

Six Strategies for Strengthening the Workforce

Evidence and insights from health leaders across the country highlight six strategies to support and retain the workforce, anchored in leadership, equity and patient safety.



Fostering Physically Safe Work Environments.

Providing appropriate and necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), along with the implementation of reasonable policies, procedures and precautions that protect workers from physical harm.



Enhancing Sustainable Staffing.

Ensuring that tasks can be completed within regular working hours, minimizing excessive overtime, reducing administrative burden and aligning responsibilities within workers' qualifications and expertise.



Building Flexible Work Structures.

Offering consistent and manageable work schedules and allowing flexibility to help healthcare workers effectively balance their work and personal lives.



Providing Equitable and Appropriate Compensation.

Ensuring that compensation aligns to work expectations and adapt to changing economic conditions (e.g., cost of living increases).



Ensuring Supportive and Inclusive Workplaces.

Building psychologically safe workplaces that promote mental well-being by addressing racism and prejudice, enhancing trust in management, empowering workers through increased decision-making capabilities, and ensuring recognition their contributions.



Supporting Career Advancement.

Creating pathways for career advancement through comprehensive training and education programs, raising awareness of growth opportunities, and supporting workers with mentorship and sponsorship initiatives.

How this was developed

In March 2023, Healthcare Excellence Canada convened more than 50 health system leaders to explore coordinated actions to better support and retain Canada's health workforce. Participants included representatives from federal, provincial, and territorial governments, regional health authorities, professional associations, unions, frontline providers, pan-Canadian organizations, patient partners and researchers.

Through this roundtable and a review of more than 40 reports and strategies, including 270 activities aimed at retaining health workers, these six key strategies were identified.

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