



# Health Human Resources Action Plan

## *Progress Report - March 2023*

Saskatchewan's second in-person recruitment mission to the Philippines in mid-March resulted in 236 conditional job offers extended to Registered Nurses (RNs), for a total of nearly 400 Filipino RNs now committed to joining the provincial workforce.

A small, focused group from the Government of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) hosted the mission in two major cities - Manila and Cebu - as part of continuous recruitment efforts that reinforces Saskatchewan as a preferred destination for internationally educated nurses (IENs). The SHA conducted hundreds of job interviews over the course of a week, and was accompanied by Health Recruitment and Retention Navigators from the government along with nursing experts from post-secondary training institutions and nursing partners.

The Navigator Team met with several hundred potential IENs interested in working in Saskatchewan and prepared nearly 130 career action plans detailing the next steps for the IENs.

The 162 Filipino RNs who received conditional job offers in December 2022 are currently moving through the RN Pathway, which includes language training, bridging education and licensing.

Improving connections and engagement with Saskatchewan's nursing students and recent graduates is also delivering positive results. The SHA has hired 114 Grad Nurses from Saskatchewan and across Canada since December. A further 81 conditional job offers have been made to nursing students who will be graduating this Spring.

## 2023-24 HHR Budget Priorities

Key 2023-24 budget investments include nearly **\$100 million** across government, including **\$55.5 million** for the Ministry of Health, to support Saskatchewan's four-point Health Human Resources (HHR) Action Plan to recruit, train, incentivize and retain more health-care workers and physicians.

An **\$11.9 million** investment will continue supporting work underway to recruit internationally educated health care workers, including regulatory assessments, navigator services, and settlement supports.

Over **\$22 million** will be allocated for continued implementation of 250 new full-time positions and enhancement of part-time positions to full-time in rural and remote areas around the province, first announced in September 2022. As of late March, more than 100 of these positions have been filled.

New HHR investments in 2023-24 include **\$3.1 million** to create a new Registered Nurse travel pool program to help mitigate rural and remote health human resource pressures.

Funding of **\$1.3 million** in 2023-24, annualizing to \$1.7 million in future years, will support the hiring of 12 Physician Assistants in Saskatchewan's health system for the first time.

A **\$2.0 million** investment will provide for the continued provision of incentives between \$30,000 and \$50,000 to recruit in nine high priority classifications in rural and remote Saskatchewan, in exchange for a three-year return-of-service. Since launching in October 2022, 72 incentives have been approved in a variety of professions and locations.

This budget also includes **\$1.8 million** for enhancements to the Rural Physician Incentive Program. Starting April 1, 2023, the incentive was increased to \$200,000 over five years, more than four times the amount that was previously offered. First launched in 2013-14 for recent Canadian graduates, this incentive will now expand to include international medical graduates who establish a practice in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

Progress continues on Saskatchewan's HHR Action Plan multiple initiatives to recruit, train, incentivize and retain more health-care workers.

## RECRUIT

### Recruitment of health-care professionals from the Philippines

- A second in-person recruitment mission to the Philippines in March 2023 resulted in 236 conditional offers extended to Registered Nurses (RNs).
- November 2022 mission to the Philippines resulted in conditional job offers to 162 RNs.
- Four Continuing Care Assistants and two Medical Lab Assistants from the Philippines have been hired and already started working in Saskatchewan.
- RNs with conditional offers are now moving through the RN Pathway which includes language training, bridging education and licensing.
- Eighteen RNs are currently in the bridging program.

### Unlicensed Internationally Educated Health Care Professionals residing in Saskatchewan/Canada

- The SHA has extended conditional offers to nine Saskatchewan-based RNs who are currently participating in the bridging education program.

### Ukrainian Newcomers

- The SHA has hired ten Ukrainian newcomers into the health care workforce.

## TRAIN

### Expanding health-care training seats at Saskatchewan's Indigenous institutions

- The expanded Health Care Aid program at Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) in Prince Albert started in March 2023 with 20 more seats. SIIT will also have a one-time increase of Indigenous Practical Nursing seats.
- Dumont Technical Institute will have additional Continuing Care Assistant seats and a one-time seat expansion in Practical Nursing.

## INCENTIVIZE

### Improve job offers and connections for nursing graduates

- Following the launch of the Grad Nurse Expression of Interest initiative in December 2022, 114 Nursing Graduates from Saskatchewan and out of province have been hired.
- As of March 28, 81 conditional letters of offer have been extended by SHA to nurses who will be graduating in Spring 2023.
- The SHA is actively promoting employment opportunities, and will continue to offer in-person career events and attend career fairs in and outside Saskatchewan throughout March and April.

### Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive

- The incentive of up to \$50,000 for a three-year return-of-service agreement for high priority positions continues to accept applications.
- Since launching in October 2022, 83 incentives have been approved to date in a variety of professions and locations.
- This incentive is available to new employees in nine high priority positions in rural and remote areas. For a complete listing of eligibility criteria and eligible locations, visit [saskatchewan.ca/HHR](http://saskatchewan.ca/HHR).

### Final Clinical Placement Bursary

- 168 bursaries have been approved in 2022-23 to support students in health disciplines with their final clinical placement requirements, the highest since 2014-15.

## RETAIN

### New Full-Time and Enhanced Part-Time to Full-Time Permanent Positions

- As of late March, the SHA has hired 108 of the 164 positions posted in nine high-priority classifications in rural and remote locations experiencing service disruptions.

### Physician Recruitment and Retention

- **Rural Physician Incentive Program:**
  - » Starting April 1, 2023, an enhanced Rural Physician Incentive Program will be offered to physicians who establish a practice in rural Saskatchewan. The total incentive will be up to \$200,000 over five years, more than four times the amount that was previously offered.
- **Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA) program:**
  - » Fifteen new physicians are practicing in rural Saskatchewan, following completion recently of the SIPPA program. These newest physicians are among the 278 internationally-trained family physicians currently working in the province as a result of the SIPPA program. The vast majority (77 per cent) practice in rural communities.

Announced in September 2022, Saskatchewan's four-point Health Human Resources (HHR) Action Plan to recruit, train, incentivize and retain more health care workers and physicians will add more than 1,000 health professionals into the health system over the next few years.

A total of nearly \$100 million government-wide investment in 2023-24 distributed among the Ministries of Health, Advanced Education, and Immigration and Career Training will continue advancing innovative solutions that expand and strengthen the health workforce in all Saskatchewan communities.

Details on health-care opportunities, how to access them and more information on the province's HHR Action Plan are available at [saskatchewan.ca/HHR](http://saskatchewan.ca/HHR).