

Maternal / Child Nurses' Interest Group

Message from the Chair - Susan Georgoussis RN



MCNIG Winter Newsletter 2021

A year to remember! As we approach the first anniversary of the COVID-19 lockdown, it is amazing how far we have come. On March 13th 2020, I began cancelling prenatal programs and within ten days the educators were teaching the first virtual sessions. Of course, that was just the beginning of many zoom relationships and challenges of the pandemic

The year has been exciting for MCNIG as we initiated a series of successful webinars which are now posted under “Events” on our website www.MCNIG.ca

Social Media officers, Emily Fung and Dakota Carrie have done an excellent job of revitalizing Facebook, Instagram and MCNIG website. Please share any topics and activities you would like MCNIG to offer to members across the province.

- Have you completed the **MCNIG membership survey**? Tell us more about you <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WWTK3BN>
- The **RNAO’s 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM)** is taking place virtually on Friday, June 25, 2021 (4:00 - 7:00pm). Check the RNAO website for registration information and prepare to be impressed.
- **“Tips for Finding Your First Mother Child Nursing Job”**. Are you a nursing student or new grad? Erika Toth shares her job search experiences as a new grad.
- **“A call to Anti-Racism” by Erika Fifield & Andrea Fulton**, Policy & Political Action Nursing officers (PPAN), share important background on need for anti-racism work in the maternal-child community. They also outline valuable resources to help raise awareness & facilitate social change.

Stay safe & keep in touch! Warm regards, Susan

Tips for Finding Your First Mother Child Nursing Job By: Erika Toth, RN

Finally! I just started in my first nursing job in a birthing unit – my dream job.

While always passionate about mother-child nursing, at first, I did not know how to achieve my goal. Along the way, I received some practical advice on how to obtain experience and prepare my resume. Here are tips that helped me land this first job - exactly where I want to be.

1) Get Involved - Joining a professional group can provide networking opportunities, connection with mentors and possible shadowing opportunities. Get involved while you are still a student and offer your time/skills to projects that particularly inspire you. Some ideas include:

- MCNIG (Maternal Child Nurses' Interest Group), RNAO
- CAPWHN (Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses)
- CANN (Canadian Association of Neonatal Nurses)

2) Volunteering - goes a long way, so be sure to seek opportunities while a student!

Nursing school is not easy, and volunteering on the Birthing unit reminded me to persevere through the difficult times. Furthermore, I became familiar with unit routines while building up my resume and making connections. After graduation, the hospital invited me to interview and offered me a position on one of their postpartum units. I know several new grads who were hired for perinatal jobs where they were previously volunteers.

3) Consolidate - It goes without saying that there are substantial benefits to consolidating on a unit that you want to work on. So, if at all possible, try to make this happen.

Due to COVID-19, I didn't end up having a consolidating nursing practicum at all and was devastated as I planned to complete my final semester in Labour and Delivery. Despite this setback, I was hired onto a Childbirth unit right out of school.

4) Get Certified - Take a look at perinatal nursing job postings, and note the recommended certifications. This can be a daunting list! These three are most important and demonstrate your commitment:

- NRP certification - do this last semester or shortly after graduation.
- Fetal Health Surveillance certification – the online component was helpful in preparing me for interview questions as well!
- Breastfeeding course - RNAO's 18-hour Breastfeeding e-learning course is an excellent (free!) resource and provides a certificate to include on your resume

5) Enroll in a Perinatal/Obstetric Nursing Program - Your formal education is not over! Nurses who specialize in perinatal care are expected to eventually write the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) certification exam. There are several perinatal/obstetric nursing programs to prepare RNs for this exam, including Mohawk College, Humber College, Durham College, and Algonquin College, to name a few. At every hospital interview I was asked if I'm either enrolled in one of these programs or planning to enroll in the near future. So apply to a perinatal/obstetric nursing program to help get your foot in the door.

6) Prepare for Your Interviews Interview preparation and practice is key. My first interview was a real wake-up call. While I was ready for general nursing questions/scenarios, I should have brushed up on my obstetric nursing knowledge. This prompted me to study like crazy for the next few interviews. I was able to demonstrate more knowledge of obstetrical nursing, how to approach client teaching and prioritizing situations. Soon I was prepared for what they threw at me, and received more than one job offer. Great to have choices!

Remember to check the hospital websites. To prepare me for my perinatal nurse interviews, I found great resources on Mount Sinai Hospital's website. As a leading hospital in Canada for obstetrics, they have a plethora of information and links about pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period. Even without other textbooks or resources, this gave me enough to be knowledgeable for the interview stage.

