



Accountability Report 2022–23

Healthcare Professionals Recruitment



Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment
2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government’s Accountability Report

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Introduction

The Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment (OHPR) plays a critical role in achieving the objectives outlined in the Government's plan to improve health care for all Nova Scotians, Action for Health. OHPR works with, and for, communities and healthcare professionals on recruitment and retention strategies that establish Nova Scotia as a magnet for healthcare workers.

Over the past fiscal year, OHPR has worked with system partners to advance recruitment and retention of the health workforce. OHPR has developed partnerships with healthcare employers, including Nova Scotia Health Authority, the IWK, the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care, Emergency Health Services and Emergency Management Centre Inc., and the Office of Addictions and Mental Health, as well as other departments, regulatory bodies, and academic institutions. This work highlights that Nova Scotia is not only a great place to work, but a great place to live. This report outlines the initiatives the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment has implemented over the course of 2022-23.

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment for the year ended March 31, 2023, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment outcomes necessarily include estimates, judgments, and opinions by Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment 2022-23 Business Plan.

Original signed by
Honourable Michelle Thompson
Minister

Original signed by
Jeannine Lagassé
Deputy Minister

Measuring Performance

Position the Role of the Office

Since its inception in Fall 2021, the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment (OHPR) has been working diligently with internal and external partners to identify and implement solutions to address longstanding health workforce shortages in Nova Scotia: challenges that are experienced nationally.

OHPR's strategic framework articulates a vision of a thriving workforce in a world class health system – working with people and communities for a healthy Nova Scotia. OHPR nurtures partnerships that work as one health system to plan for, recruit and retain the health workforce of today and redesign it for the needs of the future.

OHPR works to facilitate health workforce innovations and knowledge-sharing across federal, provincial and territorial tables, and works with external and internal partners to solve policy problems, streamline processes and remove barriers in support of health transformation and redesign.

OHPR created a recruitment plan to support operationalization of market development, attraction in domestic and international markets, as well as initiatives to streamline the recruitment experience for all health professions. Examples of this work include:

- Working with Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) on a multi-year expansion of the More than Medicine + website, providing a centralized point of contact for health professionals seeking information about opportunities.
- OHPR is supporting NSHA with the implementation of a Client Relationship Management (CRM) tool that will support engagement of healthcare professionals and community partners. In 2022-23 a vendor was selected, and implementation began.
- OHPR led nine recruitment missions in 2022-23, promoting Nova Scotia at 24 events in 7 countries and resulting in approximately 1,552 candidate contacts system wide, which were referred to NSHA for follow-up.
- A successful provincial digital nursing campaign that generated 120 candidate contacts, who were directed to NSHA for follow-up by their recruiters.
- Partnering with Health Association of Nova Scotia (HANS) and the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care (SLTC) in a provincial-led Kenyan refugee camp mission whereby 65 Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) received conditional job offers through the federal Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP).

In 2022-23 the administration of the Province's Nursing Strategy transitioned to OHPR. This strategy provides several streams of funding to employers of healthcare professionals to support recruitment, retention and professional development. As an example, \$340,000 was allocated to streamlining licensing in partnership with the Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN), resulting in registered nurses who are licensed in Canada, Philippines, India, Nigeria, USA, UK, Australia or New Zealand being eligible for immediate licensure with no extra requirements other than passing the entrance exam.

OHPR works to provide robust evidence and research to guide health workforce policy and programs. In 2022-23, OHPR provided leadership in data standardization, supply and demand forecasting, and

informed and advanced a needs-based planning approach. OHPR is also a key partner in the development of an \$8 million temporary modular housing for healthcare workers initiative.

OHPR collaborated with academic partners and the Department of Advanced Education to support workforce expansion by adding seats for medical lab technologists (MLTs), respiratory therapists and other health professions. Career laddering and professional development that optimizes scopes of practice of nurses, paramedics and others are part of OHPR's workforce expansion focus in 2023-24.

Recognize the Need for More Local Involvement and Work with Communities to Give Them the Tools for Successful Recruitment

In 2022-23, OHPR developed and administered the \$2 million OHPR Community Fund with significant engagement with system partners, government departments and communities, including the Department of Communities Culture Tourism and Heritage (CCTH). The OHPR Community Fund supports planning, recruitment, and retention efforts of all healthcare providers in communities across Nova Scotia, provides communities with the opportunity to address social and cultural barriers within their regions, and profiles Nova Scotia as a place to live and work. The goals of the fund are achieved through a combination of community-led projects, as well as targeted initiatives as identified by OHPR. Twenty-eight partner organizations were funded in 2022-23 through a call for proposals and are in the process of scaling up their community attraction and retention efforts. Targeted initiatives included providing funding for the inaugural International Black Health Conference and support for the Nova Scotia International Community of Health Workers Engagement (NICHE) program.

To foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among the funded organizations, OHPR organized a highly successful Healthcare Recruitment and Retention Community Conference. The conference served as a platform for partners to discuss their initiatives, share best practices, and learn from one another's experiences. The event was attended by over 150 representatives from partner organizations, multiple government departments, and community leaders across the province, leading to the identification of several valuable opportunities for ongoing work in the coming year.

Finally, as mentioned above, OHPR has been supporting NSHA with implementing the CRM recruitment database and tracking tool to help engagement of healthcare professionals and community partners.

Assist Health Regions in Their Local Recruitment Efforts and Strategy

Through its monthly Health System Recruitment Plan Advisory Task Team, OHPR has been able to solicit the advice of health leaders on recruitment and retention efforts.

OHPR's new needs-based planning approach, in combination with clinical services planning, will guide recruitment for 'hard to recruit' professions in 'hard to recruit' areas of the province. In 2022-23 the province provided signing bonuses of \$10,000 and relocation allowances of up to \$5,000 for nurses who signed agreements to hard to recruit areas/specialties.

Support Physicians and/or Other Relevant Health Professionals Participating in Recruitment Efforts

In 2022-23, NSHA and OHPR worked together to include healthcare professionals in recruitment efforts by hiring six Medical Doctor (MD) recruitment leads. Their role is to participate in site visits and meet with potential candidates to share their experiences of living and working in NS. This has helped ensure regional recruitment efforts include opportunities for healthcare professionals to participate.

Work with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Health Authority to Expand a Clinical Assistant Program

OHPR is working with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia (CPSNS), DHW and NSHA to develop plans to increase the opportunities for Clinical Assistants (CAs) to practice.

Expand Opportunities for Foreign-Trained Physicians Wishing to Practice Medicine in Nova Scotia

In 2022-23, OHPR explored the potential to expand the Practice Ready Assessment (PRA) program or the International Medical Graduates (IMGs) clerkship, including working with NSHA and CPNS to determine constraints and additional resources required.

In 2022-23, OHPR alongside its partners, undertook an analysis of the capacity and potential to add a stream for Nova Scotia-born IMGs to have annual residency seat allocation. A designated pathway to residency for ten IMGs was created, allowing them to complete their residency at home.

In 2022-23, two OHPR advertising campaigns promoting Nova Scotia to UK-based physicians resulted in just over 300 new physician contacts.

OHPR, NSHA and CPSNS developed a streamlined service to review qualifications of international physicians, including those from Ukraine.

Focus Efforts on Retention of Our Current Healthcare Professionals

Wage and benefit incentives are a key retention driver. In 2022-23, system partners from NSHA, OHPR and IWK began working with the Council of Nursing Unions to reach a new Nursing Collective Agreement.

In addition, DHW Emergency Health Services and OHPR worked to align benefits funding for paramedics employed across the province. Emergency Medical Care Inc.'s (EMCIs) paramedic workforce now pays less for their benefits.

OHPR and DHW Clinical Services have been leading the Province's Nursing strategy with a strong focus on funding retention initiatives.

Nova Scotia Health Innovation Hub has provided \$150,000 in innovation funding to enhance emergency care and contribute to better working environments. A just-in-time program will provide nurses working in emergency departments (EDs) with evening and weekend access to consult with experienced nurses online.

Accountability and Performance

Action for Health is Nova Scotia's four-year strategic plan describing the actions and solutions to transform healthcare in the province. Transparent measurement of success is an important component to ensuring accountability.

Key Performance Indicators to track shorter term outcomes of changes to the health system, as well as daily reporting on health system metrics, can be found at: [Action for Health \(novascotia.ca\)](https://www.novascotia.ca/actionforhealth).

Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)

<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2022-2023 Estimate</u>	<u>2022-2023 Actuals</u>	<u>2022-2023 Variance</u>
General Administration	543	692	149
Strategic Direction and Accountability	9,296	3,594	(5,702)
Total - Departmental Expenses	9,839	4,286	(5,553)
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenues	--	--	--
Fees and Other Charges	--	--	--
Ordinary Recoveries	--	112	112
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	--	112	112
TCA Purchase Requirements	--	--	--
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	33.0	15.6	(17.4)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

OHPR's expenses were \$5.5 million lower than estimate primarily due to a \$3.0 million underspend in professional services and \$2.5 million reduction for positions and associated operating costs not transferring to OHPR as expected.

Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Ordinary recoveries were \$112 thousand higher than budget due an unbudgeted recovery.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

N/A

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

OHPR is reporting a variance of 17.4 FTEs under budget due to temporary vacancies and positions not transferring to OHPR as expected.

Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment; or,
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by (*Department/Public Service Offices/ Governmental Unit including Crown Corporations and Agencies*):

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2022-2023
The number of disclosures received	None
The number of findings of wrongdoing	None
Details of each wrongdoing (Insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing. (Insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	