

Health Human Resources Product Review, 2021



The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) is committed to ensuring that its long-standing products, including its data sets, indicators and reports, continue to resonate with stakeholders and reflect the evolving Canadian health care landscape.

In May 2021, CIHI completed a product review of the health human resources (HHR) suite of releases (the HHR product), which comprises 6 annual releases: Nursing in Canada, Occupational therapists in Canada, Pharmacists in Canada, Physicians in Canada, Physiotherapists in Canada and Canada's health care providers. The HHR product provides essential information to federal, provincial and territorial governments, health systems and other organizations about HHR and their distribution within broader health systems to deliver care.

The review followed a rigorous protocol and produced a number of key findings, which were accompanied by a detailed implementation plan.

Process of the product review

Guided by an external reference group, the product review consisted of an international scan, focus groups, informant interviews, a review of the product's online usage statistics and an online stakeholder questionnaire. Pan-Canadian representation was included in the feedback with a balance between government stakeholders, including health authorities, and non-government stakeholders (i.e., regulatory bodies, professional associations, unions, educational institutions, think tanks and academia).

Key findings

The product review affirmed the value of CIHI's HHR information for stakeholders, and their trust in CIHI's high standards. Stakeholders viewed CIHI's data as a reliable source of information for the main regulated health providers in Canada.

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Based on stakeholder feedback, 5 recommendations were developed to ensure the HHR product continues to be relevant in the evolving Canadian health care landscape:

1. Streamline and integrate HHR data into a multidisciplinary product, and improve user functionality and data visualization to provide a more cohesive picture of HHR in Canada's health systems.
2. Enhance the timeliness of data, and consider reporting forecasted supply and/or provisional data.
3. Increase reporting of comparable pan-Canadian HHR data on regulated and unregulated providers at the provincial, territorial and regional levels to address information gaps. Ensure interprofessional comparability.
4. Enhance reporting of socio-demographic characteristics and employment specifications to increase the level of detail available across providers, and explore opportunities to report by service area, as well as on the demand and need for health providers.
5. Release short multidisciplinary analyses on health system issues to support and bring to light emerging trends (e.g., shifts in care settings, the contribution of unregulated providers, impacts of HHR in long-term care).

Implementation plan

Taking into account stakeholder priority needs, and the time and investment required to implement the recommendations, CIHI has proposed a phased implementation plan for the recommendations over the next few years.

Activities to enhance future HHR releases are already underway and a number of recommendations will be incorporated into releases within the next year. These include streamlining the HHR content, embedding multi-professional reporting and improving data comparability across Canada.

Improvements in the coming years will include enhancing HHR reporting with further socio-demographic and employment information, supplementing HHR data with new regulated and unregulated providers (i.e., personal support workers), improving user functionality and data visualization, exploring forecasting and migration methodologies, and developing a series of analytical briefs relevant to health policy in Canada.



For more information on the HHR product review or to request the complete HHR product review report (English only), please email productreview@cihi.ca



What's next?

Recommendations from this product review provide a foundation for CIHI's Health Workforce Strategy, which is currently being developed in anticipation of CIHI's upcoming 2022 to 2027 strategic plan.

The next CIHI products slated for review include those related to health system inputs and characteristics, and pharmaceuticals. Details will be shared as they become available.