Good luck, and remember to never give up! Many colleagues have accepted positions on other nursing units and eventually transferred to Maternal Child. This route can help build up diverse nursing skills that will be valuable in your perinatal practice and you may even find another area of very rewarding. Nursing is about life-long learning.

Fasten your seatbelt and prepare for the journey. I did it and you can do it too!

A Call to Anti-Racism by Erika Fifield & Andrea Fulton

As your Policy and Political Action Officers of the Maternal Child Nursing Interest Group, we want to contribute to anti-racism work, specifically related to the maternal-child community. The RNAO has several statements, webinars, and a Best Practice Guidelines (BPGs) that remind us of the important work of condemning racism, oppression, and discrimination in all forms.

We have linked the RNAO statement on anti-racism below, as well as the RNAO BPG Embracing Cultural Diversity in Health Care. This BPG asks us as health care providers to "state and continually explore, through reflection and feedback, how one's own biases, personal values, and beliefs affect others," as well "recognize and address inequitable, discriminatory, and/or racist behaviours or institutional practices when they occur." Anti-racist work is not only for mothers, children and families but also nursing colleagues, in the workplace and communities.

To begin this discussion, consider these historic, systemic, and present effects of racism in the maternal-child community:

- Black women are 2-3 times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women (Centre for Disease Control [CDC], 2019)
- The Pregnancy-Related Mortality Ratio (PRMR) for Black women with at least a college degree was 5 times as high as white women with similar education (CDC, 2019)
- When controlling for socio-economic factors, the infant mortality rate is twice as high among African Americans as among Caucasians (Halwani, 2004)
- While Canada experiences overall lower preterm birth rates than the US, a study by McKinnon et al. (2016) found the relative differences in preterm and very preterm birth rates between Black and white women in Canada are similar in significance to the racial disparities observed in the US study cohort.

Here are some important and valuable resources to aid in anti-racist work that is our responsibility both as individuals and as perinatal nurses & health care workers.

Registered Nurses Association of Ontario

- *RNAO media statement:* <https://rnao.ca/news/media-releases/rnao-stands-together-our-black-sisters--brothers>
- *Best Practice Guideline: Developing Cultural Competence*
<https://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/embracing-cultural-diversity-health-care-developing-cultural-competence>
- *Let's Talk about Anti-Black Racism and Discrimination in Nursing.* This is RNAO's monthly webinar covering updates from the RNAO's Black Nurses Task Force.
<https://rnao.ca/events/let%E2%80%99s-talk-about-anti-black-racism-and-discrimination-nursing>

Black Health Alliance: is a Canadian, community-led registered charity working to improve the health and well-being of Black communities in Canada. Their knowledge resource hub has links to relevant health care research and reports, including the Black Experience in Health Care 2020 Report <https://blackhealthalliance.ca/>

Black Mamas Matter Alliance: is a US-based organization aiming to change policy, cultivate research, advance care for black mothers and shift culture. BAMA is led by Black women who envision a world where Black mamas have the rights, respect, and resources to thrive before, during and after pregnancy. The Black Mamas Matter Toolkit can be found under the "resources" tab on their website. While it focuses on US maternal policy, the concept of maternal health as a human right can be applied in our Canadian context. It is free to download.

<https://blackmamasmatter.org/>

Additional Resources: check these links for thought provoking resources/reading on racism and Black maternal health care

- <https://www.mothingtouch.ca/blog/resource-list-on-systemic-racism-in-perinatal-health-in-canada/>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/whitecoat/i-am-a-white-settler-why-that-matters-in-health-care-1.4545454/it-s-the-hardest-conversation-we-can-have-confronting-racism-in-health-care-1.4545477>
- https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/black-maternal-health-canada_ca_5ed90ae3c5b685164f2eab93
- <https://www.mommymonitor.ca>
- <https://www.ican-online.org/anti-racism-and-black-maternal-health-resources/>
- <https://everymothercounts.org/anti-racist-reading/>
- <https://www.childbearing.org/blm>

If you would like to share additional resources, please sent to mcnig.rnao@gmail.com. We will be updating this list as more resources become available.

References

McKinnon, B., Yang, S., Kramer, M. S., Bushnik, T., Sheppard, A. J., & Kaufman, J. S. (2016). Comparison of black–white disparities in preterm birth between Canada and the United States. *CMAJ*, 188(1), E19–E26. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.150464>

Halwani, S. (2004). Racial inequality in access to health care services. Ontario Human Rights Commission. <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/race-policy-dialogue-papers/racial-inequality-access-health-care-services>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Preventing pregnancy-related deaths. <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/preventing-pregnancy-related-deaths.htm>