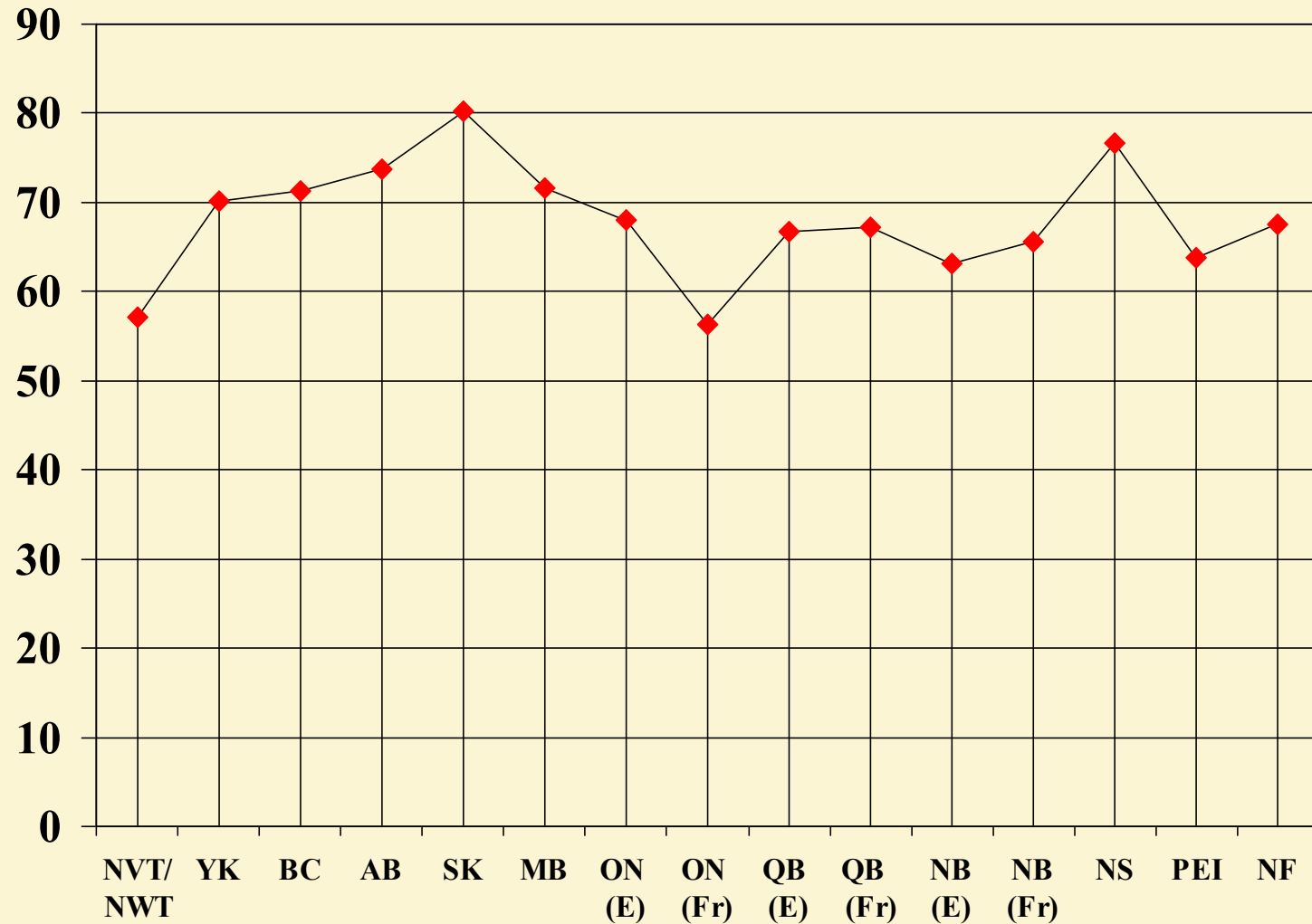
# Quality of Care Scope of Practice

## Survey Method

- Mailed questionnaire with persistent follow-up  
(Dillman's Tailored Design Method)
- Sample (N=3933)(NS=353; Atlantic= 1120)
  - 1) random sample of registered nurses (RNs)  
living in rural areas in all Canadian provinces
  - 2) total population of RNs who work in outpost settings or  
the northern territories



# Sample Response Rates by Province and Territory (N=3933)



Source: 2001-2002 Nursing in Rural and Remote Canada Survey



# **Sustainability of Care**

- **Predictors of Intent To Leave**
- **Migration of Nurses**



# Predictors of Intent To Leave Variables

source: Survey

- Individual
  - Sociodemographic & professional
  - Satisfaction with work & community
- Worklife
- Community



