

## Article for Info Magazine

According to the 2011 New Brunswick Department of Health Final Report, there are 910 community health nurses employed in the province (personal communication, NANB, 2012). “Community health nurses are registered nurses whose practice speciality promotes the health of individuals, families, communities and populations, and an environment that supports health”, (CHNC, 2011). In New Brunswick community health nurses are employed in public health settings, community mental health, home health nursing, correctional settings, community health centers, occupational health and more. No matter the work setting, community health nurses combine “their foundational nursing education with specialized knowledge of community health nursing concepts and competencies” (Stamler & Yui, 2012. p. 42) in order to inform and guide their practice which includes primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Promoting client health, the primary goal of the Community Health Nurse and the long term goal of achieving healthier communities requires these nurses to be well informed, have an excellent understanding of the social determinants of health, their impact on the health of individuals and populations, and to appreciate the role of health promotion strategies at the individual, group, community and population level.

Community Health Nursing is recognized by the Canadian Nurses’ Association as a specialty. The work setting and nature of the work requires significant professional autonomy and independence as a community health nurse may find him or herself working alone and without the benefit of peers with whom to consult when decisions need to be made. A very important resource for community health nurses is the Community Health Nurses of Canada (CHNC).

Founded in 1987, the CHNC is a federation of Provincial/Territorial community health nurses and an associate group of the Canadian Nurses Association. The board of directors are a diverse group of community health nurses from all provinces and territories. Their energy and expertise in a wide range of practice settings, education administration, policy and research has resulted in strong partnerships and work that promotes the health of Canadians where they live, work, play, worship and gather (CHNC). As well, CHNC has a strong commitment to their membership and there have been a number of publications of documents which support and guide the work of the community health nurse. Some examples would include

- Canadian Community Health Nursing Standards of Practice (2011)
- Public Health Nursing Discipline Specific Competencies
- Home Health Nursing Competencies
- Public Health Nursing: Primary Prevention of Chronic Disease Report (February, 2012).
- A Blueprint for Action for Community Health Nursing

- CHNC Submission to CNA National Expert Witness (2011).

Membership in the CHNC allows access to these and other documents. As the CHNC membership grows to greater than 2000 nurses across Canada, this diverse group contributes to the education of future nurses, to the ongoing development of community health nurses, and to the knowledge and scientific bases of community health nursing practice.

If you are a community health nurse, consider what membership could mean for you

Membership in CHNC:

- ◆ Provides provincial representation from every province and territory on the board of directors,
- ◆ Supports development and publishing of the *Canadian Community Health Nursing Standards of Practice*,
- ◆ Supports the collaboration with CNA to continue the CNA Certification in Community Health Nursing,
- ◆ Supports the development and publishing of PHN Discipline Specific Competencies,
- ◆ Supports the development and publishing of Home Health Nursing Discipline Specific Competencies,
- ◆ Provides reduced fees to attend the National Community Health Nursing Conferences,
- ◆ Provides access to educational webinars,
- ◆ Provides opportunities for involvement in national committees and forums
- ◆ Provides access to the members only section of the website
- ◆ Provides access to Great Big News
- ◆ Your involvement in committees, boards and forums provides continuing education hours towards re-certification.

Your membership is especially important as CHNC continues to work towards strengthening community health nursing as a specialty nursing focus. As well, as informed and active health care providers, CHNC membership facilitates your voice being heard as major decisions are being made about health care in Canada.

For less than the cost of one cup of coffee a week you can be part of an organization that provides a national voice for community health nurses in Canada. Join CHNC by going to [www.chnc.ca](http://www.chnc.ca) and be part of the **Vision:**

*Community Health Nurses – leaders for a healthy Canada*

## References

Stamler & Yiu, 2012. Stamler&Yiu. (2012). *Community Health Nursing. A Canadian Perspective*.3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Pearson Canada Inc. Toronto, ON.