

Government of Northwest Territories / Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

**Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System  
Human Resources Plan  
2021-2024**

Systeme de santé et de services sociaux des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

**Plan des ressources humaines  
2021 à 2024**



*Le présent document contient la traduction française du sommaire.*



# Table of Contents

- 5 | Message from the Minister
- 6 | Terminology
- 7 | Our Vision
- 8 | Executive Summary
- 10 | About the NWT Health & Social Services System
- 12 | Living and Working in the Northwest Territories
- 17 | Developing the Plan

## Strategic Goals

- 18 | *Informed Decision-Making Related to Workforce Planning, Recruitment, and Retention*
- 19 | *Developing and Supporting Indigenous and Northern Populations in the Pursuit of Health and Social Services Careers*
- 21 | *Enhanced Attraction and Recruitment Strategies and Tools*
- 23 | *Increased Employee Engagement through Organizational Change and Leadership Development*
- 25 | *Support Quality Training and Targeted Development*
- 27 | *Enhanced Health, Safety, and Wellness Support Systems*
- 29 | Moving Forward
- 31 | Appendix A: HSS System Demographics
- 33 | Appendix B: Insights into the HSS System
- 35 | Appendix C: Strategic Goals at a Glance
- 37 | Appendix D: Year 1 Highlights



# Message from the Minister



I am pleased to present the *Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System Human Resources Plan 2021 – 2024*.

The plan has been established with a vision of a robust and representative workforce, supported by strong leadership and an organizational culture rooted in the principles of cultural safety and anti-racism. Achieving this vision will allow our workforce to thrive, in turn supporting continuous improvement in the delivery of the Health and Social Services System goals under Best Health, Best Care for a Better Future for the residents of the Northwest Territories. This plan aligns with the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly and the Department of Health and Social Services System’s Strategic Planning Framework, where a key aim of the system is a stable and representative workforce.

An overarching key principle guiding the plan is a commitment to addressing systemic racism and promoting cultural safety and anti-racism within the HSS System.

The importance of a robust and talented health and social services workforce has been underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic. I acknowledge the sacrifice and commitment our health and social services professionals have made, and I am proud of and inspired by the incredible perseverance, dedication, and innovation demonstrated in the face of this adversity. We are aware of the challenges our health and social services system faces with recruitment and retention, and we have heard the calls for action.

2021 marked the five year anniversary since the formation of the current Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System. Through the successful implementation of this plan, we will continue to build upon the work of the past five-years, with a focus on creating a stronger and more collaborative culture for our workforce. This is a stepping-stone in developing and increasing an Indigenous and Northern health and social services workforce while promoting cultural safety and anti-racism. Each year we will report on the progress of the plan and continue to identify the evolving human resource needs of our workforce.

Sincerely,

Hon. Julie Green

Minister of Health and Social Services  
Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities  
Minister Responsible for Seniors

# Terminology

## ***Indigenous Population / Workforce***

refers to those persons who are descendants of the Dene, Inuit, Cree, or Métis people, indigenous to the present boundaries of the Northwest Territories and includes any aboriginal persons resident at birth pursuant to Section 23 of the Vital Statistics Act and any Canadian aboriginal persons who have lived more than half of their life in the Northwest Territories. While Indigenous is the preferred terminology when referencing the Indigenous population, within the context of the Affirmative Action Policy, and hiring / workforce metrics, the Indigenous population / workforce may also be referred to as Indigenous Aboriginal, or Priority 1 (P1).

## ***Northern Population / Workforce***

are non-aboriginal persons born in the Northwest Territories or persons who have lived more than half their life in the Northwest Territories. Within the context of the Affirmative Action Policy, and hiring / workforce metrics, the Northern population / workforce may also be referred to as Indigenous Non-Aboriginal, or Priority 2 (P2).

## ***Resident / Resident Workforce***

refers to persons who are living in the Northwest Territories.

## ***Recruitment***

refers to the process of attracting, screening, hiring, and ultimately onboarding qualified job candidates.

## ***Employee Retention***

refers to an organization's ability to prevent employee turnover, or the number of people who leave their job in a certain period, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

# Our Vision

Best health, best care, better future.

## HR Plan Vision

A robust and representative workforce, committed to excellence, supported by strong leadership and an organizational culture rooted in the principles of relationship-based care, cultural safety, and anti-racism.



# Executive Summary

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 marked the five-year anniversary of the consolidation of six of the health and social services authorities into the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority. Since that time, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System (HSS System) has grown and evolved towards a more unified and collaborative system. With this change comes the need for a shared approach to supporting our workforce, so that it can succeed in delivering the best care possible to residents of the Northwest Territories and a better future for the NWT HSS System.

The 2021 – 2024 NWT HSS System Human Resources Plan (HR Plan) represents a collaborative approach to strategic human resource planning and support across the entire HSS System, including the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and the three health and social services authorities - the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA), the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA), and the Tłı̄chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA). It provides an overview of the opportunities and challenges currently facing the HSS System, along with the activities being implemented over the next three years.

This HR Plan was created with the support of the department and three health and social services authorities, with input from HR stakeholders and HSS System leaders, HR metrics and data, and the results of the Worklife Pulse Surveys.

Through the development of the HR Plan, six strategic goals were identified:

- 1. Informed Decision-Making Related to Workforce Planning, Recruitment, and Retention**
- 2. Developing and Supporting Indigenous and Northern Populations in the Pursuit of Health and Social Services Careers**
- 3. Enhanced Attraction and Recruitment Strategies and Goals**
- 4. Increased Employee Engagement through Organizational Change and Leadership Development**
- 5. Support Quality Training and Targeted Development**
- 6. Enhanced Health, Safety, and Wellness Support Systems**

Through the continued, successful implementation of goals and objectives outlined in the plan, the NWT HSS System will grow into a stronger and increasingly cohesive organization. It will continue to mature and thrive towards its vision of a robust and collaborative workforce, supported by strong leadership and an organizational culture rooted in the principles of cultural safety and anti-racism. It will help to ensure that the HSS System has the workforce required to effectively and efficiently provide health and social services to the residents of the Northwest Territories.



