

## *Student's Current Perspective*

What do you think about a US company being responsible for making a Canadian RN exam?

The College of Registered Nurses of B.C. and nine other Canadian nursing regulators have advised that there will be a new entry-to-practice examination coming into effect in January 2015. Although the new exam format will not affect our class, I was quite intrigued to hear about a computer-adaptive test replacing the Canadian Registered Nurse Exam (CRNE) currently available from the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA).

The new exam will be developed by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, which develops and administers the NCLEX or entry-to-practice examination for nurses in the United States. There has been a lot of outcry from the CNA as well as the Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA) around the decision to go with a US-based exam developer, but what I did not realize is that the CNA profits to the tune of around eight million dollars a year from the CRNE. Every student that wants to become a registered nurse in Canada must write the exam at a cost of about \$600 whereas the new exam will cost at least 50% less than that. I would love to see the cost go down – did you know the US developer is a not-for-profit organization? Did you know that the new exam is designed to adapt to a specific exam candidate's knowledge-base so that if you are doing well, the computer will ask harder questions and end the exam earlier? This will result in a more precise estimate of a candidate's knowledge and should reduce false positive and false negative classification errors associated with the determination of pass/fail.

Currently, the CRNE is only offered three times a year on a single day, so if you fail the exam you must wait until the next sitting or if an illness or situational problem occurred, again, you would have to wait until the next available exam writing date. Because the new exam is a computer-adaptive test, there will be many more opportunities to take the exam.

There is one aspect that troubles me, and that is that it is too bad that a Canadian company was not able to meet the requirements of the nursing regulatory bodies. But that one disappointment will not cause me to be against the change. The ability for nurses in other countries to take the exam and come to Canada to work may also help reduce nursing shortages. As well, the option to practice in the US will be increased because instead of having to study and write two separate exams, they will be the same. I look forward to this historical change and the positive effects it will bring to the nursing profession in Canada.

-Jodi Meacher, nursing student