



2022

Physician Recruitment Progress



PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT PROGRESS REPORT

2021-2022 continued the pandemic-related challenges and impacts on physician recruitment. The team faced new variants, continued lock downs, travel restrictions, and site-related restrictions. The physician recruitment team continued to adapt their approaches to sourcing and engaging physicians and residents through a combination of virtual and in-person methods. When travel was limited in spring 2020, recruiters quickly pivoted to online and virtual options and expanded these efforts into 2021-22. Where referrals and new contacts used to arise from physician events and conferences, they are now shifting to virtual contact, digital advertising, and physician referrals.

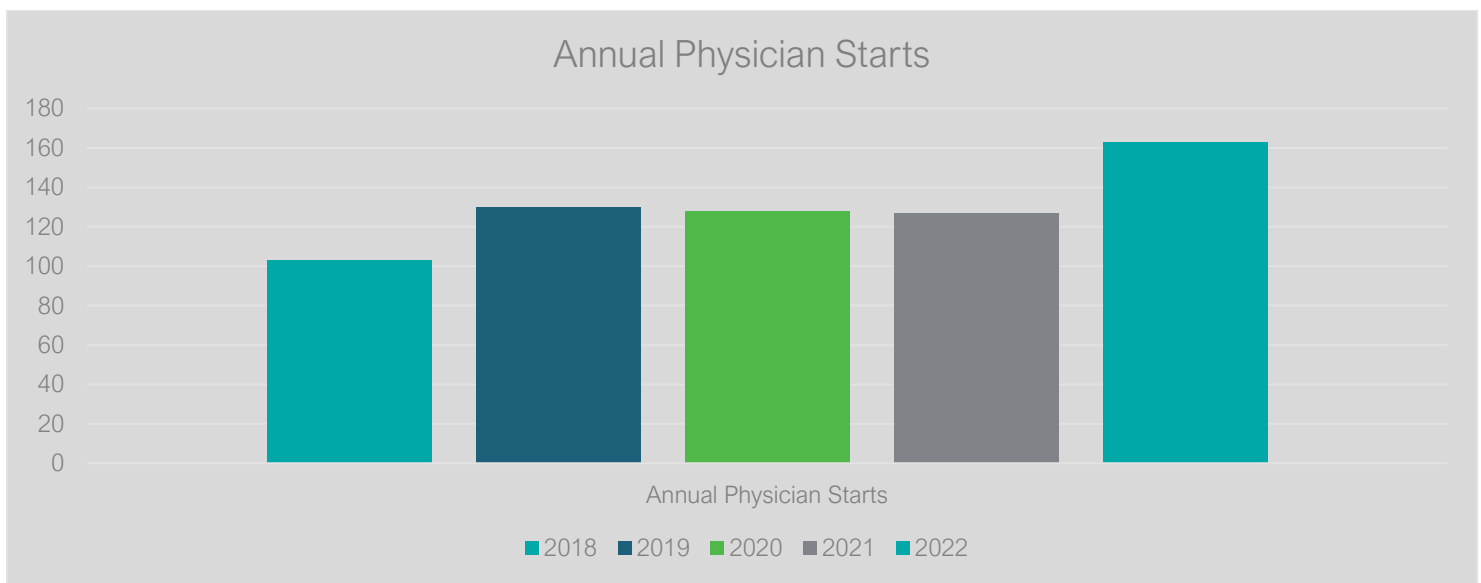
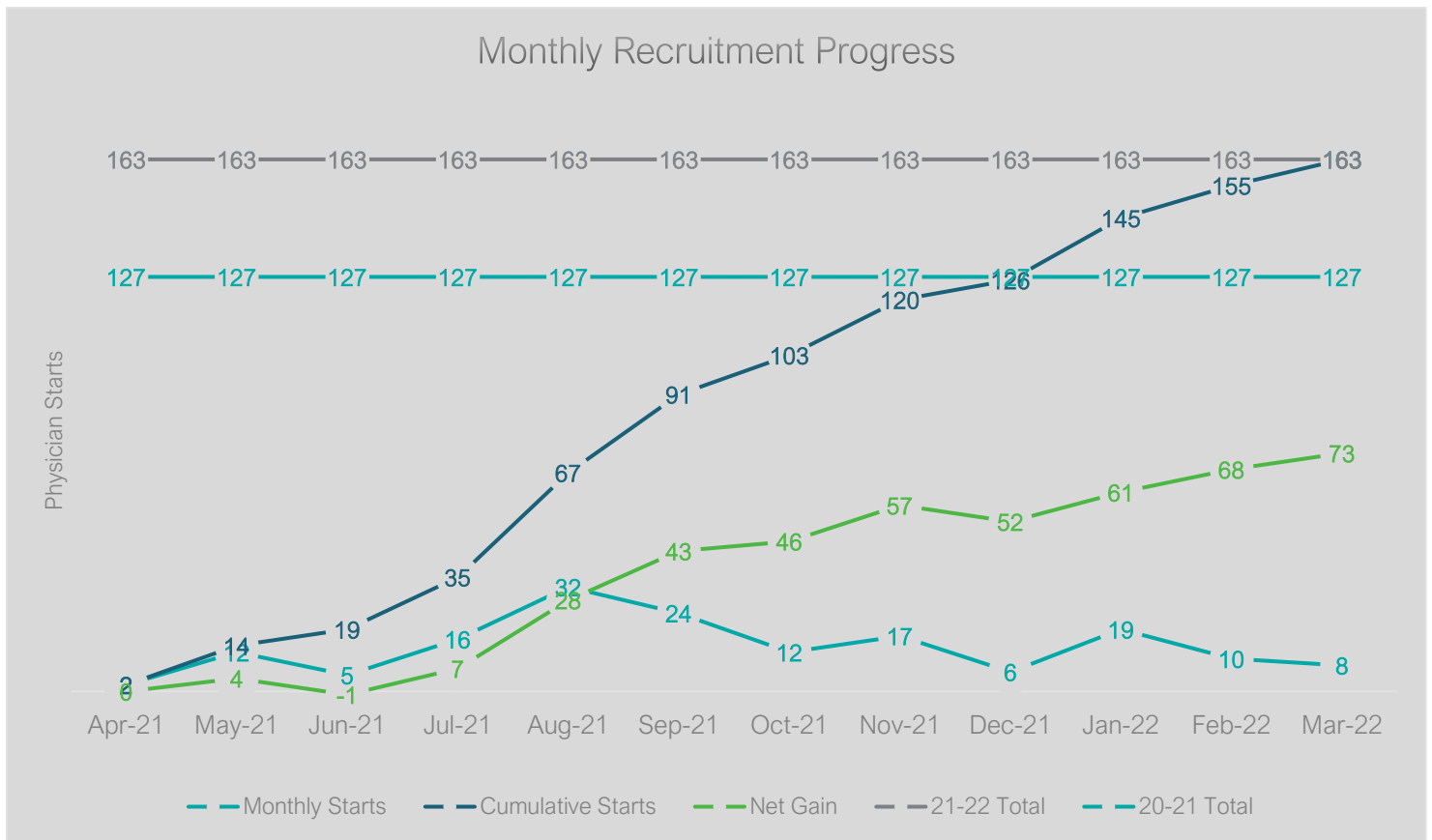
This ongoing focus has resulted in a banner year despite the pandemic related obstacles. We credit this success to the momentum of a solid physician recruitment strategy and a dedicated team of recruitment professionals. We share this success because of the hard work and collaboration of many partners and stakeholders.

On August 31, 2021, the Government of Nova Scotia created the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment. This department is poised to position Nova Scotia as a magnet for health care workers. The office has quickly moved into motion, helping overcome administrative challenges for physician recruitment and adding roles for physicians to support the work of recruitment. This work will continue to evolve as government increases focus and priority on recruiting the health care professionals required to deliver on its [Action for Healthcare Strategy](#).

