

Canada's Health Workforce: A Snapshot

Registered nurses

- The growth rate of this workforce was steady at close to 2% per year over six years, with a workforce of 257,961 RNs in 2007.
- There were 782 RNs per 100,000 Canadians, a number which remained relatively steady since 2005. The highest ratio previously recorded was 824 per 100,000 in the early 1990s.
- The average age of RNs in 2007 was 45.1, compared to 44.5 in 2003.

(*Regulated Nurses: Trends, 2003 to 2007*, Canadian Institute for Health Information)



Occupational therapists (OTs)

- Based on an average age of 38.9, OTs were a young health profession that was predominantly female (92.5%) in 2007.
- 8.1% of the OT workforce was educated outside of Canada, with just less than half of these having obtained their education in either the U.S. or the U.K.
- 41% of OTs worked fewer than 36 hours per week.

(*Workforce Trends of Occupational Therapists in Canada, 2007*, Canadian Institute for Health Information)

Pharmacists (in eight provinces)

- Pharmacists in selected provinces were mostly female. Nova Scotia had the highest proportion of female pharmacists (68.7%), while Newfoundland and Labrador had the lowest (48.1%).
- More than 75% of pharmacists worked in the community setting, while fewer than 20% worked in hospitals.
- 64% of pharmacists younger than 40 in 2007 were female, compared to only 27% of pharmacists 60 and older.

(*Workforce Trends of Pharmacists for Selected Provinces and Territories in Canada, 2007*, Canadian Institute for Health Information)

Physicians

- There were 63,682 active physicians in Canada in 2007; this represented an increase of 7.1% between 2003 and 2007.

Over the same five-year period, the Canadian population increased by 4.2%.

- The total ratio of physicians to 100,000 population increased from 187 in 2003, to 192 in 2007.
- For the fourth year in a row, the number of physicians returning from abroad was greater than the number moving abroad (142 versus 122).
- In 2007, 56% of family physicians younger than 40 were women, compared to 16% of family physicians 60 and older.
- The average age of doctors in Canada continued to rise, reaching 49.6 in 2007. The average age of family physicians was 48.9 and the average of specialists was 50.5.

(*Supply, Distribution and Migration of Canadian Physicians, 2007*, Canadian Institute for Health Information)

Physiotherapists

- The physiotherapist workforce increased 11% over the past six years from 14,471 in 2001, to 16,108 in 2006, compared to growth in the general population of 5.2%.
- Physiotherapists were predominantly female (78.7%).
- 40% of physiotherapists worked in a hospital setting, while 60% worked in professional practice, community or other settings.

(*Workforce Trends of Physiotherapists in Canada, 2007*, Canadian Institute for Health Information)