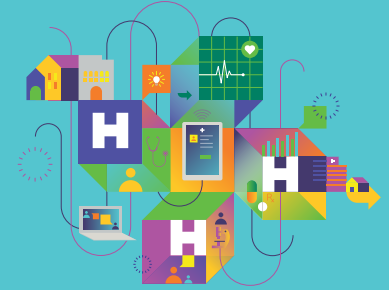


Supporting Hospitals Through the Evolving COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

Need for a Funded Broader Health Human Resource Strategy

FEBRUARY 2022



Providing Immediate Funding to Bolster Staffing Models

Prior to the pandemic, many years of funding restraint resulted in the implementation of staffing models that were as efficient as possible while maintaining quality care. There has been a necessary focus on ensuring agile staffing models to respond to patient care needs in a 24/7 environment, which requires an appropriate mix of full-time and part-time employees. While this situation was well-calibrated prior to the pandemic, it is no longer tenable given the significant impacts of COVID-19.

Given the efficient staffing model that was the norm prior to the pandemic, any vacancies now need to be filled in real-time to ensure that there are no service delivery gaps. An increase in turnover coupled with the need to fill net new positions in a competitive environment poses a real challenge to providing care. Moreover, this has a large impact on the day-to-day workload of existing health care workers who grapple with these demands. **Providing immediate funding to bolster staffing models would create more manageable workloads for staff, help increase retention rates, and allow hospitals to better respond to patient needs.**

At a minimum, as there are new investments in capacity in the near term, there also needs to be corresponding attention paid to the human resource needs to staff these new beds. Ontario's hospitals are grateful for the recent government support for the creation of 3,100 additional beds as well as additional announcements for capacity increases, which will

translate into the need for additional health care workers over and above existing staffing levels. However, Ontario already has the lowest nurses per capita in the country and there is a need to immediately bolster staffing models to create more manageable workloads for staff, help increase retention rates, and allow hospitals to better respond to patient needs.

Recommendation:

➔ To respond to recent and announced capacity increases and to develop more resilient staffing models, **the OHA is recommending funding and government policy support to enable the hiring of at least an additional 10,000 registered nurses and 3,500 registered practical nurses as well as other critical health care workers over the next five years as an immediate step forward at this time.**

