



REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSE

FOREIGN CREDENTIALS REFERRAL OFFICE



WELCOME

Psychiatric nursing is a distinct health-care profession in Canada. Registered psychiatric nurses (RPN) are employed in a broad range of settings that provide challenging and exciting opportunities for people interested in holistic health care and a career in the mental health field. With over 5,000 RPNs in Canada, registered psychiatric nurses represent the largest single group of health-care professionals in the mental health field in Western Canada.

Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada (www.rpnc.ca) invites you to explore its website and resources, in particular the websites of the provincial regulatory bodies. They will describe how you can become an RPN in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan or the Yukon Territory.



Nursing in Canada

In Canada, there are three regulated nursing professions: licensed practical nurses (LPN), registered nurses (RN) and registered psychiatric nurses. There are differences in the basic educational programs for each of the regulated nursing groups. You must be licensed or registered to practise one of the nursing professions in Canada.

Registered psychiatric nurses focus on the mental and developmental health of people within the context of their overall health and life situations. RPNs are employed in settings that cover all areas where people live, work and play. This includes settings and programs for individuals across the life span in communities and in facilities such as acute care hospitals; addiction and substance abuse programs; assertive community treatment programs; clinics; community mental health programs; crisis teams and suicide prevention programs; forensic and correctional programs; geriatric and long-term care programs; home care programs; occupational health programs; outreach programs; palliative care programs; programs for people with developmental disabilities; psycho-social rehabilitation programs; and school programs.

RPNs work in full partnership with psychiatrists, psychologists, registered nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, pharmacists, managers, community agencies, law enforcement professionals and social service providers.

The information in this fact sheet applies specifically to the profession of registered psychiatric nurse.

Before You Come to Canada

While you are waiting to go to Canada, there are many important things you can do to improve your chances for success.

The Foreign Credentials Referral Office (www.credentials.gc.ca) is an organization of the Government of Canada that has helpful resources such as the *Planning to Work in Canada?* workbook and the Working in Canada Tool (www.workingincanada.gc.ca). Use these resources to find and collect important information and to develop your job-search plan.

You may need to prove your language skills in English or French or be tested. You can find information at www.language.ca. If you will be working in English, you may have to undergo a special language test for nurses. The provincial regulator will specify which tests, if any, are required. If you need to improve your language skills, start before you come to Canada.

Your official education, work and identity documents are important. It is much easier for you to gather and organize your documents while still in your home country.

Verify the translation requirements with the regulator. In some cases, you will have to use a professional translation service in Canada.

Becoming a Registered Psychiatric Nurse in Canada

You must meet the requirements of the provincial or territorial regulatory nursing body.

In order to be registered as a registered psychiatric nurse in Canada, a psychiatric nurse must have graduated from a basic psychiatric nursing education program that meets the Canadian criteria for classroom and clinical hours. Psychiatric nursing education and practice require knowledge of the medical and general nursing sciences.

www.cic.gc.ca

It is important for you to learn about the steps you need to take to get your credentials and qualifications recognized in Canada. Citizenship and Immigration Canada also recommends that you review the resources on our website for helpful information about the immigration process and living in Canada.

The regulatory body will require you to complete application forms and to follow specific procedures to have your qualifications and eligibility evaluated. There will be fees to pay and some elements of the process can take a while to complete.

You will have to provide proof of English language fluency if your educational program was not provided in English. Proof of current psychiatric nursing licensure or registration, or eligibility for licensure or registration, with a regulatory body is required. Work references will be checked. A criminal record check is also required.

Your college or university will be required to send original transcripts and documents related to your education or training to two organizations: an assessment agency and a provincial regulatory body. The assessment agency confirms that the original documents come from a recognized educational institution. The regulatory body will tell you which assessment agency you must use. The regulatory body will evaluate your education documents to determine if your educational program meets the requirements for classroom and clinical hours in the required content areas.

If there are gaps in your education or training, the regulatory body will inform you if additional training would help you to become licensed or registered. A “bridging” or other educational program might be recommended.

Registration Examination

The regulatory body will tell you when you are approved for writing the RPN registration examination. This multiple choice examination tests competency and safety to practise as a registered psychiatric nurse in Canada. It is held several times a year in various locations in Western Canada. The examination is held on two consecutive weekdays and consists of four parts, each with approximately one hundred multiple choice questions. Check with the regulatory body for advice on test preparation, materials and tutoring options.

Finding a Psychiatric Nursing Job in Canada

Registered psychiatric nurses must be registered to practise. While most RPNs work in Western Canada and the Yukon, they also work in other provinces and territories while maintaining registration with one of the four regulatory bodies in Western Canada.

Many regional health authorities and other health institutions post jobs on their websites. The Canadian Healthcare Association publishes a directory of names and addresses for hospitals, health centres, nursing homes, and others. The regulatory body might be able to direct you to some other provincial resources.

Provincial Regulators

College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of British Columbia www.crpnbcc.ca

College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta www.crpna.ab.ca

Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan www.rpnas.com

College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba www.crpnm.mb.ca

Additional Resources

Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada www.rpnc.ca

Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health www.camimh.ca

Citizenship and Immigration Canada www.cic.gc.ca

Service Canada www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Foreign Credentials Referral Office www.credentials.gc.ca

