

BULLETIN

## RPNs: intensely focused, caring with pride

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**hat are your key concerns** about working conditions? What role does the union play in your workplace? What challenges do you encounter to provide the standards of care that are consistent with good nursing practice?

These are some of the provocative questions that RPNs from across the province tackled earlier this year during a focus group conducted by the University of Toronto's Nursing Effectiveness, Utilization and Outcomes Research Unit (NRU). The nation-wide study, entitled "Building the future: an integrated strategy for nursing human resources in Canada," was conducted under the auspices of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Ten HSA activists took part on behalf of the unions 700 RPNs.

Audrey MacMillan, who represents Region 7 members on HSAs board of directors, was one of the key participants. "Most health professions are facing growing shortages, and nursing is no exception," she said.

"This focus group explored union activists opinions on a wide range of topics, including labour relations, work environment and conditions, retention and recruitment, employee assistance programs, and ongoing educational opportunities. From these focus groups, the NRU hopes to assist in resolving the human resource issues facing nurses, including the issue of shortages.

"I'm heartened that our staffing shortages are being getting this type of attention," she said. "I was happy to be involved in this project. If our participation helps develop strategies that will improve our working environments, that would be great."

MacMillan also represents HSAs RPNs on the Nursing Bargaining Associations bargaining committee. MacMillan, an RPN at Chilliwack General Hospital, said she has little news yet from the nurses bargaining table. "HSAs RPNs were surveyed this winter about their bargaining priorities. HSAs RPN focus group used the surveys to develop our proposals for submission to the Nursing Bargaining Association," she said. "As of mid-April, though, we have yet to hold any talks with the employer."

Any developments will be communicated to RPNs through bulletins on your workplace bulletin board, posted on the unions website, and recorded on HSAs bargaining hotline at 604/519.6150 or 1.800/663.3600. [Click here for up-to-date information about nurses' bargaining.](#) 

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