

March 2024

Nursing Retention Toolkit

The Association of Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC (NNPBC) is thrilled to see the release of the [Nursing Retention Toolkit: Improving the Working Lives of Nurses in Canada](#) (the "Toolkit"). Led by the Chief Nursing Officer of Canada, Dr. Leigh Chapman, and in collaboration with nursing leadership from across the country, NNPBC was delighted to participate in the development of this for nurses-by-nurses toolkit. Eight identified themes are explored in depth. These include:

- Inspired leadership
- Flexible & balanced ways of working
- Organizational mental health and wellness supports
- Professional development & mentorship
- Reduced administrative burden
- Strong management & communication
- Clinical governance & infrastructure
- Safe staffing practices

Each theme is presented with corresponding work that employers and/or provincial health authorities can undertake to affect positive change to working conditions for nurses.

It is well established that the health system struggles with service delivery and that demand is outpacing the supply of health professionals. In a recent Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) report entitled "[The state of the health workforce in Canada, 2022](#)", the growth rate of the majority of nurses has slowed or levelled (with only NPs seeing a 9% increase), a significant increase in overtime was reported, and the number of nurses in direct care roles is not keeping pace with an aging population. Nurses are frequently challenged by untenably high workloads and chronic understaffing, leaving the profession at a crisis point which has had a corresponding negative impact on population health.

These data points underscore the need for critical strategies to retain nurses in their positions. While the focus of the Toolkit is on retaining nursing professionals, the underpinning anchor is on a broad complement of strategies that, when applied, enables the quality practice environments that nurses and patients deserve.

"This toolkit is a foundational piece of work for nursing professionals across the country as strategies to retain nurses are critical to improving patient outcomes. Without nurses, the health system would simply cease to function. Using the right tools to support nurses is crucial, as it not only benefits the profession but is key to delivering optimal care to those we are privileged to serve. Canadians deserve a well-supported nursing workforce with higher levels of job satisfaction, and who are empowered to be leaders in their workplaces. I applaud Dr. Chapman and all of those involved in the creation of this important Toolkit", noted Bernice Budz, NNPBC's CEO.

Nurses are skilled and educated experts in relational practice and, as leaders, are well positioned to engage in the kind of collaborative leadership practices that are recognized as essential for health care transformation. NNPBC looks forward to ongoing collaboration in implementing the Toolkit and to working with both provincial and national colleagues in doing so.