



Summary of Recent Provincial Initiatives Supporting Internationally Educated Health Professionals (IEHPs)

Note: *This document provides a summary of some recent initiatives (policies, programs, legislation) at the provincial level over the last two years. This document is a work-in-progress and not exhaustive. It has been sourced from publicly available documents. Initiatives that may indirectly benefit internationally educated health professionals (IEHPs), but do not specifically target, internationally trained individuals are not included.*

Please send additional information on these or other IEHP initiatives to cewen@wes.org to help us continue to build out this information.

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In the context of significant health workforce challenges, Canadian provinces and territories have each been working to develop, fund, and implement a range of strategies to support training, recruitment, licensing, and retention of health care workers. Canada wide, the health care and social assistance sector saw 136,100 job vacancies in Q2 2022. Over 34,000 of these were in nursing. Nearly all provinces and territories have individual strategies targeting the recruitment and retention of internationally trained health care workers in the context of broader health human resource or workforce strategies.

Below is a table summarizing recent provincial HHR strategies and specific initiatives aimed at integration of internationally educated nurses (IENs) and internationally trained physicians (ITPs).

Some themes:

- **Recruitment initiatives:** Several provinces have signed MOUs with the Philippines and India that aim to reduce barriers or streamline entry to practice in Canada for nurses. At the federal level, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is inviting individuals with health care work experience (including nurse aides, long-term care aides, and hospital attendants) to immigrate through Express Entry, and setting targets for Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP), many of which have provincial immigration streams for health care workers.
- **Navigator programs / access hubs:** Several provinces have implemented nurse navigator models to support IENs in navigating assessment and licensing processes; New Brunswick has expanded its model to support individuals in other health occupations. Several provinces (e.g. Manitoba, Ontario) have access hubs for IEHPs, affiliated with either universities or provincial governments, that provide services and supports to IEHPs.

- **Financial supports:** Bursaries, grants, and tuition support are being made available through provincial funding for IENs to offset the costs of training, exams/assessments, licensing fees, and registration costs. These initiatives offer supports ranging between \$1,500-\$18,000.
- **Expansion of educational seats + bridge program seats:** Several provinces have recently expanded the number of educational seats and training opportunities offered, including seats in bridging programs. Some additional residency positions have been created specifically for ITPs (e.g. in Newfoundland), while several provinces have announced an expansion of residency positions for all medical graduates (not ITPs specifically).
- **Expansion of supervised assessment models:** Supervised assessment and licensing models including Practice-Ready Assessment (PRA) for physicians, or the Supervised Practice Experience Partnership (SPEP) between the College of Nurses of Ontario and Ontario Health are being implemented and expanded.
- **Regulatory reforms:** Introducing new classes of licensing with registration class inclusive of those internationally trained (e.g. “Associate Physician” in BC; “Associate” registration for physicians in Newfoundland & Labrador; Temporary Class licensing for nurses in Ontario). Some provinces have also eased registration requirements for recently retired nurses.
- **Legislation:** Several provinces (Ontario, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland & Labrador) have recently introduced or amended legislation to reduce barriers to registration and employment. For example, mandating fair and transparent registration practices; prohibiting health regulatory colleges from requiring Canadian work experience for the purpose of registration (with some exceptions); and reducing duplication in examinations, i.e. language proficiency exams.

Province	Health workforce strategy	IEN-specific	ITP-specific
British Columbia	<p>Provincial HHR Plan: BC released the “BC Health Workforce Strategy” in September 2022; four pillar strategy (“retain, redesign, recruit, and train”), with some items beginning in 2022-23; IEHPs are included under the “recruit” pillar.</p> <p>Includes expansion of the BC Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) streams targeting health care workers.</p>	<p>Integrated IEN supports: The 2022 health workforce strategy follows the announcement “Supporting IENs” (April 2022), which consolidated the provincial assessment process for IENs (“triple track assessment”). This established \$9 million in bursaries to support IENs with assessment fees, and created new nurse navigator positions to support assessment & licensing processes. It also supports partnerships between Government of British Columbia, British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives, the Nursing Community Assessment Service, and Health Match BC.</p>	<p>Practice-Ready Assessment: Tripling the number of PRA positions from 32 seats to 96 seats annually by March 2024.</p> <p>Adding residency positions: Expanding the number of family medicine residency seats in the province, with an additional 48 seats available by Fall 2028. It is unclear what proportion will be allocated to ITPs vs Canadian Medical Graduates (CMGs).</p> <p>Associate Physician licensing: “Associate Physician” class of licensing enables ITPs who do not meet registration requirements for independent licensure to practice under supervision; the title has similar registration requirements as “Clinical Assistant” in Manitoba and Nova Scotia, and “Clinical/Surgical Assistant” in Alberta.</p>
Alberta	<p>Nursing Seat Expansion: Ministry of Advanced Education announced a \$20.5 million investment to add 1,338 additional nursing seats in the province (May 2022).</p>	<p>MOU with Philippines: Alberta signed a memorandum of understanding with Government of Philippines to recruit more Filipino nurses. The province also announced \$3.5M in funding to further expand nursing education seats in the province (November 2022).</p> <p>IEN Bridging: University of Alberta launched pilot program in partnership with the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA) to bridge IENs to licensure over 12 weeks, including a 6-9 week clinical placement. (February 2022)</p> <p>Mount Royal University also offers a Bridge to Canadian Nursing (BCN) program.</p>	<p>Practice-Ready Assessment: Alberta has had a PRA program since 2010.</p> <p>In Fall 2022, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) announced a new initiative to accelerate registration of ITPs “trained in certain jurisdictions”. This waives the initial 3-month Preliminary Clinical Assessment period for PRA process (PRA consists of two parts; the first a three-month Preliminary Clinical Assessment where the candidate works under direct observation in the medical practice of a CPSA-approved assessor, and the second a three-month Supervised Practice Assessment period).</p> <p>Alberta Clinical Surgical Assistant Program (ACSAP): The ACSAP program through Alberta Health Services (AHS) provides a pathway for ITPs to become licensed as Clinical/Surgical Assistants and work under supervision in the province.</p>

