

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

2023-24 Health Human Resources (HHR) Action Plan - \$98.8M Government-wide Investment

The Government of Saskatchewan released a four-point action plan to *recruit, train, incentivize* and *retain* health care workers in September 2022. The 2023-24 Budget will build on commitments to stabilize and grow our health care workforce to benefit patients, strengthen health care teams and support the growth of our province.

A total \$98.8 million government-wide investment distributed among the Ministries of Health, Advanced Education, and Immigration and Career Training will continue advancing innovative HHR solutions that expand and strengthen our health workforce in all Saskatchewan communities.

RECRUIT

- **Ongoing recruitment of Internationally Educated Health Care Workers (IEHs)**
 - **\$11.9M** will support costs associated with recruitment of 850 internationally-educated healthcare workers (IEHs) over two years, including 600 from the Philippines and abroad; 200 already residing in Saskatchewan; and 50 from Ukraine. Recruitment supports include cost related to regulatory assessments, navigator and immigration fees, and settlement fees.
- **Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency (SHRA)**
 - **\$2.4M** will support the continued building of Saskatchewan's HHR-focused Agency, which supports recruitment efforts for human resources in health care. Resourcing efforts are currently underway for the Agency with a Board of Directors in place and recruitment ongoing for a new CEO.
- **Physician Assistants**
 - **\$1.3M** of new funding will support the hiring of physician assistants in Saskatchewan's health care system for the first time. Physician assistants are being introduced in the province to provide health services under the supervision of a doctor in a variety of settings.

TRAIN

- **Training Seat Expansion**
 - **\$28M** in new funding will support the continued implementation of the more than 550 new training seats in 18 high demand health occupations which were first announced in February 2023.
- **Nursing Seat Expansion**
 - **\$10M** will fund the second year of the 150 Nursing seat expansion in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina and Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

- **IEH Training Costs**
 - **\$5.1M** in new funding will cover training costs associated with the recruitment of 850 internationally educated healthcare workers (IEHs) over two years. Training includes bridging programming at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, tuition, tutoring, and exam fees.
- **Family Medicine Residency Seats**
 - **\$1.6M** will continue to support the four additional family residency seats in the southeast part of the province first added in 2022-23 under the Distributed Medical Education strategy.
- **Specialty Residency Seats**
 - **\$1M** will continue to support four specialty residency seats added to the College of Medicine in 2022-23.

INCENTIVIZE

- **Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive**
 - **\$2M** in new funding will continue to provide for 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.
- **Student Loan Forgiveness Program**
 - **\$600,000** for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners who practice in rural and remote communities with forgiveness of up to 20 per cent of their outstanding Saskatchewan Student Loan debt, up to \$4,000 annually, for up to five years, to a maximum of \$20,000.
- **Final Clinical Placement Bursary**
 - **\$259,000** to continue offering one-time bursaries to students in health care disciplines who complete a final clinical placement as part of their program in any community outside of Regina or Saskatoon, in exchange for a one-year return-of-service.

RETAIN

- **Staffing Stabilization**
 - **\$22.2M** in new funding to support the continuing implementation of the 250 new full-time and enhanced positions in the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) first committed to in September 2022.
- **Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA)**
 - **\$4.3M** will fund readiness assessments of international medical graduates to practice family medicine in Saskatchewan, including a three-year return-of-service as part of full licensure.
- **New Academic/Research Positions**
 - **\$3.3M** in new funding for seven additional academic/research positions added at the College of Medicine since 2022-23.

- **Registered Nurse Travel Pools**
 - **\$3.1M** in new funding for a travel pool of Registered Nurses to travel to rural and remote locations to temporarily fill nursing vacancies and provide coverage during nursing absences.

- **Rural Physician Incentive Program**
 - **\$1.8M** to offer up to \$200,000 for a five-year return-of-service to recent Canadian and international medical graduates who establish a practice in rural Saskatchewan.