

The number of reports offering recommendations for the transformation of Ontario's health care system continue to mount. With economic restraints required to contain a ballooning deficit and health care spending, the need for accountability and best value for our health dollars are critical indicators of a revitalized health care system. Policy must be based on sound evidence. How can we decide the best way to spend taxpayer money (aka, all of our money, as we are all taxpayers!) if we do not ask the questions which will inform our policy indicators? To this end, NPs need to be included in any metrics of health care reform.

Evidence-based clinical practice guidelines have informed front line health care for many years. We treat many chronic and acute conditions based on the best available evidence. We need to do the same when we plan our health human resource strategies, and this includes a review of the best evidence related to NP care.

What is the best mix of NPs related to other health care providers? Do different health care settings require a different mix of providers to optimize outcomes? How are various funding models comparable in terms of health outcomes for patients? These are some of the questions we need to be asking.

Just as we provide health care based on the best possible evidence, we need to spend our money in a way that supports the best possible outcomes for patients and avoids wasteful duplication of service and system inefficiencies. Nurse Practitioners must be an integral part of such outcome measures.

The measurement of outcomes and cost efficiencies are necessary to ensure the sustainability of nurse practitioners in Ontario. NPAO is discussing this issue as we meet with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, the Nursing Secretariat, and the Ontario Medical Association, to ensure the value of NPs can be objectively measured.

On behalf of all the NPAO staff and Board members, I would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy Hanukkah!

Claudia Mariano

President