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<p>Saskatchewan</p>	<p>Provincial HHR Plan: Announced their “Health Human Resources Action Plan” in September 2022, which includes a four-point plan (recruit, train, incentivize, retain) with investments of \$60 million. The plan aims to add 1,000 health care workers to the workforce over the next “several years”.</p> <p>A provincial call is being put out to unlicensed, internationally trained health care workers in the province. Individuals are asked to fill out an assessment form to access navigation services. 4 new health system navigator positions have been added to support this call out. (February 2022)</p> <p>Passed ‘Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Act’ in April 2022; establishing a “Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Office” within the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training.</p>	<p>MOU with Philippines: Government of SK signed an MOU with the Philippines government to exchange research, education, and information about nursing in post-secondary institutions.</p> <p>Expansion of seats: 150 nursing seats are being added to Saskatchewan’s RN/RPN/NP programs via the HHR Action Plan.</p> <p>Accelerated pathways for IENs: Accelerated training, assessment, and licensure pathway for IENs that includes support for individuals’ pre-arrival. The first cohort will arrive in Fall 2022 after completing initial online training.</p>	<p>Practice-Ready Assessment: In April 2022, Government of Saskatchewan announced \$1.1 million to expand number of PRA seats from 36 to 45 annually. Saskatchewan has implemented PRA (SIPPA) since 2011.</p>
<p>Manitoba</p>	<p>Provincial HHR Plan: In November 2022 the Government of Manitoba announced \$200 million allocation for its Health Human Resource Action Plan. This has three pillars: recruit, train, retain. The plan aims to add 2,000 health-care professionals to the provincial health care workforce.</p> <p>Navigation supports: The “IEHP Access Hub” is located in the University of Manitoba and provides navigation supports related to settlement and employment.</p>	<p>Expansion of nursing seats: The 2022 HHR Action Plan will add 400 nurse education seats between multiple training institutions.</p> <p>Supervised Practice for IENs: 2022 HHR Action Plan includes an expansion of Undergraduate Nurse Employee (UNE), providing opportunities for nursing students and IENs to practice under supervision.</p> <p>MOU with the Philippines: Streamlines recruitment & workplace integration for nurses from the Philippines.</p>	<p>Programs for ITPs: Manitoba has Practice-Ready Assessment (PRA) programs available for family and specialty practice. It also offers a “Medical Licensure Program for International Medical Graduates” (MLPIMG). This is a one-year training program for eligible family medicine physicians who require additional training while working towards licensure.</p> <p>Clinical Assistant licensing: Clinical Assistant (CA) licensing is offered in Manitoba, with registration requirements aligned with CA licensing in Nova Scotia, the “Associate Physician” class in BC, and the “Clinical/Surgical Assistant” class in Alberta.</p>

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Ontario	<p>Provincial HHR Plan: Announced ‘A Plan to Stay Open: Health System Stability and Recovery’ in August 2022.</p> <p>Other relevant Legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill 27, “Working for Workers Act, 2021” • Bill 106, “Pandemic Emergency Preparedness Act” <p>Access Hub: The “Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals (IEHPs)” is an arms-length government agency providing programs and services supporting IEHPs.</p>	<p>Tuition support for IENs: Bridging Educational Grant in Nursing was announced in October 2021 and provides tuition support to personal support workers and RPNs to pursue further education. The BEGIN program offers grants of \$6,000 - \$10,000/year. Candidates with additional needs may be eligible for further supports of up to \$5,000 (extra) for subsidies related to materials, tutoring, childcare, and travel costs.</p> <p>Supervised Practice Experience Partnership (CNO and Ontario Health) Announced January 2022; assists internationally educated nursing applicants who have met all registration requirements except language requirements and evidence of recent safe practice. Participants complete a minimum practice experience of 140 hours under supervision of a qualified preceptor in a CNO-approved organization.</p> <p>Preceptor Resource and Education Program in LTC (PREPLTC) Announced in February 2022 the program allocates \$73 million over three years to train and provide clinical placements for over 16,000 personal support worker (PSW) and nursing students.</p> <p>Temporary Class registration for IENs: Temporary Class registration is now available for IENs who have already applied to General Class and received an offer of employment. This enables supervised practice while working towards General Class licensing.</p> <p>Funding for IEN bridging curriculum enhancements: In 2022 the Ministry of Labour,</p>	n/a