# Sommaire

Le 1<sup>er</sup> août 2021 a marqué le cinquième anniversaire de la fusion de six administrations des services de santé et des services sociaux pour former l'Administration des services de santé et des services sociaux des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (ASTNO). Depuis, le système de santé et des services sociaux s'est développé pour devenir un système davantage unifié et qui favorise la collaboration. Ce changement appelle une approche concertée pour appuyer la main-d'œuvre, afin qu'elle puisse offrir les meilleurs soins possible aux Ténos et contribuer à un avenir prometteur pour le système de santé et des services sociaux ténos.

Le plan des ressources humaines du système des services de santé et des services sociaux pour 2021 à 2024 représente une approche concertée d'appui et de planification stratégiques pour les ressources humaines de l'ensemble du système, y compris le ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) et les trois administrations de services de santé et de services sociaux : l'Administration des services de santé et des services sociaux de Hay River (ASSSSHR), l'ASTNO, et l'Agence de services communautaires ṯı̱çı̱ (ASCT). Le plan donne un aperçu des possibilités et des enjeux avec lesquels le système doit composer actuellement, de même que des activités en cours de mise en œuvre pour les trois prochaines années.

Ce plan des ressources humaines a été élaboré grâce à l'appui du MSSS et des trois administrations des services de santé et des services sociaux, aux réflexions de différents acteurs des ressources humaines, et aux diverses mesures et données pertinentes colligées, notamment les résultats des enquêtes de 2019 sur la vie professionnelle.

Six objectifs stratégiques sont ressortis de l'exercice. Les voici :

- 1. Prise de décision éclairée dans la planification, le recrutement et la rétention de la main-d'œuvre**
- 2. Formation et appui des populations autochtones et nordiques dans les carrières en santé et services sociaux**
- 3. Stratégies intensifiées et objectifs d'attraction et de recrutement haussés**
- 4. Motivation accrue des employés soutenue par le changement organisationnel et le développement du leadership**
- 5. Soutien de la formation de qualité et du développement ciblé**
- 6. Systèmes améliorés de santé, de sécurité et de soutien au mieux-être**

En s'appliquant à réaliser les objectifs fixés dans le plan, les représentants du système de santé et des services sociaux des TNO parviendront à augmenter sa fiabilité et sa cohésion.

Le plan continuera de mûrir et d'évoluer vers l'idéal d'une main-d'œuvre concertée et fiable, soutenue par un leadership fort et une culture organisationnelle ancrée dans les principes de respect culturel et d'antiracisme. Le système sera ainsi animé par la main-d'œuvre nécessaire à la prestation efficace des services de santé et des services sociaux pour l'ensemble de la population ténos.

# About the NWT Health and Social Services System

The NWT HSS System represents a partnership between the Department of Health and Social Services and the three authorities. This partnership is built on shared goals and values, working towards a unified vision of *Best Health, Best Care, for a Better Future*.

The HSS System has a workforce of approximately 2,200 indeterminate and term employees, representing nearly 10% of the Northwest Territories labour force. This workforce supports health and social services care over an area approximately 1.2 million km<sup>2</sup> in size, serving a population of 43,000 residents. Slightly more than half the population is Dene, Metis, Inuvialuit, Cree, Inuit, and Indigenous peoples from other parts of Canada.

Together, the three health and social services authorities function under a one-system approach and are governed by the Northwest Territories Leadership Council, with Regional Wellness Councils that provide advice and valuable input to the HSS System on the needs and priorities of the residents in their geographic regions.





# Living and Working in the Northwest Territories

The unique geography and demographics of the Northwest Territories, alongside the one-system approach of the HSS System, create many unique opportunities and challenges related to the recruitment and retention of health and social services professionals, and the delivery of services to Northwest Territories residents.

## Geography:

With a population density of 0.04 persons/km<sup>2</sup> in the Northwest Territories, the geography of the territory presents several challenges to the HSS System. Of the 33 communities in the territory, ten have less than 200 residents, and only six have over 1,000 residents. In terms of accessibility, four communities are without highway access, and 10 communities have winter highway access only. As a result, vulnerabilities and challenges to service delivery and staffing exist, particularly in smaller communities where the system and the government have limited capacity and staff to deliver the resources, expertise, and capacity required, particularly during unexpected increases in demand.

Creative problem-solving and evolving infrastructure can help meet the needs of NWT residents while addressing geography-related challenges. This includes requiring staff to travel from other communities on a scheduled basis, and creating additional supports for staff working in rural and remote settings. Improved internet speeds are increasing the availability of telehealth in communities and expanding highway infrastructure across the territory will increase year-round access to care for residents.



## Service Delivery Costs:

A significant threat to the long-term sustainability of the HSS System is the incredible financial and service demand placed on the system. Based on projections from the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI), the 2021 total health spending (public and private) per NWT resident (\$20,365) is over 2.5 times higher than the average cost per Canadian.

In the NWT, these high costs and pressures can be attributed to increasing costs of services and increasing volumes of patients/client utilizing services. The NWT population fares worse in a number of life style indicators such as: daily smoking, heavy drinking, and obesity. These can all have serious short-term and long-term consequences such as injury, cancer, circulatory, and other chronic diseases and are often linked to poorer social determinants of health. As the HSS System evolves, there are increasing opportunities to mitigate costs through a one-system approach in support of shared services and initiatives.

