

# Nurse Practitioner and Physician Collaboration in Ontario Long-term Care Homes



CHSRF/CIHR Chair Program in  
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Or see: <http://www.apnnursingchair.mcmaster.ca/whatsnew/Donald%20NPMDCollabSurvey%20Article%20Published%202009.pdf>

## THE ISSUE

The increasingly complex needs of elderly residents and the shortages of physicians have been driving forces for the introduction of nurse practitioners (NPs) in Ontario Long Term Care (LTC) homes. Ineffective collaboration among NPs and physicians has been identified as an important barrier to quality resident care.

## THE PURPOSE

To assess the extent of and satisfaction with collaboration between physicians and NPs working in Ontario LTC homes.

### What did we do?

A cross sectional study was conducted in which a two part questionnaire, comprised of the Measure of Current Collaboration (MCC) and Provider Satisfaction with Current Collaboration (PSCC), was mailed to NPs and physicians who worked together in LTC homes. Fourteen of 15 (93%) NPs and 27 out of 33 (85%) physicians returned completed questionnaires.

### What did we find?

14 matched pairs of NPs and physicians reported similar levels of collaboration; however, physicians were significantly more satisfied with collaboration (96%) than were NPs (79%). Barriers to NP-physician collaboration include territorialism and role confusion.

### How will this research help?

Little research has been conducted to examine NP-physician collaboration in LTC homes. Although physicians tend to have greater satisfaction with collaboration than NPs, there is room for improvement in both extent of and satisfaction with physician-NP collaboration. Poor collaboration has potentially serious implications for safety and continuity of care, as well as communication with residents, their family members and LTC staff.

### What's next?

To help successful collaborative relationships, NPs and physicians who work well together could act as mentors and role models for colleagues working in LTC homes. Physician and NP collaborative partners who attend inter-professional education sessions can share what they have learned and how this information can be applied to specific LTC resident needs. Further research is recommended to understand how NPs and physicians collaborate in their daily practice, to identify major facilitators and barriers to collaboration and to design and to evaluate interventions to improve collaboration.

## BOTTOM LINE?

Interprofessional collaboration has become a necessity in the current Canadian healthcare delivery system and may contribute to quality resident care in LTC homes. Although evidence shows modest satisfaction with collaboration between NPs and physicians, there is room for improvement.

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