Ontario Hospital Association

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MEDIA RELEASE

Ontario Hospitals Must Be Able to Adapt to Meet Evolving Patient Needs

October 28, 2026, Toronto, ON – Following concerns raised today about changes to registered nursing positions, the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) is providing important context about how hospital care teams are evolving and what these changes mean for patients and health care workers.

Changes to individual positions do not tell the full story. They may reflect vacant positions, changes in the mix of health professionals on a care team, or employees moving into other available roles. For that reason, figures about position changes should not be interpreted as the number of nurses leaving hospitals or solely, as a measure of the care available to patients.

“Ontario’s hospitals value registered nurses and the essential role they play in delivering high-quality patient care,” said Kirk LeMessurier, Chief of Communications and Public Affairs at the OHA. “But health care does not stand still. As clinical practice advances and the roles of other health professionals evolve, hospitals have a responsibility to evolve with them.”

Modern hospital care brings together registered nurses, registered practical nurses and other health professionals with different skills and expertise. Hospitals adjust the mix of professionals on these teams to match the care their patients need, while making the best use of the skills available across the health care workforce.

That flexibility is also why rigid, fixed registered nurse staffing ratios are not the answer. Patient needs can change from day to day, and some patients require far more care than others. Hospitals need the flexibility to respond to those differences. A fixed formula based on the number of registered nurses cannot account for every patient’s needs, the skills and experience of the broader care team, or new and better ways of delivering care.

“The question should always be what delivers the best care for patients,” said LeMessurier. “That means having the right professionals, with the right skills, caring for patients based on their needs, rather than relying on a fixed formula.”

Hospitals recognize that staffing changes can create uncertainty for health care workers and must be managed thoughtfully and in accordance with applicable collective agreements. Where vacancies exist, affected registered nurses may also have opportunities to move into other roles within their hospital.

Innovation and adaptability are essential to a strong and sustainable health care system. Ontario’s hospitals will continue to work constructively with nurses, other health professionals, government and health system partners to strengthen patient care and support the people who deliver it every day.

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Established in 1924, the OHA serves as the voice of the province’s public hospitals, supporting them through advocacy, knowledge translation and member engagement, labour relations, and data and analytics with the goal of helping hospitals build a better health system. The OHA is also attuned to the broader strategic questions facing the future of the province’s health care system and we work to ensure Ontario’s hospitals have a voice in shaping this longer-term vision.

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