## Effects of Colonialism and Racism in Canada:

Another significant challenge faced by the NWT HSS System is that mainstream institutions, like health and social services, cannot be separated from the legacy of colonialism and racism in Canada.

This legacy is most evident in disproportionate inequities experienced by Indigenous peoples today. Systemic racism describes how mainstream institutions, including the public service, normalize and condone, often unintentionally, long standing racist ideas and beliefs into policies, practices, and norms. This results in a system that inherently privileges the ideas and needs of the dominant white population while disadvantaging non-white racial groups, like Indigenous peoples. In turn, systemic racism contributes to inequities for Indigenous peoples. Within health and social services, these inequities impact access to services and quality of care received by Indigenous clients, resulting in inadequate outcomes.

The NWT HSS System acknowledges that it is not immune to systemic racism and in 2013 established a new division to address inequities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents, which includes a priority focus on cultural safety. The new division works in partnership with all program areas of the health and social services system to advance commitments under the cultural safety action plan, including specific actions within the HR Plan to increase Indigenous employment. One critical pathway to achieving a culturally safe and anti-racist system is having a more diverse workforce that reflects the population it serves.

## Recruitment & Retention

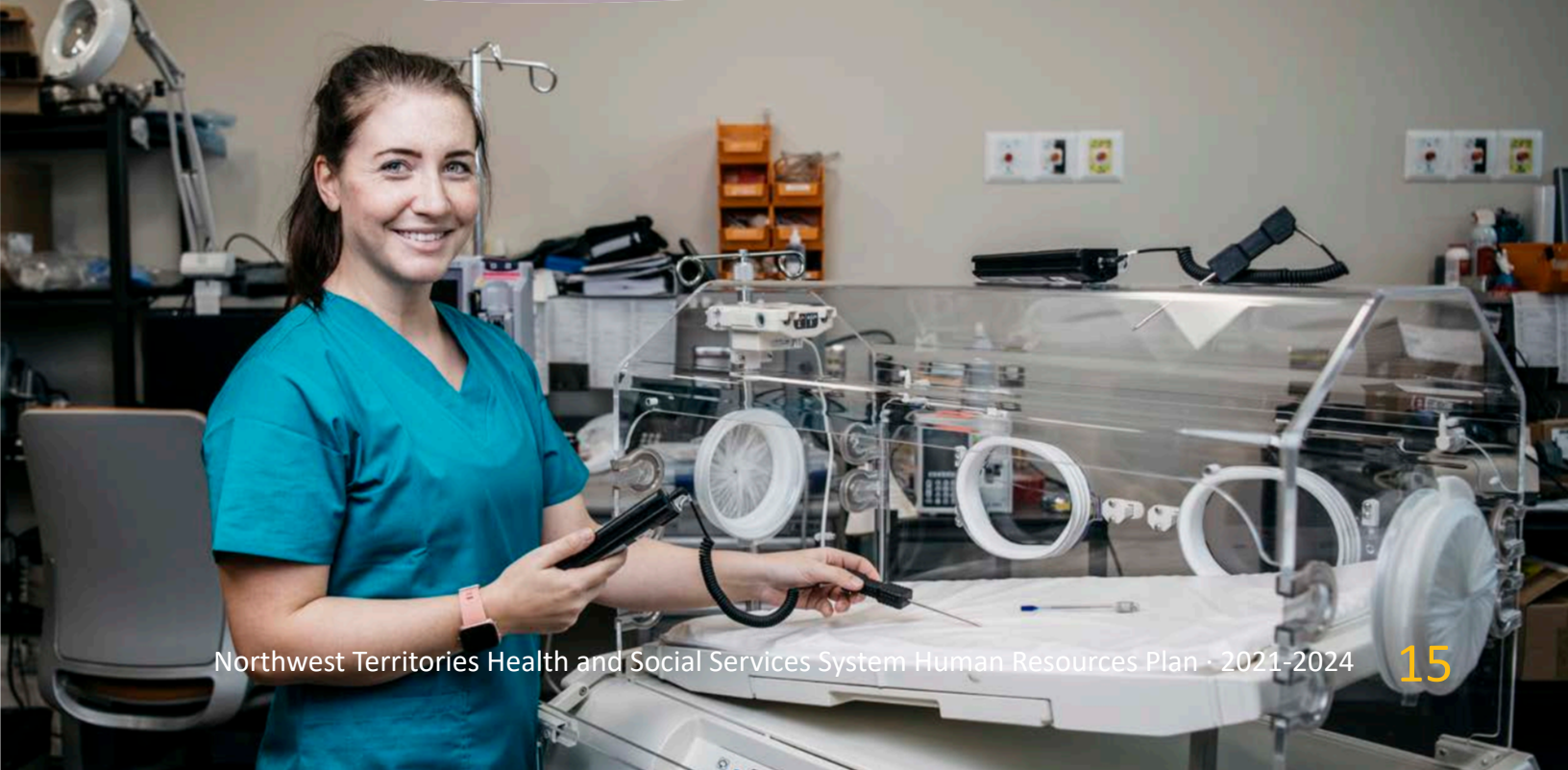
Operating within these realities, the HSS System faces many unique challenges, but also many unique opportunities.

## Challenges: Recruitment & Retention

- Higher cost of living.
- Geographic remoteness.
- Existence of systemic racism within the HSS System.
- Availability of housing and childcare, particularly in smaller communities.
- Limited ability to offer recruitment and retention premiums in hard-to-fill positions.
- Limited access to territory-based education and professional development opportunities.
- Under-representation of Indigenous peoples employed, including in senior management.
- Canada-wide shortages of health and social services (HSS) professionals.
- Reduced work/life balance and increased workload.
- Impacts of COVID-19 on existing staffing shortages, work/life balance, and mental health of workforce.