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		<p>Training and Skills Development provided \$1.5 million to the Ontario Internationally Educated Nurses Course Consortium (OINCC) to update a successful competency-bridging curriculum for IENs.</p>	
<p>Quebec</p>	<p>Provincial Workforce Strategy: Quebec released the “National Workforce Strategy” in 2018. Some initiatives will indirectly impact IEHPs.</p>	<p>Recruitment from francophone countries: In early 2022, Quebec announced \$65 million to recruit and train approximately 1,000 nurses from francophone countries over 2 year. Funding will be used for training, licensing, and wraparound supports (including childcare). 344 candidates set to arrive in “Fall 2022”.</p> <p>The government announced it would offer financial bonuses to nurses who move from part-time to full-time (\$15K), nurses who have quit and are willing to return (\$12K), and up to \$18K for nurses in regions hit hard by the pandemic. The provinces plans to attract 4,300 nurses back into the system on a full-time basis.</p>	<p>Practice-Ready Assessment: Quebec has implemented PRA for both family and specialty practice in the province and grants a “Restrictive permit” for practice. Quebec also has a unique pathway (similar to PRA) for physicians who completed their education and training in France.</p>
<p>New Brunswick</p>	<p>Provincial HHR Plan: “Stabilizing Health Care: An Urgent Call to Action” (November 2021) aims to develop an integrated health system.</p> <p>IEN Navigator: In 2022, NB expanded the IEN Navigator program (established 2019) to support individuals in other health occupations, and non-health occupations. The program has matched more than 200 IENs with employers to-date.</p>	<p>MOU with India: In November 2022, UNB announced an MOU with India to streamline pathways to practice for RNs from India. This includes enabling nurses to write the NCLEX-RN licensure exam from India.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Nova Scotia</p>	<p>In August 31, 2021, the province established the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment.</p>	<p>Review of IEN licensing: In August 2022, the NS Government announced one-time funding of \$340,000 to the NS College of Nursing to</p>	<p>New Licensing Pathway: Launched a new licensing pathway & streamlined process for ITP. ; Some ITPs are eligible to practice under a “Defined</p>

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	<p>NS has two PNP immigration streams for physicians and added 200 nurse education seats in July 2022.</p>	<p>support a “comprehensive review” of nurse registration in the province. Others changes already implemented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional options to demonstrate language proficiency - Earlier access to registration exams - Streamlining documentation required of internationally educated nurses - Conditional licensing for nurses already registered, licensed and in good standing elsewhere in Canada 	<p>license” (supervised / probationary) for a period of 6-24 months (down from a max of 60 months) (September 2022)</p> <p>New licensing pathway includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientation for incoming ITPs - Shortened period of supervised practice (“defined license”) - Fast-tracking eligibility for independent licensure (after 6-month period) <p>Practice-Ready Assessment: Nova Scotia has implemented PRA for family physicians through the Nova Scotia Practice Ready Assessment Program (NSPRAP).</p> <p>Clinical Assistant licensing: Nova Scotia has regulated the Clinical Assistant (CA) role, similar to Alberta and Manitoba.</p>
<p>PEI</p>	<p>IEHP Recruitment Coordinator: Ministry of Health announced plans to hire IEHP Recruitment Co-Ordinator; in November 2022</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Practice-Ready Assessment: College of Physicians and Surgeons cited plans to partner with other Maritime provinces to discuss expansion of PRA in PEI and Atlantic region. (August 2022)</p>
<p>Newfoundland / Labrador</p>	<p>Legislation to amend regulatory requirements: Bill 1 (An Act to Amend the Medical Act, 2011) and Bill 15 (Fair Registration Practices Act) passed in November 2022. These pieces of legislation expand pathways to practice for out-of-province & internationally trained physicians (including through an “Associate” class of licensing). They also reduce barriers to registration, and enhance reporting requirements for regulatory bodies.</p> <p>‘Extraordinary Every Day’ Campaign: A recruitment campaign designed attract and</p>	<p>IEN Bursary Program: Government of NL allocated \$420,000 to support up to 42 IENs in completing the bridging program offered by the Centre for Nursing Studies (March 2022). The program is followed by a practical component to complement national assessments.</p> <p>BScN Seat Expansion: Increased number of seats in the program by 25% through rural program and remote learning implementation (Oct 2021)</p> <p>‘Engage NL’ Nursing Think Tank: Is a convening of stakeholders including the</p>	<p>Practice-Ready Assessment: PRA is offered in NL through Memorial University.</p> <p>Residency seats for ITPs: An additional 5 seats are now ‘reserved’ for ITPs in Memorial University’s Family Medicine Residency Program.</p>

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	retain healthcare professionals through collaboration between the Provincial Health Professional Recruitment and Retention Office is now housed in the Department of Health and Community Services (July 2022)	Government of NL, Registered Nurses Union, and regional Health Authorities. It is focused on improving HHR including retention, and recruitment of RNs and RNPs. (Feb 2022)	