



Health Human Resources in Canada: A Federal Overview

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Canada in Brief

Canada is a vast country, with a land mass approximately three times larger than Argentina, but with a smaller population of 34 million people:



- » Health disparities exist between rural, urban and northern territories;
- » Approximately 19 percent of the population resides in rural areas of the country, with nearly half as many physicians as urban centres, and significantly fewer medical specialists;
- » 77,000 physicians (50.7% family medicine; 49.3% specialists), a 3.4% increase over the previous year and an all-time high;
- » 408,093 regulated nurses : 73.7% Registered Nurses (RNs) including Nurse Practitioners (NPs), 24.9% Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), and less than 2% Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs), who only practice in the four Western provinces and Yukon.



Federal Role

- Canada's publicly funded and universally accessible healthcare system is largely administered by the provinces and territories, including matters related to the training, hiring, licensing, and planning of health human resources.
- Health Canada is the federal department responsible for helping the people of Canada maintain and improve their health.
 - » Five core federal roles:
 - Leader / Partner** - Working together with the provinces and territories to foster collaboration and support key activities across the country;
 - Funder** - Transfers to provincial/territorial governments;
 - Guardian/Regulator** – Food, drugs, blood, laboratories, etc.;
 - Service Provider** – Health Canada acts as a health service provider for First Nations and Inuit peoples within Canada;
 - Information Provider** – Canadian Institute of Health Information data standards, etc.



Federal Initiatives

- **Key Federal Investments:**

- » Recent investments aim to address the mix and distribution challenges by targeting efforts at better aligning health education with population health needs and increasing access to needed services in underserved areas:
 - Family Medicine Residencies Initiative;
 - Canada Student Loan Forgiveness;
 - Funding to the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada to support efficiencies in the medical education system;
 - The Internationally Educated Health Professionals Initiative.
- » Also investing in McMaster University's Teams Advancing Patient Experience: Strengthening Quality (TAPESTRY) project, which evaluates the impact of primary healthcare teams on patient outcomes and the healthcare system.



Committee on Health Workforce: Collaborative Action

- To respond to emerging health workforce issues, the federal/provincial/territorial Committee on Health Workforce (CHW) was established to provide policy and strategic advice to pan-Canadian Deputy Ministers of Health.
 - » Senior representatives from each province/territory provide a national forum for discussion and information sharing on pan-Canadian issues; Health Canada is a co-chair.
 - » Health workforce issues are undertaken by the CHW's task forces and working groups, which focus on:
 - Physician Resource Planning;
 - Principal Nursing Advisors;
 - Team Based Models;
 - Health Human Resource Management;
 - Health Labour Relations;
 - Health Professions Credentials;
 - Internationally Educated Health Professionals
- Provinces and territories are solely responsible for HHR planning and management within their jurisdictions.

