

# How may our findings be useful? Translating research knowledge on nursing practice in rural and remote Canada

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An increasing need for answers about how best to support, retain and recruit nurses in rural and northern communities led to a three-year, nation-wide study on the nature of nursing practice in rural and remote Canada. The study is built on a partnership model, with knowledge translation as an integral component. The study itself consists of a survey of 4000 nurses in rural and remote communities across Canada, an analysis of the Registered Nurses Database, the collection and interpretation of 150 nurses' narratives and an analysis of relevant policy and practice documents. This three-year study has a total of 18 researchers, more than 20 advisory committee members representing all provinces and territories, and close to 20 funding partners. Key findings have identified the complexity of nursing practice in rural and remote areas, the inextricable links between nursing practice and the community, as well as the challenges of providing relevant and responsive education and administrative supports. Intensive activities are currently under way across the country to develop ways to use knowledge gained from the study in decision making about rural and remote nursing practice, including practice in Aboriginal communities.

In this presentation we will describe some key findings, and how researchers are working in partnership with the project advisors and others locally, provincially and nationally, to make use of the study findings. In particular, findings are being used in: developing policies to support rural and remote practice; supporting already-identified policy directions; and creating implementation strategies. A central component of knowledge translation is the development of a lens for rural nursing, a concise set of questions and processes that can be used to assess policies and practices for their relevance to rural and remote communities. The presentation will centre on issues and lessons learned during this multi-sectoral, partnered research. Participants will be invited to engage in a dialogue to explore essential ingredients that may be common to Canada and Australia, in successfully translating research knowledge for remote and rural health human resources planning.

## PRESENTER

**Martha MacLeod** is Associate Professor, Nursing and Community Health Programs, at the University of Northern British Columbia. Her research is on the nature of everyday experience and practice and ways in which professional practice and expertise may be developed or hindered within health care organisations, particularly those in rural and remote settings. Dr MacLeod serves on the Advisory Board of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR), Institute of Health Services and Policy Research, and on the CIHR Rural and Northern Health Research Initiative. She is actively developing multi-disciplinary health research networks through the Canadian Rural Health Research Society.