

Executive Summary

The crisis in health human resources has been developing over the past decade. The recent pandemic exacerbated the staffing shortage and pushed hospitals across Ontario to rely on private agencies as a primary staffing tool. As a result, healthcare spending on these agencies have exploded and there is a need for a more financially sustainable way forward.

The key findings of our research identified:

- The current cost of travel nurse agencies to hospitals at \$140 per hour, totaling over \$168 million in 2022 with over 1.2 million hours worked
- A current staffing shortage in the healthcare system by over 5000 nurses
- A predicted spend of \$4 billion over a five year timeframe if the staffing shortage is not resolved

We explored potential strategies forward such as improvements to nursing education and cultural reform of the nursing profession. To provide relief to the healthcare system within the 5 year timeframe, we detailed a recommendation of two actions for the Ontario Health Minister to take:

1. Introduction of legislation to ban the use of travel staff agencies by Ontario Hospitals
2. Creation of an internal travel agency to recruit and supply nurses internally within the Ontario hospital network