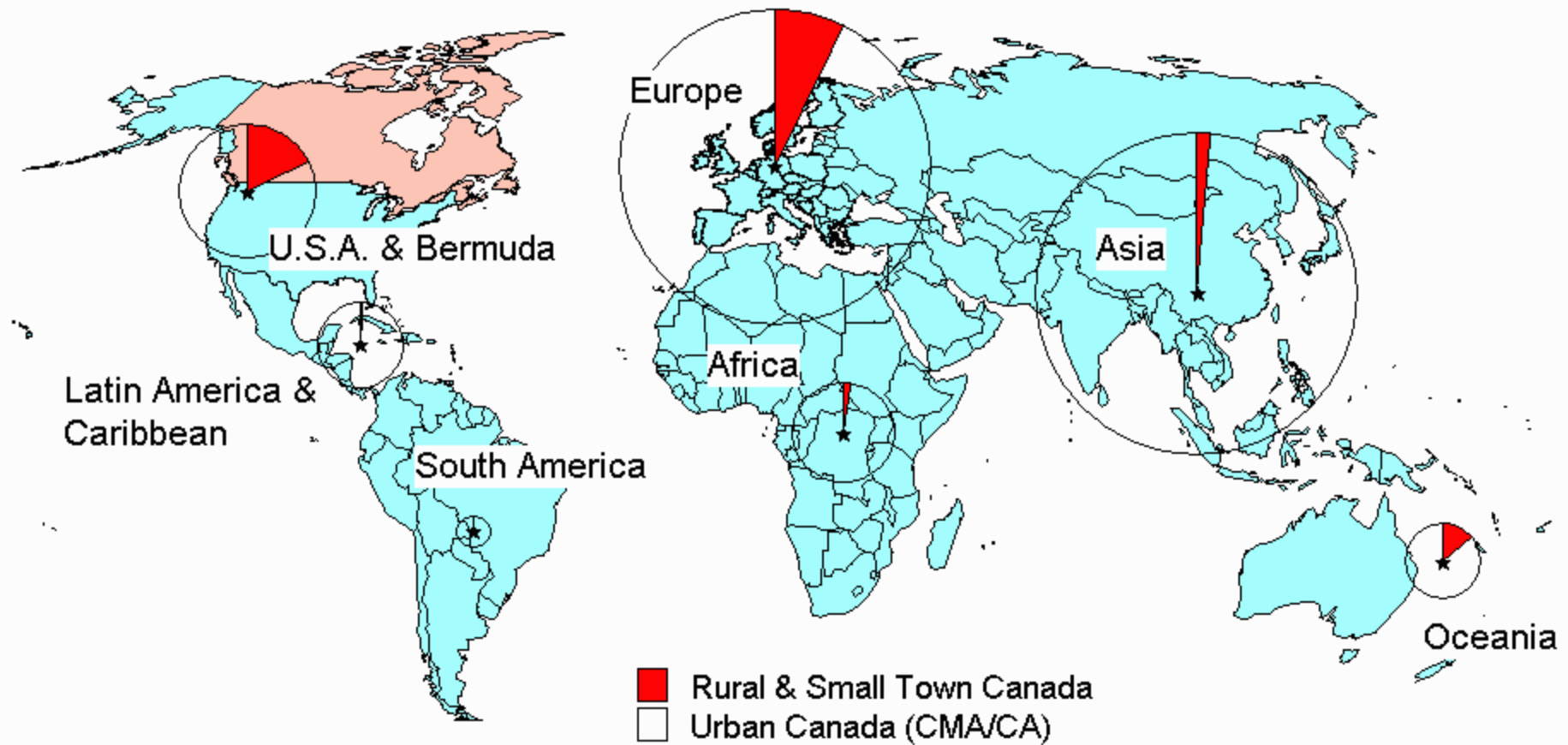
# Sustainability of Care

- **Migration of Nurses**

- source: RNDB



## Major World Region Origins of the International Nursing Graduate RNs of Canada



Source: RNDB/CIHI, 2000



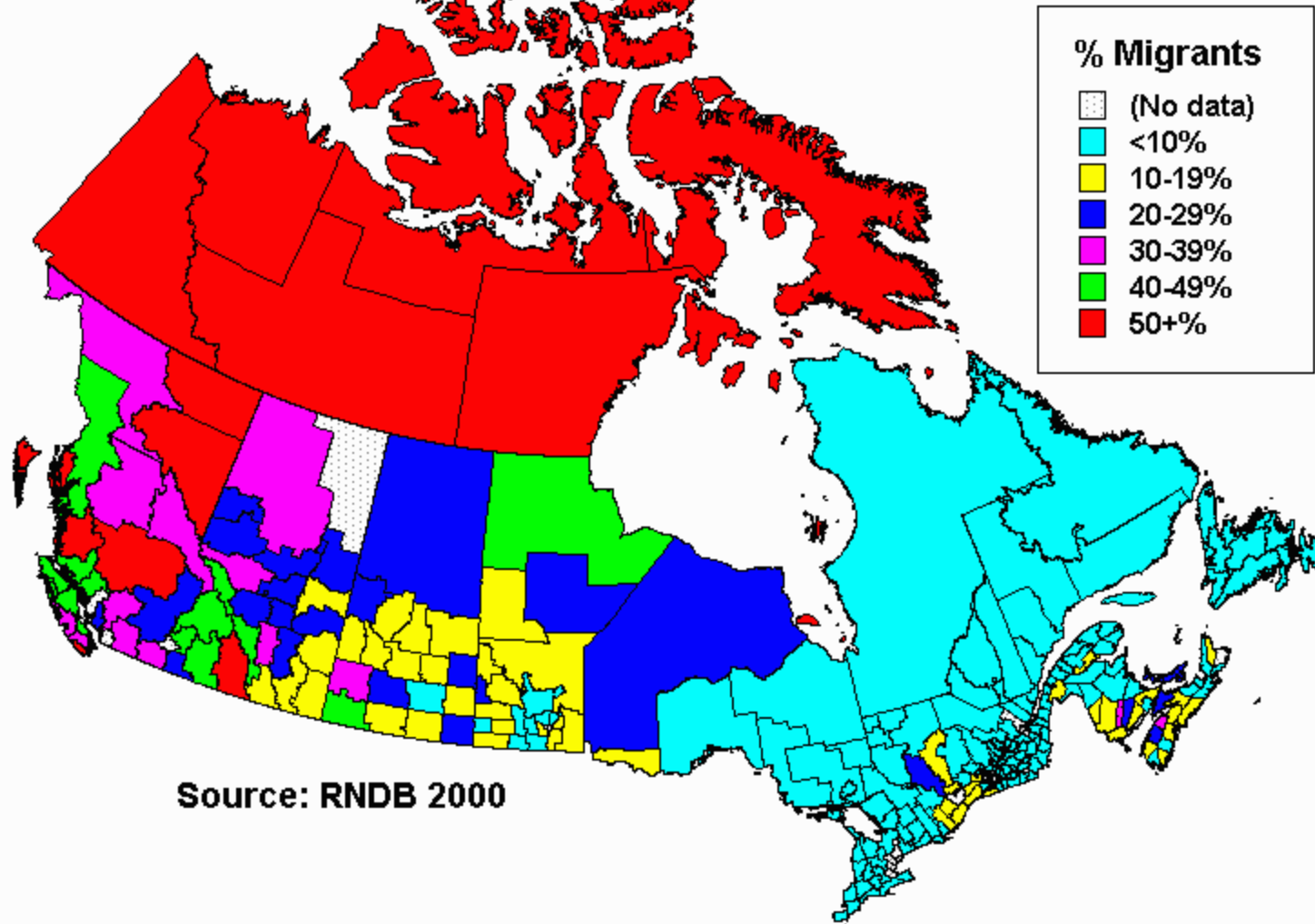
# International Nursing Graduates

source: RNDB

- In 2000 14,177 international nursing graduates were registered and employed in nursing in Canada
- 5.7% of international nursing graduates worked in rural Canada
- But this represented only 1.9% of rural RNs
- Therefore, our analyses focus on **INTERNAL MIGRATION** of Canadian-educated, rural RNs



## Proportions (by Census Division) of Canadian-Educated, Rural RNs Who Graduated from a Different Province



Source: RNDB 2000



# Nature of Nursing Practice

Recognizing nurses and the complexity of rural and remote practice

- Access to Care
- Quality of Care
- Sustainability of Care





# Implications

- Create a “rural lens”
- Understand and support the fact of the inseparability of nurses’ professional and personal roles
- Provide supports at a distance - in-person and via technology
- Partner with nurses and communities in recruiting and retaining nurses



# Implications

- Develop new models of interprofessional practice
- Attend to the needs of Aboriginal communities
- Develop undergraduate and post-graduate education for rural nursing



# Implications

- Develop and design relevant continuing education
- Do not rely on recruiting nurses from overseas
- Improve nursing databases and rural indicators



# Contact Information

## **Overall Project and Narratives:**

Tel: 1-866-960-6409

e-mail: [rrn@unbc.ca](mailto:rrn@unbc.ca)

[macleod@unbc.ca](mailto:macleod@unbc.ca)

<http://ruralnursing.unbc.ca>

## **Project Coordinator:**

Donna Bentham, RN, BSN

## **Documentary Analysis:**

(403) 382-7119

e-mail: [kulig@uleth.ca](mailto:kulig@uleth.ca)

## **Survey:**

(306) 966-6260

e-mail: [stewart@sask.usask.ca](mailto:stewart@sask.usask.ca)

## **RNDB:**

(705) 675-1151 ext: 3355

e-mail: [rpitblado@laurentian.ca](mailto:rpitblado@laurentian.ca)