

## Seneca launches independent nursing degree program

The Ontario government is providing a new pathway for nursing education with the launch of Seneca's new stand-alone four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the King Campus. Details were shared last Friday by Jill Dunlop, Minister of Colleges and Universities, who was joined by Stephen Lecce, MPP for King-Vaughan and David Agnew, President of Seneca. "I'm here today to highlight an important milestone for postsecondary education in Ontario. Seneca will offer a stand-alone nursing degree independent of a university partner at its campus in King City," said Minister Dunlop. "By allowing colleges and universities to both offer stand-alone nursing degrees, our government is increasing choices and reducing barriers to high-quality, local education for Ontario's students. The new program builds on Ontario's recent changes allowing both publicly-assisted colleges and universities to offer a baccalaureate degree in nursing to increase opportunities for students to access a high-quality education. Ontario's nurses go above and beyond to provide exceptional care to patients and we are grateful for their continued efforts throughout the pandemic," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Seneca's new Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program will provide students with more choices for nursing education, further strengthening our health care workforce as more Ontarians pursue this important career. Seneca will welcome the first cohort of new nursing students starting in September 2022. Our government announced the addition of over 5,000 new and upskilled registered nurses and registered practical nurses, and to do that, we are leveraging the good work of Seneca's new Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program that will help keep students closer to home," said Lecce, Education Minister and MPP for King-Vaughan. "By expanding access to Seneca in King's high-quality postsecondary education, we are helping more young people access well-paid, in-demand jobs in this field and meeting our province's growing health care needs as the population ages. Seneca is delighted to add a baccalaureate degree in nursing to our credential options for health care professionals," said Seneca President David Agnew. "This degree builds on 50 years of nursing education at Seneca and allows us to support the urgent need for registered nurses in Ontario. As part of the government's recently announced \$35 million investment to increase enrolment in nursing education programs in publicly-assisted colleges and universities across the province, the province is also providing up to \$1.2 million to help increase enrolment in nursing education programs at Seneca, supporting the training of 55 new practical nursing students and 80 new Bachelor of Science in Nursing students. To become a registered nurse in Ontario (and be registered with the College of Nurses of Ontario), individuals must obtain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Investing in nursing education supports the government's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan that was launched last year. At the centre of this plan, the hours of direct care for residents in long-term care will be increasing to an average of four hours per day over four years. To implement this initiative, the government will be making overall investments of \$1.9 billion annually by 2024-2025. To strengthen the health and long-term care workforce, Ontario is investing \$342 million, beginning in 2021-22, to add over 5,000 new and upskilled registered nurses and registered practical nurses as well as 8,000 personal support workers. In addition, Ontario is investing \$57.6 million, beginning in 2022-23, to hire 225 nurse practitioners in the long-term care sector. Jill Dunlop, Minister of Colleges and Universities; Stephen Lecce, MPP for King-Vaughan, and David Agnew, President of Seneca, joined in announcing Seneca's new nursing degree program.