

Health Human Resources Action Plan

Progress Update - October 2022

Saskatchewan's HHR Action Plan announced in September will invest over \$60 million and add more than 1000 health professionals into the health system over the next several years. It will address current challenges, stabilize health services across the province and build a stronger, more sustainable health-care workforce.

Progress has been made on each of the four pillars of the Action Plan: *recruit, train, incentivize and retain*. This includes resumptions and restorations of acute and emergency services in a number of communities that have experienced disruptions, made possible by staff recruitment that builds on work already well underway prior to the launch of the Action Plan.

Recruit

- The Saskatchewan Health Authority has received over 3,500 applications for the positions the province is recruiting from the Philippines.
- 11 job offers have been extended by the SHA for Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) from the Philippines.
- The Ministry of Health and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) are working with regulators and training institutions to increase candidate eligibility.
- Nearly 400 applications have been received following a call for internationally educated health-care professionals (IEHPs) from Saskatchewan and Canada who may qualify for future training or employment in the province. Submissions are being reviewed to determine supports for eligible applicants. Applications are still being accepted.
 - This includes nearly 30 applications received from Ukrainian newcomers, including three from physician candidates.
- Four new health system navigators will come onboard in November to assist in the recruitment and retention of internationally educated healthcare workers.
- Provincial government officials will lead a health-care recruitment mission to the Philippines later this fall to promote available work opportunities.
 - This will include signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of the Philippines on the recruitment of Filipino health-care professionals, as well as recruitment and/or hiring events for prospective candidates.

- A traditional and social media campaign has begun in Philippines. The largest outlets have published news of Saskatchewan’s recruitment efforts and a Facebook post reached over 75,000 people in one day.
- An information and marketing campaign is currently underway and will continue into the following months to promote career opportunities, as well as incentive, retention and financial support programs for health-care workers.
 - The next phase of the campaign will feature testimonials from health-care workers from home and abroad who have built a successful career in Saskatchewan.
- The new saskatchewan.ca/HHR website with information on health-care opportunities and how to access them, and province’s Health Human Resources Action Plan has attracted over 60,000 visits.

Train

- In September, a webinar was hosted for over 140 RN candidates from the Philippines.
- As of September, 150 new training seats were introduced and successfully implemented, including:
 - 10 nurse practitioner training seats – five in the collaborative nurse practitioner program jointly delivered by Saskatchewan Polytechnic and the University of Regina, and five in the University of Saskatchewan nurse practitioner program;
 - 124 registered nursing seats – 62 in the Saskatchewan Polytechnic/University of Regina collaborative program and 62 in the University of Saskatchewan program; and
 - 16 registered psychiatric nursing seats in the Saskatchewan Polytechnic program.
- The Ministries of Advanced Education and Immigration and Career Training will continue its support of the HHR Action Plan as it explores training seat expansions for more critical health sciences programs for 2023-24.
- Residency seats at the College of Medicine have been expanded by eight for a total of 128.
- The number of seats for the Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA) program has increased to 45 seats, targeting approximately 15 seats per cohort.

Incentivize

- Applications are now open for the new incentive of up to \$50,000 over three years for a return-of-service agreement which has been introduced to attract new employees to targeted positions in rural and remote areas. Up to 115 new healthcare workers in the SHA and/or Affiliates will benefit from this initiative.
- 105 clinical bursaries have been approved this year, with nearly 80 per cent of the allocated budget spent. This is the highest number of clinical bursaries awarded by the Ministry of Health in more than four years.

Retain

- Over 125 new, full-time, frontline health care positions have been created and posted.
- Over 50 existing, part-time positions have been enhanced to full-time.
 - These new and enhanced positions span 49 communities across the province, and include Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Continuing Care Aides, Medical Radiation Technologists, Medical Laboratory Assistants, and Combined Lab and X-Ray Technicians.
- The SHA is developing new mentorship and additional peer-to-peer well-being and resiliency programming.
- The SHA is working collaboratively with First Nations and Métis health to build engagement with five sessions held in October.
- The SHA committed to hire up to 450 Métis citizens over the next 5 years who have completed training with Gabriel Dumont Institute health care program.

Service Resumptions and Restorations

- La Ronge Health Centre experienced service disruption with four acute care bed closures in December 2021. Due to successful RN recruitment, they have re-opened 90% of their acute care beds and are on target to reopen all remaining beds this fall.
- Assiniboia Hospital was experiencing intermittent emergency department bypasses, which have now stabilized, and the emergency department is available 24/7 due to recruitment efforts for additional resources. In addition, four acute care beds have re-opened in Assiniboia.
- Biggar Hospital emergency department has restored their emergency services back to 24/7 availability due to recruitment.
- Further service resumptions are anticipated in the weeks ahead as additional staff are onboarded in facilities across the province.