



# Longwoods Review

Volume 1, Number 4 • 2003

## Editor-in-Chief

**Peggy Leatt, PhD**

## Editorial Advisory Board

### Philip Berman

Director, European Health Management Association,  
Dublin, Ireland

### Michael Guerriere, MD, MBA

Managing Partner, Courtyard Group, Toronto, Ontario

### Peggy Leatt, PhD

Professor and Chair, Department of Health Policy and  
Administration, School of Public Health, University of North  
Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

### Cam Mustard, ScD

Professor, Department of Public Health Sciences  
University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine  
President/Scientific Director, Institute for Work  
& Health, Toronto, Ontario

### Dorothy Pringle, PhD

Professor and Dean Emeritus, Faculty of Nursing University  
of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

### Enrique Ruelas, PhD

Senior Undersecretary, Mexico Health, Mexico City, Mexico

### Eugene Schneller, PhD

Professor and Director, School of Health Administration &  
Policy, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona

## Managing Editor

### Dianne Foster-Kent

Email: dkent@longwoods.com

## Publisher

### W. Anton Hart

Email: ahart@longwoods.com

## Associate Publisher/ Administration

### Barbara Marshall

Email: bmarshall@longwoods.com

## Associate Publisher/ Media

### Susan Hale

Email: shale@longwoods.com

## Design and Production

### Yvonne Koo

Email: ykoo@longwoods.com

## Copy Editors

### Kristine Culp, James Gladstone

Information contained in this publication has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness, these are not guaranteed. The views and opinions expressed are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily represent an official opinion of *Longwoods Review* or Longwoods Publishing Corporation. Readers are urged to consult their professional advisors prior to acting on the basis of material in this journal.

No liability for this journal's content shall be incurred by Longwoods Publishing Corporation, the editors, editorial advisory board or by any contributors.

*Longwoods Review* is published quarterly by Longwoods Publishing Corp., 260 Adelaide St. East, No 8, Toronto, ON Canada, M5A 1N1. Tel: 416 864-9667 Fax: 416 368-4443

Canada Post Publications Agreement No. 40069375

Copyright © 2003

## Adversaria

In this issue of *Longwoods Review* we address two very important topics. The first is a critical human resources issue that is on every manager's and policy-maker's agenda – nursing shortages, specifically the aging workforce. The second paper provides analysis of rationalization or rationing of health services in Canada from an historical perspective.

The paper **Early Retirement among RNs: Estimating the Size of the Problem in Canada** by **Linda O'Brien-Pallas, Chris Alksnis, Sping Wang, Stephen Birch, Gail Tomblin Murphy, Francine Anne Roy and Paul Sajan** attempts to provide us with the facts relating to the aging of the nursing workforce. Many health human resource planners have warned that Canada, like much of the industrialized world, is facing a major challenge. In Canada, nearly one-third of registered nurses (RNs) in the workforce are aged 50-years or older, and will soon reach the typical retirement age of 65 years. Research also indicates that an increasing proportion of RNs are retiring early, many by age 56. The authors predict that Canada is likely to lose 30,000 RNs aged 50-years or older by 2006, that is, 13% of the workforce. Quebec is likely to be the most strongly affected by these retirements. This paper examines the impact of RN retirement and death on the future RN supply for Canada's health services and stresses the need to improve the work environments for nurses in order to improve retention.

The second paper in this issue of *Longwoods Review* is entitled **Strangulation or Rationalization? Costs and Access in Canadian Hospitals** by **Morris L. Barer, Steven G. Morgan and Robert G. Evans**. The authors describe a period beginning a decade ago when Canadian hospitals first experienced the most severe fiscal restraint of the past half-century. Between 1992 and 1996, hospital expenditure per capita fell sharply, from \$939 to \$858. These cuts fuelled professional declarations – and a swarm of anecdotes – about the dire consequences for the health of Canadians. Confidence in the healthcare system dropped precipitously. Yet, a series of royal commissions and similar inquiries later concluded that there was substantial scope for rationalization and cost-containment within the provincial hospital systems. This paper examines the statistical record, looking at hospital capacity, access and utilization, prior to, during and after the 1990s reductions, and the impact of provincial finances on hospital-funding decisions. The authors advise that provincial governments should not be tempted to continue with hospital and other healthcare services budget cuts or the system will become rapidly unsustainable.

We welcome your responses to these or other papers published in the *Longwoods Review*. Send your thoughts and insights to: editor@longwoods.com.

Peggy Leatt, PhD



Fonds