Dr. Kevin Orrell, Deputy Minister of the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment

Dr. Nicole Boutilier, Vice President of Medicine, Nova Scotia Health

RECRUITMENT PROGRESS TO DATE



From April 1, 2021, to the end of March 2022, 163 physicians started across all zones. 75 of these starts were family physicians and 88 were specialty physicians. Speciality physicians include those working as hospitalists and in emergency medicine. Physician starts in 2021-22 represent a 28.35% improvement over 2020-2021. The previous three years of recruitment saw a total increase of 130, 128, and 127 physicians respectively.

There 68 physician departures registered with Nova Scotia Health* in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022. While there were departures, we are still posting a net gain of 95 physicians.

Of note, in fall 2021, 11 full time physician positions were added to the Nova Scotia health system through the New MD funding. Several of these positions have already received signed offer letters to start practice.

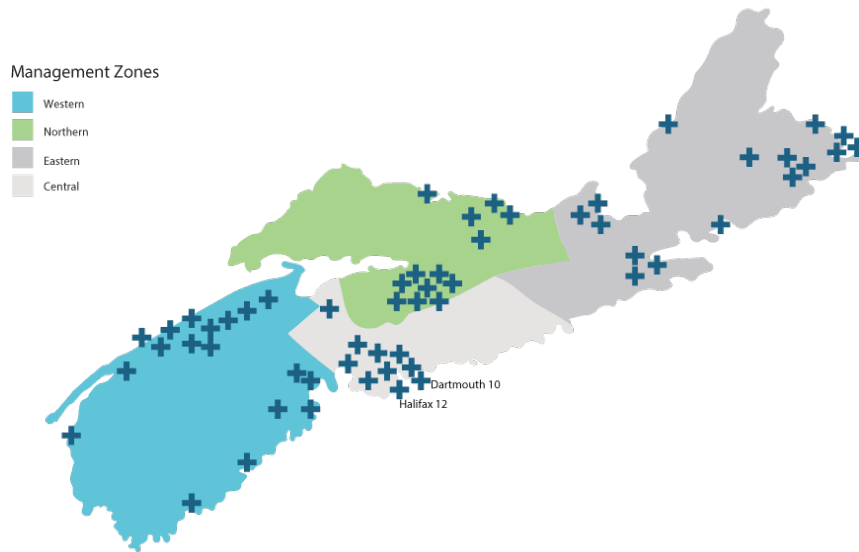
* Departures only register for those that left the province or left practice. Some physicians transferred to other positions within the province, took leave to pursue education, or assumed administrative roles. These are not counted as departures.

IMPACT ON FAMILY MEDICINE ATTACHMENT

As of March 31, 2022, the Need a Family Practice Registry had 85,856 patients seeking a primary care provider.

30,372 patients were removed from the registry with the addition of new family practice spaces this year. Also, through recruitment of new practitioners, we estimate an additional 31,688 patients were assumed by new physicians joining the province, preventing them from registering on the list.

FAMILY MEDICINE PHYSICIAN DISTRIBUTION



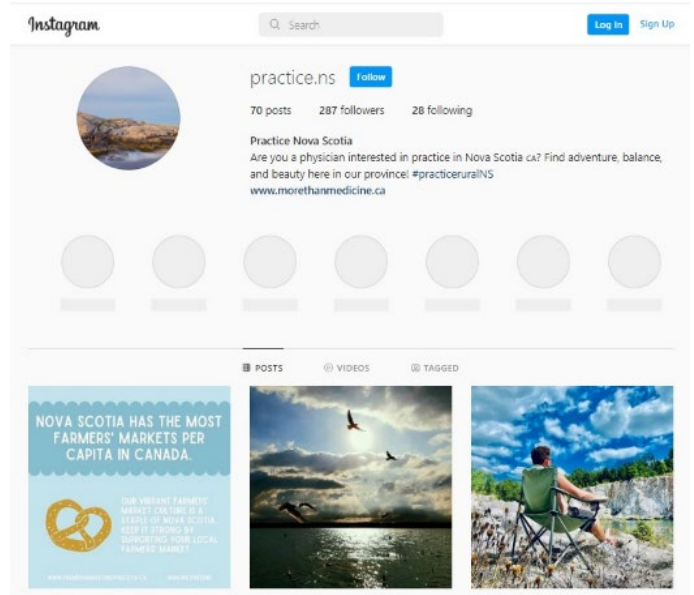
This map depicts the distribution of family medicine starts. It offers a quick reference to the distribution of new starts and shows that while there has been ongoing interest and concentration in more urban centres like Halifax, Dartmouth, and Truro, there is a growing effort to distribute physicians across all zones and rural locations across the province.

