



POLICY OPTIONS FOR OPTIMIZING THE SUPPLY OF REGISTERED NURSES IN NOVA SCOTIA

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This presentation will describe the development of an evidence base designed to inform efforts to optimize Nova Scotia's registered nurse (RN) workforce.

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PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to provide a base of current scientific evidence to inform discussions with Nova Scotia's nursing stakeholders about the kinds of policies and strategies that would help to ensure an adequate future supply of registered nurses (RNs) in Nova Scotia.

FINDINGS/IMPACT/OUTCOMES

If no changes occur to either the health of Nova Scotia's population or how its RNs are deployed and managed, an initial shortage of 185 full-time equivalents (FTEs) will increase to over 800 FTEs by 2024. Any losses in the progress made in recent years in RN education, retention and recruitment would exacerbate any future shortage. A range of individual strategies may reduce future RN shortages, but in isolation would not be sufficient to offset a large shortage. However, a multi-faceted strategy that achieves small further improvements in several aspects of how Nova Scotia's RNs are managed and deployed would offset even a future RN shortage measured in thousands of FTEs. A wide range of strategies are identified in the literature as achieving such improvements.

CONCLUSIONS

Building on recent progress and achieving several further modest improvements would be sufficient to offset even a very large future RN shortage in Nova Scotia. Central to any such strategy will be maximizing retention of practicing RNs and the availability of full-time employment for new graduates.