

Nurses a priority

No matter how you spin the numbers, they simply don't match up.

Canada is getting older and therefore sicker, according to Statistics Canada. But the chief practitioners to care for the sick and elderly, our nurses, are leaving the industry in record numbers according to a report by the Canadian Institute for Health Information.

The supply of nurses in Canada is declining for the first time in two decades— with the largest drop off in Ontario. The report says the country's supply of regulated nurses in 2014 declined by 0.3 per cent over the previous year, raising concern from several national nursing organizations.

According to the CIHI, there are several factors at play including a drop in the number of applicants applying for licensure across the country, coupled with an increase in the number of nurses choosing to leave the profession.

In this province, more 12,000 nurses have left in the past year— a decline of 2.6 per cent. A key factor is regulatory change from the College of Nurses of Ontario.

Last year, the College introduced the Declaration of Practice requirement that means a member can only renew their membership if they practised nursing in Ontario within the last three years, or became registered or reinstated within the last three years.

The report finds retention rates across the nursing professions were highest in hospitals, compared to community health agencies, nursing homes and long-term care facilities or other places of work. Fewer nurses are staying within long-term care or nursing homes, yet these settings are more appropriate for seniors rather than acute care in a hospital.

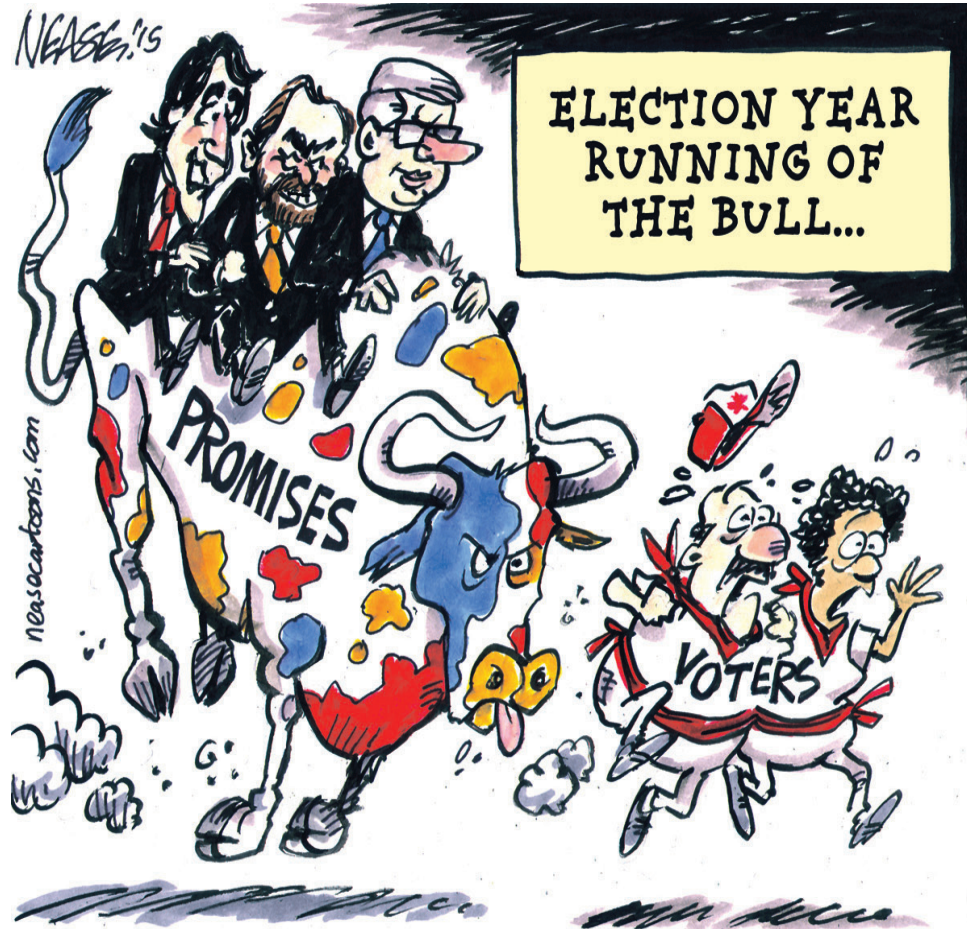
About 14 per cent of Canadians are 65 and older, and that number could double by 2036. Research has shown that age-related conditions, especially chronic diseases, are better managed in the community.

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions is also worried, and their own numbers show nurses worked more than 19 million hours of overtime in 2014 at a total cost of almost \$872 million. Nurses' absenteeism rates also rose last year, according to the CFNU.

CIHI's report finds the number of nurses actually working in their profession in Canada at the time of annual registration grew to nearly 384,000 regulated nurses but the number of nurses not renewing their registration exceeded the number entering the profession due to factors like career changes, retirement or a move outside Canada. Nurses are the backbone of the Canadian health care system, so it's important for the system to watch the trends. Right now, they are not good.

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Letters to the editor

Please spare us the propaganda

For 45 seconds or so last week I entered a parallel universe. At least that is what I thought.

I was on social media and stumbled across what seemed like a commercial. But surely it couldn't be. It showed ISIS terrorist propaganda images— stills and music from videos of beheadings and caged drownings. The same images ISIS produces to terrorize people in North Africa and radicalize young men and women. The same images meant to undermine free Western societies. What was the source of these images?

Then the real shocker. It was a Conservative Party attack ad! Yes, this was the party of Michael Chong and Stephen Harper broadcasting ISIS terrorist images. What in the world were they thinking!

So the Conservatives want to scare whom? The families of those Canadian military men and women currently in Iraq and Syria? Their Conservative core voters? All Canadians? And are they just blind to the suffering of the families of

victims of past ISIS terrorist acts because they live half way across the world?

My message to Mr. Chong and Mr. Harper— stop exposing my family, friends and fellow Canadians to your propaganda attack ads. You are in Canada. And yes, I am angry.

Peter van Vloten,
Fergus

Reader says parking bylaw needs an update

A word about the five-hour parking limit in effect in Halton Hills.

The ticket we got at our home mentions the decades-old bylaw 84-1, but our first citation for it was last month.

Five hours maximum parking. That limit is apparently in effect by default, considering there doesn't need to be any signs for it to be enforced. (I'm curious to know exactly in which cases it applies, but I can't find an online copy of the "Schedule 2" named in the bylaw.)

This prevents you from parking overnight except in your own driveway.

And if you happen to have more working adults in your household than spaces for cars in your driveway, you're out of

luck.

There are parking exemptions you can apply for, but they're one-time provisions "not intended to provide supplemental parking space for residents with more personal vehicles than their driveway or garage can accommodate."

So where should that supplemental space come from? Should we apply for permission to tear up our lawn, as some of our neighbours have done?

I can understand having the restriction on parking overnight during the snowy months.

No one would want to obstruct a snowplow. But during the summer?

And in Georgetown? This isn't Toronto. We have lots of residential streets with enough room for both parking and passing. Our street also happens to have a median that effectively gives us two lanes in each direction. The town's parking pamphlet notes that the five-hour limit is "enforced on a complaint basis." When this caveat is involved— besides fostering suspicion among neighbours— it suggests that the "offence" isn't a problem in itself until someone notices.

Luke Sawczak,
Georgetown