INTEGRATING REGISTERED NURSES INTO PRIMARY CARE ACROSS CANADA

Julia Lukewich, Michelle Allard, *School of Nursing*; Kris Aubrey-Bassler, *Family Medicine*; Denise Bryant-Lukosius, *School of Nursing*; Ruth Martin-Misener, *Dalhousie University*; Maria Mathews, *Western University*; Marie-Eve Poitras, *Université du Quebec à Chicoutimi*; Ruth Schofield, *McMaster University*; Joan Tranmer, *Queen's University*; Ruta Valaitis, *McMaster University*; Sabrina Wong, *University of British Columbia*; Lisa Ashley, *University of Ottawa*

ABSTRACT: Oral Presentation (11:15 a.m.)

Purpose: Family practice nursing offers a feasible and affordable solution to improve access to primary care, reduce costs, and promote a higher quality of care. There is currently a lack of information regarding the deployment of family practice nurses across Canada and a lack of clarity about their role in primary healthcare teams. There is a need to define family practice nursing competencies to support the integration and optimization of this role within primary care and assess the extent to which these competencies are incorporated into nursing curriculum across Canada. As well, a defined set of competencies will provide a framework to assess the learning needs of family practice nurses.

Methods: An initial draft of competencies will be generated by a panel of key informants and guided by literature related to family practice nursing. A Delphi process will be used to obtain national agreement regarding these competency statements. Once agreement is reached, undergraduate baccalaureate and post-graduate family practice nursing programs will be surveyed to assess the degree to which identified competencies are integrated into these curriculums. Surveys will also be sent to family practice nurses to determine their current learning needs with respect to these competencies.

Implications: The development of family practice nursing competencies in Canada lags behind international work. Although competencies exist at the provincial-level for some family practice nursing education programs, there are no national competencies guiding the education of undergraduate baccalaureate nurses in this practice area. A national approach to family practice nursing competency development is needed to address these gaps. It is expected that the development of family practice nursing competencies will benefit patients, primary healthcare providers, and healthcare systems nationally. With respect to enhancing workforce preparation, family practice nursing competencies will establish expectations for education and curriculum to support more formalized and structured training for this role at an undergraduate-level. Specifically, a defined set of competencies will provide a framework to assess the extent to which Canadian undergraduate programs are integrating competencies within their curricula and identify gaps that need to be addressed.