## Opportunities: Recruitment & Retention

- Broad scope of practice rarely available in other parts of Canada.
- Strong sense of community.
- Proximity to nature.
- Increased Indigenous employee supports including establishment of Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism unit, Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training, and the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework.
- One-system approach creates more opportunities for employee movement within the System.
- Competitive wages and generous benefits.
- Unique salaried model for physicians not interested in managing their own practice or working within a fee-for-service model.
- Increased opportunities for online education, including Aurora College online and blended programs.
- Future creation of a Polytechnic University in the Northwest Territories, offering increased local health and social services education and professional development opportunities.
- Low median age for NWT residents compared to the rest of Canada, representing opportunities to inspire Indigenous and Northern youth to pursue HSS careers.







# Developing the Plan

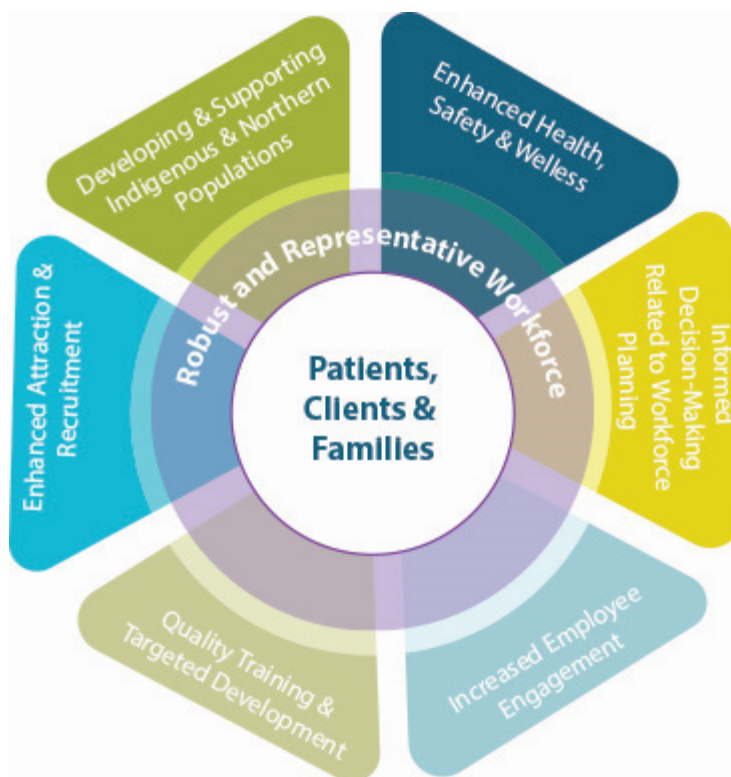
The HR Plan was developed with the guidance and support of the NWT HSS System HR Plan Working Group (working group), with representatives from the Department of Health and Social Services – Community, Culture, and Innovation, the Department of Finance – Human Resources Branch, and the three health and social services authorities.

The overall strategic direction of the plan is guided by the 2019 – 2023 mandate and priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly, and the priorities of the Department of Health and Social Services, as defined within the 2021 – 2024 Business Plan.

Within the strategy, key goals and objectives have also been identified to better gather employee input moving forward, through pulse surveys, exit and entry surveys and interviews, strengthened communications between HSS System partners, and outcome-based performance measures derived from employee feedback. This collective input will not only serve to inform the next human resources plan, but will also allow for greater adaptability in meeting workforce needs over the lifetime of the current plan.

Guided by the working group, strategic direction from the Legislative Assembly and senior management, divisional work plans, and employee input through the Worklife Pulse Survey, six goals have been identified to support the HSS System in achieving its human resources vision.

## Strategic Goals



# 1. Informed Decision-Making Related to Workforce Planning, Recruitment, and Retention

Over the next three years, it will be a priority of the HSS System to improve its understanding and analysis of HR metrics and analytics. This in turn will help to support informed, evidence-based decisions related to the workforce and workforce planning. Several objectives have been identified to help achieve this goal.

**Identify factors that contribute to talent acquisition, hiring, and retention challenges, such as high turnover and vacancies.**

This will be achieved by:

- Gaining a better understanding of factors that impact attraction, hiring, and retention efforts, to support informed decision-making.
- Introducing entry surveys, to better understand the attraction, recruitment, and onboarding experiences of new employees.
- Providing exit surveys and/or interviews of exiting employees, including physicians, to identify factors contributing to avoidable, voluntary employee turnover.

**Monitor and analyze trends in the national labour force and within the HSS System workforce in support of effective organizational and labour force planning.**

This will be achieved by:

- Conducting quarterly vacancy reviews to identify vacancies and vacancy trends, and current and future recruitment needs.
- Continued support and expansion of position tracking and the screening criteria project in support of workforce planning, including recommendations on streamlining position requirements to ensure qualifications / experience do not exceed job requirements.
- Conducting a quarterly analysis of recruitment activity trends within the HSS System.
- Completing an annual national labour force review and analysis in support of HSS System workforce planning.

**Collaborate with staff to gain feedback related to recruitment and retention to identify opportunities for improvement.**

This will be achieved through:

- Collaboration between the HSS System and the Department of Finance, HR Branch to help address HSS specific challenges.
- Opportunities to provide input on physician contracts to reflect recruitment and retention needs, trends, and initiatives during the physician contract negotiations.

## 2. Developing and Supporting Indigenous and Northern Populations in the Pursuit of Health and Social Services Careers

It is essential that the HSS System work to support the development of the Indigenous and Northern population into HSS careers. This will help address current and future hiring needs, and support a more representative workforce for culturally safe care to Indigenous and Northern populations. Several objectives have been identified to help achieve this goal.

