

# Health Accord Update: Health Human Resources

## Objective

To provide an update on Health Accord NL recommendations relating to health human resource planning in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).

## Practice Points

- 1. Human resources are a key determinant for the quality of health care and health outcomes.
- 2. Health human resources are crucial for population well-being because they provide essential health services, ensuring availability, accessibility, and quality of care that directly impact health outcomes, including physical, mental, and social well-being.
- 3. Recruitment and retention of health professionals is multi-faceted, but is linked directly to health care provider education and training capacities, work-life balance, workload and burnout. These issues along with national and global health provider shortages must be addressed to ensure the sustainability of services and quality of health care in our province.

## Methods

- 1. Data on training seats for health care professionals in NL institutions, trends in vacancy rates for key health professionals, and licensure data for physicians, was provided by the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS).
- 2. Vacancies are a point-in-time statistic (i.e., not cumulative over a timeframe). Data represents vacant positions from a single day in the reporting period, for positions with Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (NLHS).
- 3. Vacant positions in health zones are posted internally and/or externally. The data presented only include externally posted positions. External recruitment postings include vacant positions that are being actively recruited external to the organization and have not been filled through the internal recruitment process. A vacant position is one that is available because the previous incumbent has left the position, or it is a new position.
- 4. Vacancies can be for permanent, temporary, temporary call-in, or casual positions.

- 5. Casual status refers to a type of employment contract described in collective agreements such as those for registered nurses and nurse practitioners and means an employee who works on an occasional or intermittent basis. A casual employee, hired prior to 4 Aug 2023, has no obligation to the employer to come when they are called for work and the employer has no obligation to call any one particular employee. All newly hired casual employees, including existing employees who become casual after 4 Aug 2023, with certain exceptions, are required to accept a minimum of 900 hours each fiscal year.
- 6. Temporary call-in (TCI) status refers to a type of employment contract described in collective agreements such as those for licensed practical nurses and personal care attendants. TCI employees are staff who provide short-term coverage throughout the organization. The employer is obligated to recall TCI employees in order of seniority, and the TCI employee is obligated to accept the shift unless they cannot do so for a justifiable cause (i.e., sick, on approved leave, weekend off, etc.).

## Results

Table 1. Increased Training Seats for Health Care Professionals in NL Institutions

Occupation	Total Seats	Seat Increases
Registered Nurse	363	Added in Fall 2022: Satellite sites in Gander (24), Grand Falls-Windsor (28) and Happy Valley-Goose Bay (20).
Nurse Practitioner	40	20 seats added in Fall 2023.
Practical Nurse	333	32 part-time seats added in 2025.
Primary Care Paramedic	51	College of the North Atlantic added 24 seats (12 in St. John's and 12 in Stephenville) in 2023. The program is also offered by a private training institution.
Emergency Medical Responder to Primary Care Paramedic	18	Added in Sep 2023.

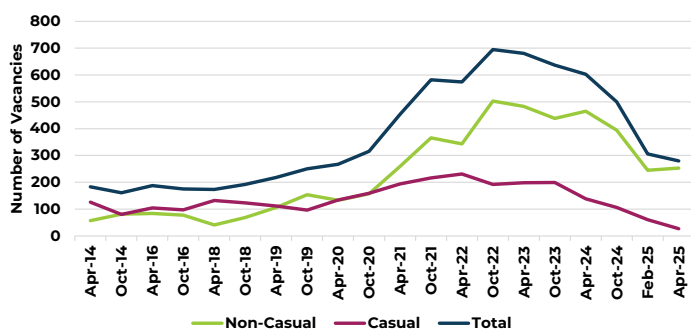
**Table 2. Increased Number and Proportion of Undergraduate Training Seats Available to NL Students, Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University**

Year	Proportion of NL Seats
2022	60/80
2023	65/80
2024	74/85
2025	84/90

**Table 3. New Postgraduate Medical Training Positions in NL, Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University**

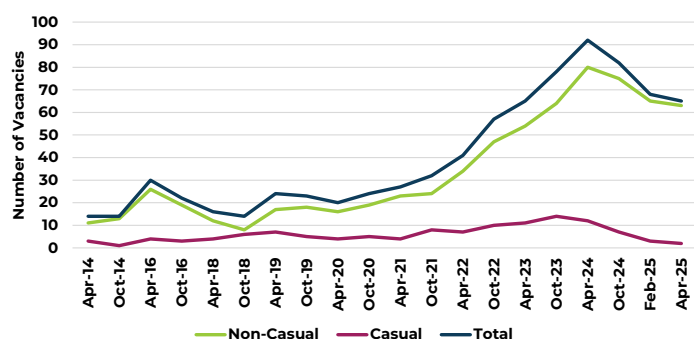
Residency Program	Seats
Family Medicine	5 for International Medical Graduates
Internal Medicine	2 for Canadian Medical Graduates and 2 for International Medical Graduates

- In addition to the nine new postgraduate medical training positions placements, the Faculty of Medicine has expanded Care of the Elderly Training for Family Medicine to four learners and is creating a Geriatric Medicine Specialist Training Program.