FOCUS ON RESIDENTS

Nova Scotia Health increased its focus on resident retention. The primary focus is for Nova Scotia medical students and residents who study at Dalhousie University. However, with the additional of a recruiter focused on medical residents we are also focusing on bespoke events for residents across Canada and issuing offer letters to every family medicine resident in Nova Scotia.

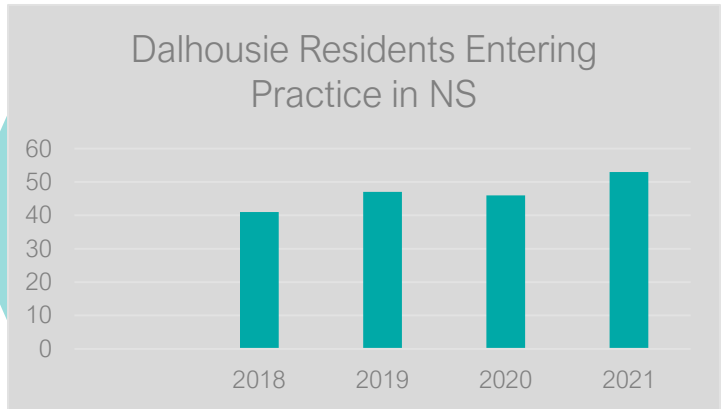
This year, we have completed a resident recruitment strategy in coordination with Dalhousie University’s residency training program site leaders and focused on social media channels that target this demographic. Our results have been consistent, we are keeping more residents in Nova Scotia. Reviewing the Maritimo Resident Doctors (MARDOCS) annual survey data, we have seen a trend of increasing tendency of new physicians to elect locum opportunities and a reluctance to choose permanent practice. This trend was most prominent in 2020, however into 2021 we are seeing a readjustment towards permanent contracts.

Additionally, Nova Scotia Health recruited 45 residents from across Canada to high needs areas across Nova Scotia which is a 50% increase from the year previous (30).

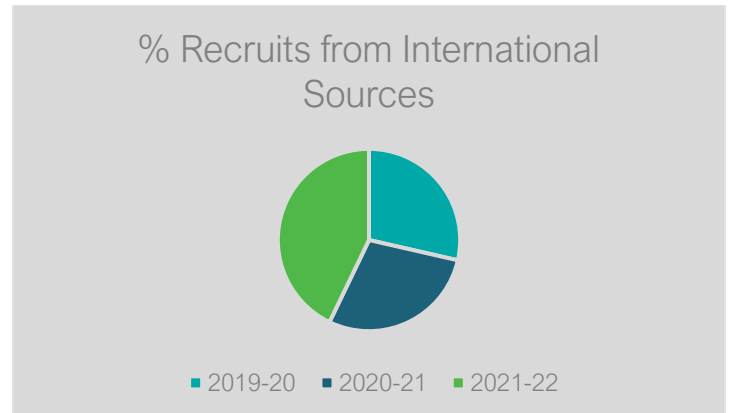
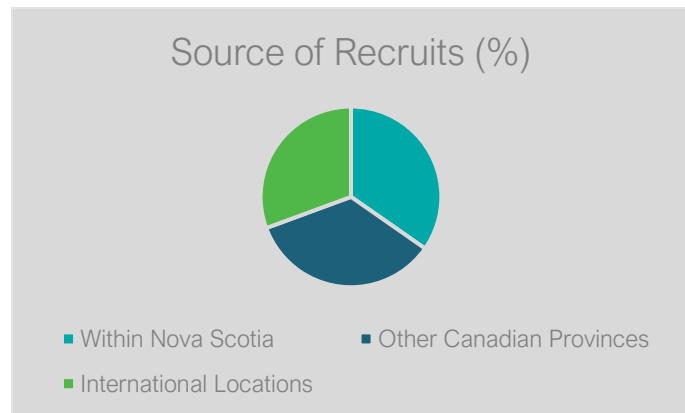