### **Inspire Indigenous and Northern populations to pursue careers within the HSS System as HSS professionals.**

This will be achieved through:

- The establishment of HSS and medical bursary programs to support Indigenous and Northern students in pursuing careers in hard-to-fill HSS professions.
- A regularly updated Health and Social Services Career Guidebook, highlighting careers, educational requirements, demand, and salaries for a variety of HSS professions.
- Attendance at career and health fairs in Northwest Territories communities.
- Supporting the annual Take Our Kids to Work Day event each November.
- The creation of an intensive, one-week annual Health and Social Services Career Camp for students from communities across the Northwest Territories.
- The creation of an HSS Youth Mentorship Program.
- The launch of the Graduate Transition Program, a program designed to support the successful transition of Indigenous and Northern post-secondary graduates into HSS careers in the Northwest Territories.

### **Promote and access GNWT programs geared towards the development and attraction of Indigenous and Northern populations.**

This will be achieved by taking advantage of a variety of employment programs supported through the Department of Finance, including:

- The Summer Student Employment Program
- The Regional Recruitment Program
- The Graduate Internship Program
- The Indigenous Career Gateway Program



Between 2016 and 2020, the HSS System hired an average of 84 summer students per year, including 48.7% Indigenous students (P1) and 47.7% Northern students (P2).

### 3. Enhanced Attraction and Recruitment Strategies and Tools

As the primary employer for most regulated health and social services professionals within the Northwest Territories, the HSS System faces the challenge of having a limited supply of locally available, ready-to-work professionals not already employed within the HSS System. The HSS System must therefore have enhanced attraction and recruitment strategies and tools in place to address vacancies in specialized and hard-to-fill positions. This will be achieved through the means outlined below.

**Establish meaningful connections with students and graduates considering the HSS System for future employment opportunities, with an emphasis on hard-to-fill positions.**

This will be achieved by:

- Creating an HSS Student Talent Network, including digital newsletters targeted at students and youth interested in HSS careers.
- Implementing HSS System-wide clinical observership and job shadowing guidelines.
- Expanding upon existing opportunities for practicum and student placements, including medical learners, to cultivate an interest in future career and life opportunities in the Northwest Territories.
- Continuing to deliver the Family Medicine Residency Program, in collaboration with the University of Alberta.



Between July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, the NTHSSA welcomed 91 individual Medical Learners to the NWT on medical electives.

## Create, support, and evaluate recruitment strategies and initiatives that attract quality talent to the HSS System.

This will be achieved through:

- The delivery of compelling, targeted marketing campaigns for HSS System employment opportunities, including campaigns targeted at physicians.
- Continued promotion of the Northwest Territories, through the PracticeNWT brand, as an exceptional place for HSS professionals to live, work, and expand their opportunities.
- Expanded online and social media presence.
- The development of a defined process for attracting and recruiting bilingual talent.
- The development of standard streamlined procedures for recruitment practices, with a set of support tools for hard-to-recruit professions, including physicians.
- Ongoing collaboration between the three authorities and the Department of Finance, HR Branch in the targeted recruitment and attraction of HSS professionals.
- Ongoing collaboration between the three authorities in the recruitment of physicians.
- Talent networks and digital newsletters, targeted at HSS professionals and physicians considering the HSS System for current or future employment opportunities.
- The creation of an Ambassador Program, supporting existing staff to attract and recruit new staff, including physicians, to the HSS System.
- The expansion of a knowledge base of frequently asked questions for job seekers and current staff, including physicians.
- Enhanced support of recruitment activities at in-person and virtual conferences and career fairs targeting hard-to-fill HSS positions, including physicians.



In 2021/22, the PracticeNWT website had 32,134 unique visitors, an increase of 52% from 2020/21.



In 2020, 441 new hires and rehires took place within the HSS System, compared to 230 exits.



There were 520 competitions advertised on the GNWT Careers page for HSS System positions in 2020.

This accounted for 34.6% of all competitions advertised across the GNWT.

## 4. Increased Employee Engagement through Organizational Change and Leadership Development

Employee retention relies heavily upon an engaged, satisfied workforce. Engagement is influenced by several factors, including a healthy and safe workplace culture, organizational communication and programs designed to empower employees, and effective supports for management and leadership to succeed. Several objectives have been identified to help achieve increased employee engagement.

### **Support an organizational culture focused on cultural safety and anti-racism within the HSS System.**

This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring management participate in at least one Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training Discussion Circle.
- Ensuring all management attend the in-person HSS Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training.
- Work with the Department of Finance - HR Branch to include cultural competence, inclusive leadership, and anti-racism within the GNWT Core Competency model.

### **Promote employee engagement as part of the organizational culture, empowering employees to effectively contribute to the role, team, environment, and HSS system.**

This will be achieved by:

- Providing staff with a formal welcome and introduction to employees new to the Northwest Territories HSS System through a Centralized Orientation Program.
- Creating a one-year Onboarding Program for all new and new-to-role HSS System employees.
- Create an engagement strategy and associated strategic action plans to address areas of concern, including mental health.
- Establishing a Community of Practice for Indigenous employees, to provide a supportive peer network, raise issues, and share innovations to address anti-Indigenous racism.
- Launching a centralized employee recognition program, celebrating and acknowledging the work of HSS employees, and their contributions to the HSS System.
- Supporting the engagement of employees through meaningful, strategic goal setting within the performance management process.
- Implementing a Remote Work Policy, representative and applicable to all workforces across the HSS System, and in line with post Covid-19 common practice.
- Regularly communicating the HR Plan goals, objectives, and actions to the HSS workforce.