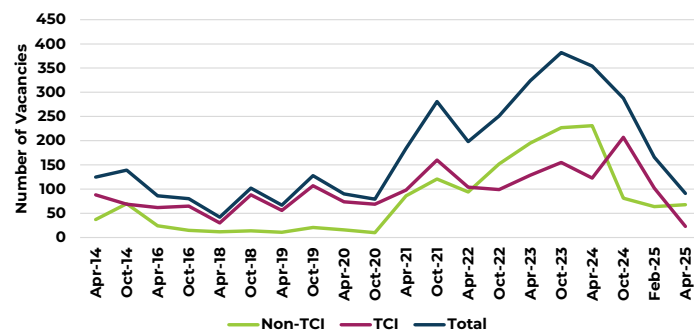
**Figure 1. Number of Vacancies for Registered Nurses in NL, Apr 2014–Apr 2025**

- The number of vacancies for registered nurses has decreased from a peak of 695 in Oct 2022 to 280 in Apr 2025



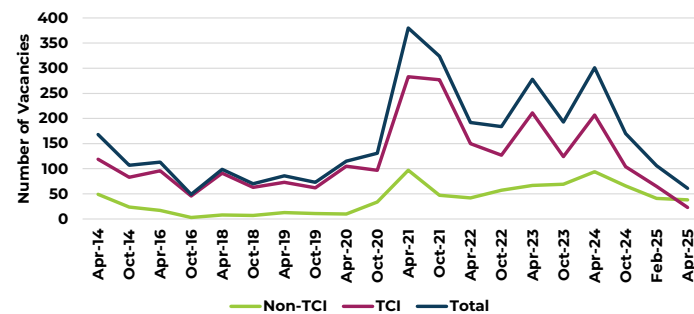
**Figure 2. Number of Vacancies for Nurse Practitioners in NL, Apr 2014–Apr 2025**

- The number of vacancies for nurse practitioners has decreased from a peak of 92 in Apr 2024 to 65 in Apr 2025.



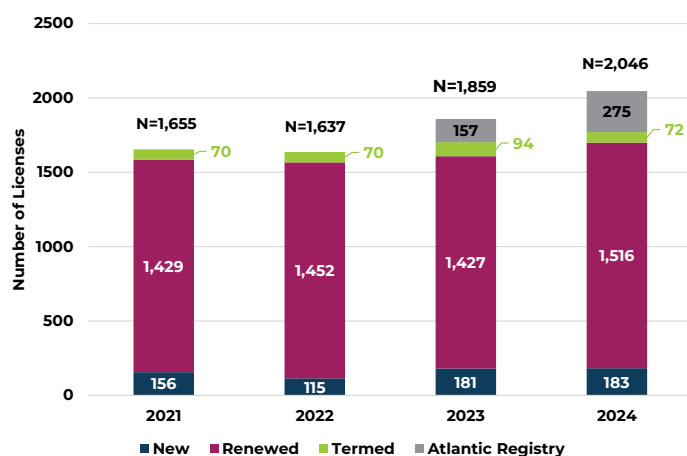
**Figure 3. Number of Vacancies for Licensed Practical Nurses in NL, Apr 2014–Apr 2025**

- The number of vacancies for licensed practical nurses has decreased from a peak of 382 in Oct 2023 to 91 in Apr 2025.



**Figure 4. Number of Vacancies for Personal Care Attendants in NL, Apr 2014–Apr 2025**

- The number of vacancies for personal care attendants has decreased from a peak of 380 in Apr 2021 to 61 in Apr 2025.



Note: Termed refers to locum licenses.  
N means total number

**Figure 5. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador (CPSNL) Licensing Statistics – Four Year Trend, 2021–2024**

- From 2021 to 2024, there was a 7% increase (1,655 to 1,771) in the number of physicians licensed in NL (exclusive of Atlantic licenses).

## Conclusions

1. Training seats have increased in NL for a number of health care professions but work still remains to fill these seats.
2. Trends show improvement in the number of vacant positions in NLHS. While the number of vacancies has decreased, challenges remain in rural and remote areas of the province and in specific areas of practice.
3. The number of licensed physicians in NL has increased but further recruitment and retention is needed to ensure timely, high quality health care.
4. Overall, increased training seats for health care professionals, vacancy reductions and increased licensure of physicians could lead to a more sustainable and quality health system that improves health outcomes and population well-being in NL. Further in-depth evaluation will be needed.