

Nursing Workforce

Workforce Statistics: As of March 31, 2025, the NSH nursing team stood at 10,370 strong with turnover below 0.5% and almost 1000 new nurses added in fiscal 24/25.

Vacancy Rates: Trending downward across all zones with notable decrease of 6% in the last two years—down to 18% overall. A strong sign of positive momentum in continuing to grow our nursing workforce!

Education: Supporting the next generation of nurses with 6720 nursing student clinical placements across the province. Funding and supports for nurses to receive specialized education to work in operating rooms, critical care, primary healthcare as family practice nurses and emergency departments, increased access to simulation learning and increased seats in bridging programs for LPNs to become RNs and RNs to be NPs.

Recruitment: International recruitment continues to grow with about 800 nurses hired in the last two years, practicing in areas all over Nova Scotia. All nursing students received employment commitment letters, 413 undergrad nurses were hired fiscal 24-25 and focused campaigns were launched to recruit NPs, build an internal travel nurse team, and expand recruitment to the U.S. and other countries. More than 301 undergraduate student nurses have been employed with NSH leading to increased recruitment of students from Nova Scotia.

Retention: We are strengthening nurse retention with coaching, mentorship, wellness grants and provincewide simulation to support professional development and new tools and supportive programs, including childcare and continued roll out of scheduling technology. We launched the first provincial Nursing Practice Council and Nursing Grand Rounds hosted in a different spot each month. We expanded NP practice leadership, launched the NP Mentorship Program and refreshed the NP Education Incentive Program. The travel nurse reduction plan already resulted in a 20% reduction with an additional 36% savings expected in F26.

Redesign: Since 2022, 54 nurses are working as RN Authorized Prescribers in various care areas at NSH, resulting in increased access to services and thousands of prescriptions for Nova Scotians and NPs and nurses are providing both in person and virtual care. Reviews and improvements to staffing are happening in all inpatient units and emergency departments where the focus is on ensuring clinicians are doing the work they are educated to do, the flow through and processes are efficient, and Nova Scotians have improved access and care.

Professional Practice & Learning

We launched the new Clinical Practice Supports page and online resources, like Dynamic Health with new best practice information and policies to ensure clinicians have the most up to date information to support excellence in care.

9,087 student placements across 60 academic institutions. Delivered specialty training to 904 graduates including bridging and re-entry to practice for more than 200 nurses.

Developed NSH's violence prevention strategy, partnered with Dalhousie researchers on intimate partner violence, expanded Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) training, and rolled out a system-wide Harm Reduction Policy co-designed with patients and providers, reducing stigma and promoting evidence-informed care.

The Provincial Simulation Program supported more than 10,000 clinicians including physicians, nurses, paramedics, learners and more to build hands-on knowledge and skills including more than 3000 participants and 2000 hours of simulation learning at the QEII focused on cutting edge technology like robotics, advanced CT and 3D printing---all focused on ensuring world-class care and service for Nova Scotians.

Knowledge to Action and Evaluation

Completed 70 rapid evidence reviews, 7 publications, and 80 ongoing evaluations in areas like primary care, chronic disease, recruitment and retention and the introduction of new roles such as Physician Assistants.

Showcased Nova Scotia transformation work nationally and internationally at various conferences and events.

Developing new ways of measuring workforce capacity and team work.

Workforce Planning

AI-Powered Innovation: Collaboratively created the Nurse Matching & Forecasting Tool—an in-house AI solution predicting nursing staffing needs and optimizing new nurse placement.

Priority profession headcount increased by 6% (657 employees) while the overall organizational vacancy rate decreased by 1.6%.

Developed a scenario modeling tool to understand current and future workforce needs in priority professions and service areas. Worked with NSH teams to develop and use a risk scoring tool to support workforce planning at the unit level. More than 50% of all inpatient units decreasing risk and stabilizing their workforce.

Respectfully Submitted,

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