

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What is the Grow Your Own Nurse Practitioner (GYO NP) Initiative?

The Grow Your Own Nurse Practitioner (GYO NP) initiative is a program specifically developed to fill vacancies among current government funded NP positions. The GYO NP is sharply defined. It is **not** a wide-scale tuition support program for nurses seeking to obtain their NP education.

The initiative allows an existing sponsoring agency the opportunity to use Ministry funds, currently allocated to a [PHC](#) nurse practitioner position, to sponsor a local registered nurse (RN) to obtain his/her NP education. The funding will be used to pay the RN's salary and benefits while he/she is in school and to reimburse education-related expenses. In exchange, the new NP must agree to a return of service (ROS) commitment to the agency.

The GYO NP initiative is part of our commitment to ensure more families have access to primary health care.

### 2. I am a director of an agency that was awarded a Ministry funded NP position. We'd like to apply for the program, what are the benefits and risks to us?

#### Benefits

Participating in this initiative benefits the sponsoring agency and the community in two ways: i) It serves the community by recruiting an NP to fill the vacancy and promotes long term retention of the NP, and ii) it increases the community's access to primary health care services.

#### Risks

The GYO NP program involves shared financial risk between the sponsoring agency and the nurse applicant.

The sponsoring agency is expected to partially reimburse the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care if:

- the RN candidate fails to pass the NP education program **or** registration exam
- the candidate fails to complete his/her return of service requirement

The details of how much must be paid back are provided in the program guidelines.

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing\\_sec/materials.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing_sec/materials.html)

Participation in this program requires a high level of commitment from both the sponsoring agency and the participant nurse.

**3. I am an RN currently enrolled in the Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Education Program. I am taking the program part time, and continue to work part time at a Community Health Centre. Can I benefit from this program?**

It depends. If the Community Health Centre where you are employed has a Ministry-sponsored NP long term vacancy, then you are welcome to approach your employer and jointly apply to the program. If accepted to the GYO NP initiative, you will **not** be reimbursed for any educational related costs incurred to date. Nor would you be eligible for salary reimbursement for your first year in the program. However, you may be eligible to be funded for your second year of NP education and salary-related costs, assuming you comply with the return of service criteria.

If your employer does not have a Ministry-sponsored NP vacancy you would not be able to apply for this program. To view a list of sponsoring agencies that have expressed interest in recruiting a nurse candidate, please consult

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing\\_sec/materials.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing_sec/materials.html)

**4. I am a Registered Nurse (RN) interested in pursuing my NP education, am I eligible for this program?**

Yes, you may be eligible for this program. If your current employer does not have a Ministry funded NP position that has been vacant for at least a year, you can consult

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing\\_sec/materials.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing_sec/materials.html)

which has a list of sponsoring agencies currently looking for RNs to partner with for this program. You may also want to consult additional community contacts to determine if there are vacancies within organizations in your community. However, to be eligible for this program you must first be accepted into an NP education program.

**5. What happens if I am registered in the NP program and I need to leave the program due to medical illness?**

There will be no penalties for RNs who need to leave the NP education program due to medical illness. However, documented proof of illness may be requested by the employer.

**6. What happens if I need to re-locate and I cannot fulfill the return of service requirements outlined in my contract?**

If you cannot fulfill your return of service requirements, you will be required to reimburse the Ministry according to the amounts outlined in your agreement. For further information about how much must be paid back, please check the program guidelines.

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing\\_sec/materials.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing_sec/materials.html)

**7. As an RN enrolled in the NP program, how and when will I be paid by the Sponsoring Agency?**

The sponsoring agency will receive Ministry funds at the beginning of every month (for the previous month's costs) by direct deposit. The RN will be paid by her/his agency in accordance with the funding agreement. All RN salary funding and educational costs will flow through the sponsoring agency.

**8. I am a Director of a sponsoring agency and I am interested in participating in this initiative, but we do not have an RN partner. Can we participate in the GYO NP program?**

Yes, you can participate provided you meet the eligibility criteria, which include identifying an RN to "partner with" who also meets the criteria. All eligibility criteria can be found in the program guidelines.

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing\\_sec/materials.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing_sec/materials.html)

If you need assistance linking with an interested RN, please send your contact information to the above website and we will post your information for RNs to consult.

**9. How will the funding flow to the sponsoring agencies from the Ministry?**

Please see question 7 for details regarding funding.

**10. I am a sponsoring agency that sponsored a nurse to get his/her NP education. Can I get reimbursed?**

There will be no retroactive funding for this initiative.

**11. Is the GYO NP initiative only available to rural, Northern and remote communities?**

No, the full time option of this program is available to any community that has a Ministry funded NP vacancy and meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the guidelines. This includes NP positions funded by: Community Health Centres (CHCs), Family Health Teams/Primary Health Care (FHT/PHC), Aboriginal Health Access Centres (AHACs), Long-Term Care Homes and the Underserviced Area Program.

The part-time option is only available to sponsoring agencies serving Aboriginal populations and / or those located in under serviced communities.

Please consult the GYO NP guidelines for further information.

**12. The interested RN partner does not have his/her BScN, is he/she eligible?**

To be eligible the RN must have been accepted to an NP education program. To gain entry into an NP education program, an RN must have a BScN degree. Once RNs complete their BScN, they are eligible to apply to the GYO NP initiative (providing they have a Sponsoring Agency partner and both parties meet the eligibility criteria).

**13. I don't currently live near an eligible sponsoring agency, but would be willing to relocate, am I eligible?**

To be eligible you must live within 100 km of where the NP position is housed. If you are willing to relocate, you are eligible to apply to this program. Keep in mind that you will be required to fulfill your return of service requirement to the position.

For a list of sponsoring agencies that are interested in participating, but have not identified a potential RN partner, please visit:

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing\\_sec/contacts.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing_sec/contacts.html)

**14. I have been accepted to a Masters level Primary Health Care NP program, am I eligible?**

The entry-to-practice requirement to become a Primary Health Care NP in Ontario is a one year certificate program. To be eligible for the GYO NP program, you must be able to complete the education program in one year (full-time option) or in two years (part-time option, if eligible).

Please note that the GYONP program was established to fill chronic vacancies among government-funded PHC NP positions and therefore, its emphasis remains on being able to fill these positions as soon as possible.

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