MARDOCS RESIDENT DATA

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of Residents Finishing	149	143	168	159
% Entering Practice	61%	68%	60%	64%
% Continue Training	39%	32%	40%	36%
% Practicing in NS	28%	32%	27%	33%
% of residents taking permanent positions	52%	57%	41%	53%
% of residents taking locum opportunities	30%	35%	48%	36%



INTERNATIONAL RECRUITS



Since 2018, Nova Scotia has focused on building its reputation as a province with so much to offer International Medical Graduates. Partnerships with local communities and the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration continue to prove fruitful, contributing to about a third of the province’s recruits. As this work continues its complexity, Nova Scotia Health has increased recruiter training and supports for those working through immigration on their journey to practice.

It is of note to mention that international recruits made up 20% of total recruits for the previous three years. In 2021, it increased to 30%. This is particularly significant with reduction in travel and international event attendance.

In 2019, we launched the Practice Ready Assessment Program (PRAP) in partnership with Dalhousie Department of Family Medicine, Department of Health and Wellness and the College of Physicians and Surgeons NS. Since program launch, 17 physicians have family practice positions in under serviced communities. In 2021-22, eight PRAP candidates will begin practice. The next cohort of physicians has grown to nine candidates, with start dates in late 2022.

On March 7, 2022, the Premier launched the Come Home to Nova Scotia campaign. The campaign generated more than 300 inquiries from physicians across the world, which resulted in 49 licensable leads for NSH/IWK. NSH is currently working with 15 candidates and has issued 2 offer letters.

EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENT



Nova Scotia Health continues to target and enhanced strategic recruitment efforts at physician events, medical conferences, and hosting new and innovative opportunities to connect with physicians interested in practicing in province.

SITE VISIT SUCCESS RATIO



One of Nova Scotia’s most effective tools for recruitment is a successful site visit. This is an opportunity for physicians to attend their future clinic location and community in-person or virtually to establish the benefits of practicing in Nova Scotia. Local community navigators and physicians’ partner with the physician recruiter to

ensure a customized and personable experience that is both memorable and exceeds expectations for the physician and often their family/spouse. Of those that have completed a site visit during this period, 100% have signed an offer to start practice in Nova Scotia.

INVESTMENTS IN DIGITAL MARKETING



In 2021-2022, Nova Scotia Health worked with a third-party organization to augment the COVID-related reductions in travel for face-to-face recruitment events. Our digital marketing efforts demonstrate that we benefit from an “always on” marketing campaign and that our brand is increasingly recognized. This work has shown excellent early results for targeted specialty groups: obstetrics, family medicine, and internal medicine. Campaigns are adjusted to areas of traction and success and retargeted throughout the time-period to ensure highest optimization of our marketing spend.

Digital marketing initiatives included:

- Nova Scotia ads are serving a highly targeted group of doctors in Canada and the US. More than 2.2 million have seen the ads (some with repetition)

- When a physician searches for a physician job in Canada, our evolving work with search engine optimization and paid search results should guarantee the More than Medicine website is featured prominently among results, from any province
- Billboards, like the one shown here, were in market from Aug 19-Sept 23, saw a 948% increase in web traffic from Alberta; with 83% increase in conversions once the billboards launched
- Nova Scotia Health has continued to work with communities to evolve our recruitment presence on Nova Scotia with content consistently performing