November 6, 2014 – New Canadian Entry-Level Competencies for Registered Psychiatric Nurses released

Edmonton, AB –The new national entry-level competencies for Registered Psychiatric Nurses in Canada was released today by the Registered Psychiatric Nurse Regulators of Canada (RPNRC). Formerly known as the Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada, RPNRC underwent a governance review resulting in the name change to better reflect its mandate.

"It is exciting to present these national entry-level competencies to the psychiatric nursing and healthcare community. These competencies benefit our Canadian and internationally educated psychiatric nurses and our academic programs as they clearly and succinctly identify the knowledge, skills and abilities expected of entry-level psychiatric nurses," commented Barbara Lowe, Co-Chair of the *Mobility and Assessment* project and Executive Director and Registrar of the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta. "We are looking forward to sharing these competencies with the international community congregating at the European Festival of Psychiatric Nursing in Malta next week" said Ms. Lowe as she prepares to present the competencies at the Festival.

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognitions program and the RPNRC, the *Mobility and Assessment* project reached out to a broad range of stakeholder groups in Canada's healthcare system to share and gather new knowledge and evidence and to inform stakeholder groups about the competencies and role of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse. "The project complements and informs other nursing initiatives such as the *National Nursing Assessment Service* and informs other health care providers and the general public about Registered Psychiatric Nurses and their role in Canada's healthcare," commented Laura Panteluk, Co-Chair of the project and Executive Director and Registrar of the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba.

"The development of the national entry-level competencies will increase the employer's awareness of the practice expectations of the entry-level Registered Psychiatric Nurse. Registered Psychiatric Nurses have a valuable role to play in addressing the mental health needs of Canadians and this common understanding of the practice expectations enhances our understanding and our ability to ensure that they are utilized to their fullest in meeting the needs of our population," added Lori Lamont, Vice-President, Interprofessional Practice and Chief Nursing Officer with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and President of the Academy of Canadian Nurse Executives. "National acceptance of these competencies will also improve mobility and enable employers in their recruitment efforts."

RPNRC looks forward to sharing these competencies with stakeholder representatives of employers, nursing and other healthcare profession regulatory bodies, and provincial and federal governments in a series of roundtable discussions that will be convened in early 2015. The discussions will focus on how the recognition and mobility of Registered Psychiatric Nurses can be improved in Canada. The national entry-level competencies for Registered Psychiatric Nurses are available at www.rpnrc.ca.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES

- Registered Psychiatric Nurses work in collaboration with clients and other health service personnel, providing holistic, client-centered services to individuals, families, groups and communities with a focus on mental health and mental illness within the context of the client's overall health needs.
- Registered Psychiatric Nurses are educated and regulated separately from other regulated nursing professionals in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. The Yukon government also regulates Registered Psychiatric Nurses.
- Registered Psychiatric Nurses must complete a psychiatric nursing program from one of the eight approved psychiatric nursing education programs in Canada or in the case of the Yukon, from a program that has been deemed equivalent to a psychiatric nursing education program in Canada. They then must pass the Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada Examination.
- Psychiatric nursing education programs are evolving and changing to meet the health and mental health needs of the populations they serve. This evolution is not dissimilar to the way in which other health professional education has evolved. Increasingly, baccalaureate education programs are the approved basic psychiatric nursing education programs in Canada and post basic baccalaureate education is now available in all of the regulating jurisdictions except for the Yukon. Since 2011, a Master's in Psychiatric Nursing has also been available.
- Currently, Registered Psychiatric Nurses graduate from a baccalaureate program or a three year equivalent diploma in psychiatric nursing.
- Canada's three regulated nursing professions share some of the same theoretical preparation and basic competencies but there are fundamental differences in their educational preparation in terms of their focus, the core content studies, and the depth and breadth of the theory. Psychiatric nursing education and practice places different demands for specific course requirements and clinical experiences for those entering the profession.

ABOUT THE RPNRC

The RPNRC strives to achieve its mission of excellence in psychiatric nursing regulation in Canada by collaborating provincially, territorially, nationally and globally on regulatory matters affecting Registered Psychiatric Nurses. Through its members who are the regulatory bodies for the profession, the RPNRC represents 5,600 Registered Psychiatric Nurses in Canada. They form the largest single group of professional mental health service providers in Western Canada.

For more information: www.rpnrc.ca.

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