



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

### **Saskatchewan Polytechnic expands Critical Care Nursing program**

*Registered nurses throughout Saskatchewan can train for intensive care nursing online*

**March 5, 2015** – Saskatchewan Polytechnic recently expanded its Critical Care Nursing program. Now, registered nurses throughout Saskatchewan have easier access to specialized education that prepares them to work in critical care settings. This expansion will help to provide consistent patient and family-centered care provincially.

The Critical Care Nursing program was first offered in January 2014 to students in North Battleford and Prince Albert. It expanded in September to include 36 students from Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Yorkton and the Northwest Territories. A total of 80 students are expected to graduate from the advanced certificate program this academic year.

Offered on a full- and part-time basis, the Critical Care Nursing program replaces the Basic Critical Care Nursing program. The new program features updated curriculum and best practices, as well as greater accessibility through online education.

"Critical care patients have complex, multi-system health issues," says Dr. Netha Dyck, dean of Saskatchewan Polytechnic's School of Nursing. "The Critical Care Nursing program ensures consistency in education for all registered nurses in the province who would like to work in a critical care area."

Students in the program learn through a variety of teaching methods, including online modules, video integration, discussion posts, textbooks, simulation, labs and clinical experiences. "Students have the opportunity to balance their home and work commitments while furthering their education as close to home as possible," says Dr. Dyck. "Flexibility and accessibility help engage students provincially."

Graduates of the program can expect to find employment in critical care settings such as medical intensive care, cardiac care and surgical intensive care units.

The Critical Care Nursing program was developed in conjunction with health region managers and educators, who continue to share their clinical expertise with students during tutorials, labs and clinical practical education placements. The program follows the standards and competencies set by the Canadian Association of Critical Care Nursing and the Canadian Nurses' Association.

The program originated in 1998 and has evolved to ensure that it continues to prepare Saskatchewan nurses for the ever-changing demands of critical care nursing. "There is also a unique early exit option which allows students to work in intermediate care areas such as the Cardiac Surveillance Unit," says Lori Garchinski, executive director Critical Care and Cardioscience, Regina General Hospital.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic works with the two tertiary care regions in the province – Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and Saskatoon Health Region – to provide quality education, training and mentoring for critical care and cardiac nurses who chose to expand their careers into these fields.

"The benefit of this program is the partnership of education and clinical expertise to provide programming we can be proud of," Garchinski says.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic serves 26,000 distinct students through applied learning opportunities at campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and through extensive distance education opportunities. Programs serve every economic and public service sector. As a polytechnic, the organization provides the depth of learning appropriate to employer and student need, including certificate, diploma and degree programs, and apprenticeship training. Saskatchewan Polytechnic engages in applied research, drawing on faculty expertise to support innovation by employers, and providing students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills.

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For more information, contact:

Daphne May, Saskatchewan Polytechnic Communications and Marketing  
daphne.may@saskpolytech.ca  
306-659-3799 (office)  
306-229-2842 (cell)

Information about Saskatchewan Polytechnic can be found at [www.saskpolytech.ca](http://www.saskpolytech.ca).

Registered nurses interested in exploring critical care nursing as a career can visit <http://saskpolytech.ca/programs-and-courses/programs/Critical-Care-Nursing.aspx> for more information.