**Support managers in developing stronger leadership competencies to lead and engage employees through improved trust and confidence.**

This will be achieved through:

- The creation of a Talent Strategy, with a focus on the development of new leaders and staff aspiring to transition into management positions.
- Support for managers transitioning into leadership positions through the Management and Leadership Navigation Program, and the Executive Leadership Integration Program.
- Talent planning processes, where leaders are supported towards proficiency and success in their roles through professional learning plans.
- The creation and delivery of an HSS System Leadership Development Program, with a focus on strategic priorities, expectations, and leadership skill development.
- The creation and implementation of a formal Leadership Mentorship Program to help leaders develop and accelerate the learning of leadership skills.
- Support for staff seeking to enroll in the Indigenous Management Development and Training Program, offered through the Department of Finance.
- The development of a learning library of practical tools and skill development programs to support staff in planning and managing their on-the-job competency development.



SPIRITUAL CARE



## 5. Support Quality Training and Targeted Development

The HSS System is committed to supporting the development of its workforce and building programs to optimize the meaningful contributions of employees to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness. As the HSS System strives to provide staff with the most current tools and resources to excel within their current positions, focus will be placed on transforming the HSS System into a learning organization. This transformation will occur through two objectives.

### **Strengthen the workforce through equal access to quality training.**

This will be achieved by:

- Launching an HSS System wide Learning Management System, providing consistent learning opportunities to all staff.
- Developing and delivering eLearning modules through the learning management system, with a focus on customized staff training specific to the HSS System.
- Providing staff with clinical solution resources, replacing fragmented and obsolete processes with up-to-date clinical best practices.

### **Increase formal and informal learning experiences to assist employees in achieving career milestones through targeted developmental opportunities.**

This will be achieved by:

- Supporting employee development through the Professional Development Initiative.
- Supporting employee education advancement through the Targeted Academic Support Program.
- Creating a Community Health Nurse Competency Development Program delivered in a just-in-time, eLearning format, available to all nurses through the learning management system.
- Launching an Employee Development Mentorship Program to promote a collaborative learning environment and guide career development.
- Explore opportunities to utilize the Department of Finance' Building Capacity in Indigenous Government Program, to support secondment opportunities.





## 6. Enhanced Health, Safety, and Wellness Support Systems

The HSS System recognizes the importance of its workforce, and the need to provide its employees with enhanced health, safety, and wellness supports. This includes the development of programs and processes supporting occupational health and safety, minimizing exposures to communicable hazards, and supporting the wellness of HSS System employees. To meet this goal, several objectives have been identified.

### **Launch formalized Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (Committee) structures throughout every worksite.**

This will be achieved by:

- Engaging executive leadership in the development and launch to ensure proper Committee support throughout the worksites.
- Educating staff and management on the functions and responsibilities of the Committee members as dictated by the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.
- Developing key performance indicators for the Committee.

### **Develop a communicable disease program to address various communicable hazards encountered by staff within the HSS System.**

This will be achieved by:

- Standardizing and improving the staff immunization policy, including receipt and maintenance of records.
- Improving the processes for internal and external reporting of exposure incidents.
- Establishing necessary processes for response and ordering of necessary post-exposure follow-up.

### **Leverage and expand upon existing mental health resources available to HSS System employees, while increasing accessibility.**

This will be achieved by:

- Creating and implementing a Mental Wellness Communications Strategy, to connect employees to employee-facing mental health supports, including cultural activities.
- Establishing a cross-system Mental Health Committee supporting and promoting mental wellness in the workplace.



# Moving Forward

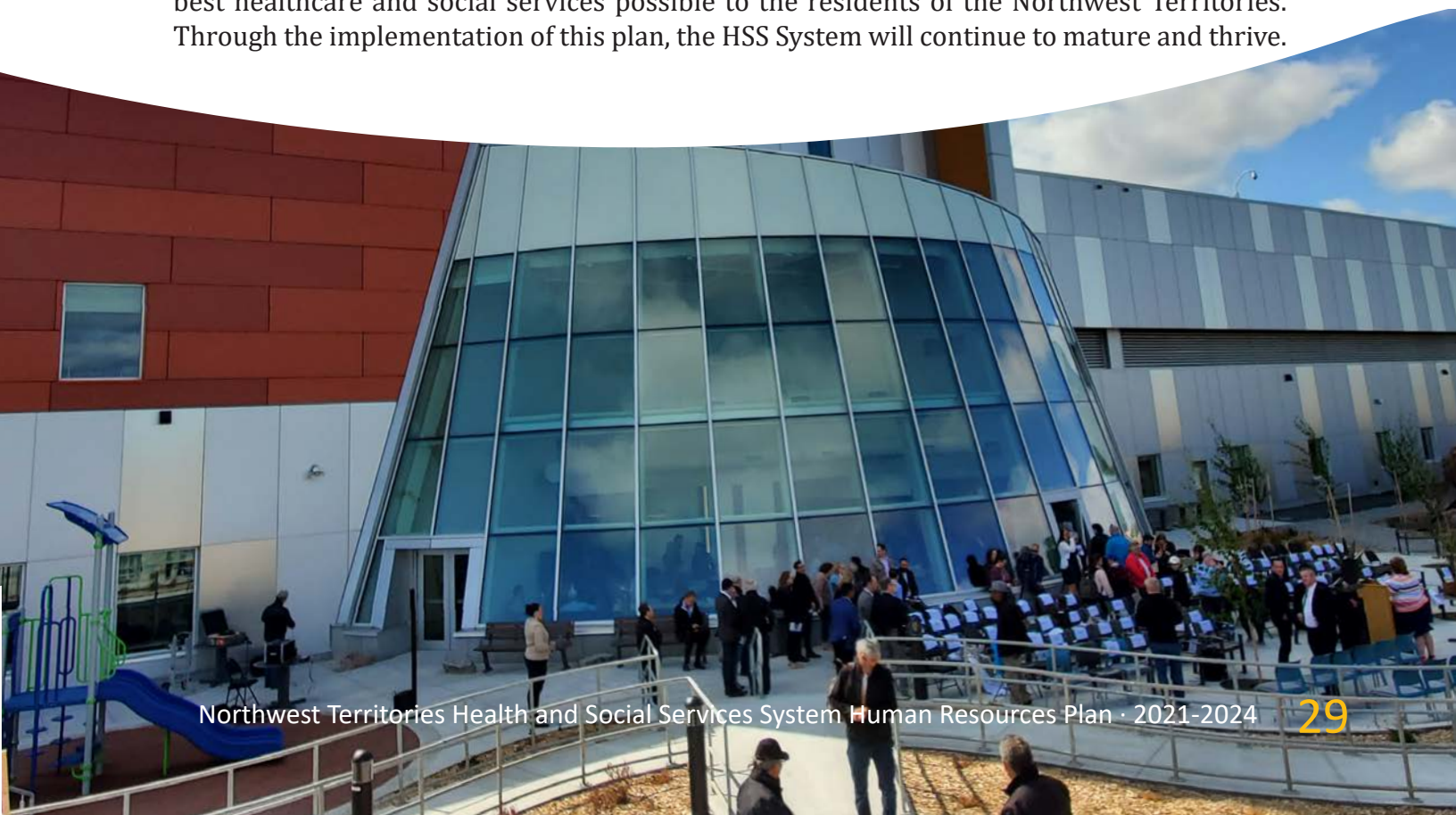
This HR Plan represents the collaborative, shared vision of a single health and social services system working towards a robust and representative workforce, supported by strong leadership and an organizational culture rooted in the principles of cultural safety and anti-racism.

