

[Ministry of Health Planning](#)**Nurse Recruitment, Education and Retention Initiatives**

This strategy is our first step in outlining the various nursing initiatives including recruitment, education and retention. Addressing the many concerns raised by nurses, health care providers and British Columbians is a high priority for our government. Our commitment is to provide health care to patients when they need it, where they live.

New Era Commitments:

- Launch a massive recruitment drive to bring non-practicing RNs and LPNs back into our health care system.
- Provide assistance and opportunities to help nurses develop the specialized skills needed in intensive care units, emergency rooms and operating rooms.
- Expand training programs for care aides, licensed practical nurses and registered nurses, in collaboration with our universities, colleges and institutions.
- Increase training spaces and recruitment of foreign-trained nurses and physicians.
- Provide forgivable student loans to BC students attending accredited nursing and medical schools provided they practice for five years in underserved communities in BC.

Ministry of Health Planning Nursing Strategy Initiatives:

- **Recruitment of non-practising Registered Nurses (\$1.1 million, launch by Oct. 15, 2001)** targeted at non-practising RNs, under-employed foreign educated nurses already living and working in British Columbia and specialty-trained, foreign-educated offshore RNs.
- **Recruitment of foreign-educated, specialty nurses (\$400,000, beginning in Oct. 2001)** off shore recruitment to attract foreign-educated nurses with speciality certifications needed by British Columbia hospitals (approximately 90 nurses).
- **Patient Lifts and Hospital Beds (\$15 million, can be done immediately)** will result in a decrease of musculoskeletal injuries to nurses.
- **Specialty Education Incentives (\$500,000, implement by Oct. 30, 2001)** establish a fund for use by health authorities in offering nurses skill upgrading and certification in specialty shortages such as intensive care, labour and delivery, emergency room and surgical specialties (approximately 60 nurses).
- **Utilization of Registered Nurses on WCB or LTD (\$1.1 million, implement by Jan. 2002)** create positions for permanent nurse mentors and preceptors open to nurses wishing to return to practice from short or long term disability status, provide education costs and support to employers (approximately 110 nurses).
- **Nursing Grants Program (\$1.2 million, Aug. 2001)** innovative rural nurse and nurse mentoring/preceptoring strategies proposed by health authorities will reduce workplace stress, assist in integrating new nurses and improve the quality of patient care.
- **Chief Nurse Executive (complete hiring by Sept. 15, 2001)** new position to provide leadership and advice to government on nurse recruitment, retention, education and workplace issues as well as support the overall planning activities

of the Ministry for Health Planning.

- Education and Training Spaces
 - 177 additional education and training spaces - 78 for Registered Nurses, 49 for Licensed Practical Nurses and 50 for Resident Care Aides (\$643,000, Jan. 2002).
 - 3 classes of English as a Second Language training for foreign-educated nurses (\$150,000, Oct. 2001)
- Forgivable Student Education Loans (\$1.32 million, implement Nov. 1, 2001)
In return for working in areas of greatest need for five years, nursing and medical students who began their final year of study on or after August 1, 2000 and are graduating from accredited institutions in 2000/01 or later would have all outstanding British Columbia Student Loan (BCSL) debt forgiven at a rate of 20 per cent per year of practice. Interest charges would also be paid while the individual is practicing in the underserved community.

Total costs in 2001/02 = \$21.41 million

Respectfully Submitted:

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