International Affairs & Best Practice Guidelines Program
Development and Implementation Components:
Best Practice Champion Network®
RNAO Learning Institutes
Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO)® Initiative
Best Practice Guideline International Program
RNAO Best Practice Guideline Research

Background
The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is the voice of Registered Nurses in Ontario, Canada with the mandate of speaking out for quality health care and speaking out for nursing. Our mission is to pursue healthy public policy and to promote the full participation of registered nurses in shaping and delivering health services now and in the future. We believe health is a resource for everyday living and health-care a universal human right. We cultivate knowledge-based nursing practices, promote quality of work life, and promise excellence in professional development services.

RNAO Best Practice Guideline Program
The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario's Nursing Best Practice Guideline Program was launched in November of 1999 and has, to date, developed thirty-six (36) clinical guidelines, 8 guidelines focused on creating healthy work environments, a tool kit to aid in the implementation of the guidelines in practice settings an educator's resource to facilitate guideline implementation in the nursing curriculum and education programs, and numerous other education and implementation resources. The rigorous guideline development process consists of the following seven phases depicted in the model in Figure 1: comprehensive topic selection, identification of Expert Panel, identification of specific scope of guideline, systematic review, development of evidence-informed recommendations focused on practice, education, and policy recommendations, stakeholder review, publication of the guideline, dissemination, and a 3 year review process.

The published guidelines are disseminated through a variety of means to be sure relevant stakeholders are apprised of the availability of the BPGs. The RNAO Centre for Professional Nursing Excellence engages in dissemination through workshops, conferences, and other learning programs and knowledge exchange events. Numerous guideline specific elearning programs are developed to raise awareness of the guideline availability and how to use it most effectively. Guideline uptake and implementation is supported using a multi-pronged approach a comprehensive focus on individual capacity development, through the Best Practice Champion Networks® and RNAO Learning Institutes, as well as implementation at the organization and system levels. The


Figure 1 International Affairs and Best Practice Guidelines Program Components

**Best Practice Guideline Champion Network®**
The Nursing Best Practice Champions Network® established in 2002, has engaged thousands of nurses in promoting, supporting, and implementing the use of nursing best practice guidelines in their organizations. This initiative supports the uptake of evidence-based practice by developing capacity in individual nurses working in various domains and sectors within the health care system.

The Nursing Best Practice Champions Network® is comprised of nurses- clinicians, administrators, educators- who are knowledgeable and passionate about improving nursing practice and client care in their organization. Network members, appropriately named “Best Practice Champions” participate in a **one day orientation workshop** designed to provide them with numerous tools and strategies to champion the project and facilitate active implementation of nursing best practice guidelines in their organization. Following the workshop, they have access to ongoing resources and supports provided by the RNAO.
RNAO Learning Institutes
RNAO BPG institutes are week-long, in-residence intense and exciting learning experiences that focus on RNAO’s Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) Clinical and Healthy Work Environment programs. They are delivered in Ontario, anywhere else in Canada and anywhere in the world. These institutes feature formal education sessions, group based learning, application exercises, and the opportunity to work with experts to plan strategies for evidence-based practice in your own workplace and context. The institute deliverables include increased knowledge and skill, a strong resource network and an action plan related to the content area.

Five RNAO Centre of Professional Nursing Excellence Best Practice Guideline Institutes have been developed and designed to focus on both general and specific areas of Best Practice Guideline implementation, and they are further described below:
- Clinical BPG - Foundational Focus Stream
- Clinical BPG - Advanced Stream
- Wound Care BPG Institute
- Chronic Disease Management BPG Institute
- Healthy Work Environments BPG Institute.

Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) Initiative
The BPSO® initiative was designed to support BPG implementation at the organizational level. It was established in 2003 and provides an opportunity for health care organizations to receive support from RNAO in the implementation of multiple RNAO BPGS in order to facilitate high quality nursing care and promote a culture of evidence based nursing practice and management decision making.

Organizations within and outside Ontario, Canada apply to become BPSO candidates and once selected begin the 3 year BPSO candidacy experience. During the candidacy experience, a formal partnership is established, and participating organizations are referred to as “BPSO candidates.” As BPSO Candidates, organizations focus on enhancing their evidence-based nursing practice and decision making cultures, with the mandate to implement and evaluate multiple (at least 3) clinical practice guidelines. At the end of the 3 year candidacy period, and assuming all deliverables are met, the candidates go on to become “Designated BPSOs.” As designated BPSOs, organizations focus on sustainability, and are committed to continue the implementation and evaluation of best practice guidelines in their organization and within the system.

To date 21 organizations have achieved the BPSO designation after successful completion of the 3 year candidacy experience. We currently have over 50 health care organizations and academic settings engaged in the 3 candidacy experience including organizations across all sectors of health care, large health regions, multiple site organizations, and international sites.

Organizations outside Ontario, and those in Ontario not part of the funded BPSO initiative are responsible for any costs associated with achieving the BPSO designation, recognizing that RNAO provides access to numerous web based resources and is committed to providing
knowledge exchange opportunities and consultation and support based on our knowledge and experience. While the program of support is offered largely in English, many of our guidelines and resources are available in French, all guidelines will be available in Spanish by early 2011, and selected guidelines are available in other languages.

The Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) initiative is internationally renowned, and has been a resounding success in demonstrating the uptake and utilization of best practice guidelines. The program’s strategic approach has served to trigger the development of evidence-based cultures, improve patient care and enrich the professional practice of nurses and other health care providers.

**RNAO Best Practice Guideline International Program**

With the popularity of the RNAO BPGs globally, RNAO is engaged in international spread activities that will result in programs and strategies to facilitate BPG implementation through parallel but context specific approaches focused on developing Champions, and creating Best Practice Spotlight Organizations around the world.

RNAO is establishing an international outreach and mentoring program to build capacity and assist these countries with guideline implementation and further international expansion. Spain has become the international model of RNAO BPG implementation as it completes the translation activities of all the RNAO BPGs, and embarks on a Champion and a BPSO program. The model developed here will be of interest to contacts in Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Italy, Mexico, South Africa, and the USA all of which have expressed a desire to work with the RNAO BPGs.

**RNAO BPG Research Activities**

RNAO has considerable experience and involvement in research related to guideline implementation, through its partnership with University of Ottawa, in the Nursing Best Practice Research Unit (NBPRU). The NBPRU aims to develop research capacity and promote research related to the implementation of BPGs and their impact on client outcomes, and to date has led a very active research agenda related to BPG client impact related research.

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