The plan is guided by the broader strategic vision of the HSS System of Best Health, Best Care, for a Better Future, as well as the mandate and strategic priorities identified by the 19th Legislative Assembly and the Department of Health and Social Services Business Plan. It is also guided by a commitment to take action in addressing systemic racism and promoting cultural safety and anti-racism within the System.

As a three-year plan, this strategic document is intended to support the future recruitment and retention needs of the HSS System. It is designed to address the medium and long-term HR needs of the HSS System. It is not intended as an immediate fix to HR challenges, but rather to anticipate and address many of the core challenges negatively impacting recruitment and retention over the coming years.

The success of the HR plan can be measured in a variety of ways, including improved employee engagement and satisfaction survey scores, decreasing vacancy and turnover rates, and an increased representation of Indigenous and Northern employees within the workforce.

Looking back to the creation NWT HSS System in 2016, an incredible amount of positive change has occurred. This plan is intended to help ensure that the HSS workforce has a clear path forward, with the tools, programs, and support required to succeed in delivering the best healthcare and social services possible to the residents of the Northwest Territories. Through the implementation of this plan, the HSS System will continue to mature and thrive.

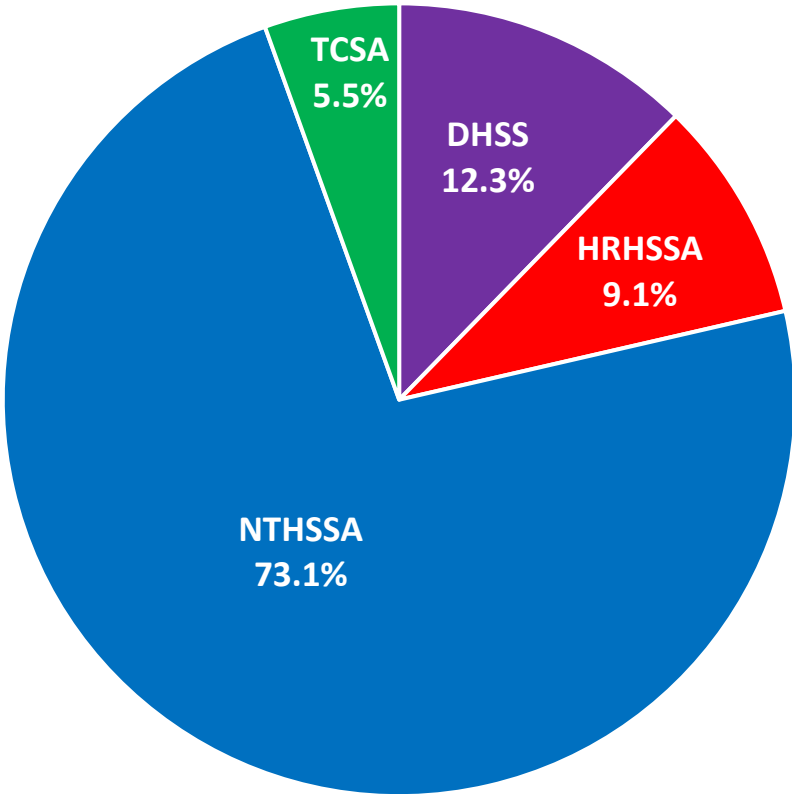




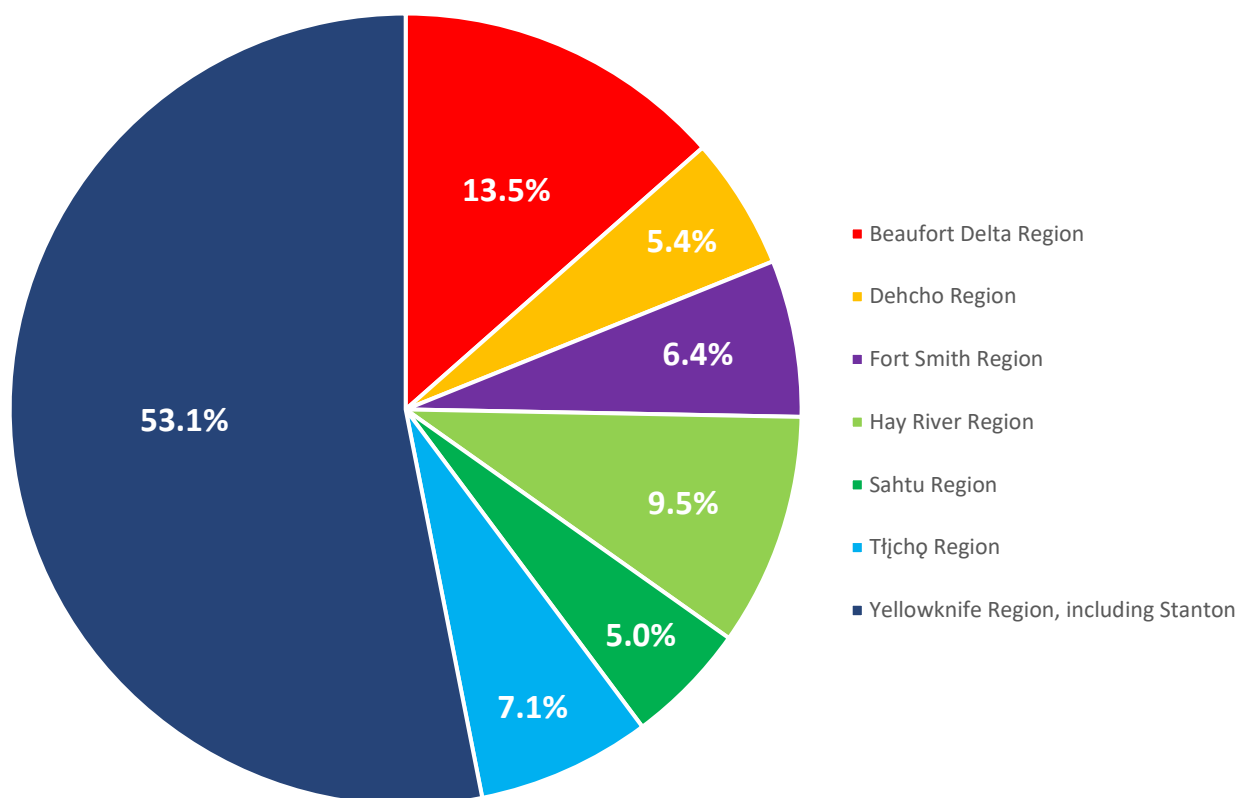
# Appendix A: HSS System Demographics

As at December 31, 2020, the NWT HSS System workforce was comprised of 2,305 indeterminate, term, and relief employees, and salaried physicians from the NTHSSA (1,636), DHSS (273), HRHSSA (203), and TCSA (137).

**Distribution of Employees & Physicians**  
*(HSS System, as at December 31, 2020)*



### Distribution of Positions by Geographic Region (HSS System, as at December 31, 2020)



### Distribution of Employees by Occupation within HSS Authorities (excluding DHSS) (as at December 31, 2020)

Occupation	Employees		Occupation	Employees	
	#	%		#	%
Allied Health	109	5.6%	Nurse Practitioners	20	1.0%
Child & Family Services	113	5.8%	Ophthalmology	11	0.6%
Community Support & Interpretation	84	4.3%	Oral / Dental Health	5	0.3%
Corporate Services	169	8.7%	Personal Support Workers	236	12.1%
Facility Services	162	8.3%	Physicians	56	2.9%
HSS Administrative Support	190	9.7%	Registered Nurses	486	24.9%
Licensed Practice Nurses	108	5.5%	Rehabilitation	75	3.8%
Mental Health & Addictions	96	4.9%	Senior Management	25	1.3%
Midwifery	6	0.3%	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>100%</b>



# Appendix B: Insights into the HSS System

As at December 31, 2020, based on indeterminate and term employees within the HSS System:



21.8% of employees were Indigenous (P1), compared to 29.5% for the entire GNWT.

6.5% were Northern (P2), compared to 10.5% for the entire GNWT.

10.2% of senior managers were Indigenous (P1), compared to 19.3% for the entire GNWT.

12.2% of senior managers were Northern (P2), compared to 20.1% for the entire GNWT.



81.1% of HSS System employees identified as female, compared to 65.2% for the entire GNWT.



92.4% of HSS System employees are represented by the Union of Northern Workers.



The overall average age of HSS System employees is 43.5, compared to 44.1 for the entire GNWT.

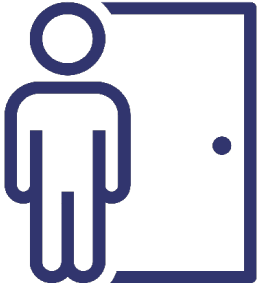


67.2% of HSS System physicians are classified as Family Physicians, 29.3% are classified as Physician Specialists.

1 in 10 NWT residents active in the labour force is employed by the NWT HSS System.



Within the HSS System, approximately 7.2% of employees were eligible to retire as at December 31, 2020.



By comparison, 8.1% of all GNWT employees were eligible to retire.

Looking ahead, approximately 26.9% of HSS System employees are eligible to retire within 10 years, compared to 30.4% for the GNWT.



The average overall years of service for HSS System employees is 7.6, compared to 8.2 for the entire GNWT.



60.2% of indeterminate and term employees within the TCSA are Indigenous (P1).

Within the NTHSSA and TCSA, based on the screening requirements, or typically attained by statements found within job descriptions:



10.4% of all positions require management or supervisory experience.



41.8% of positions require a university degree or higher.



The average number of years of relevant work experience required is 1.9 years for all positions, or 4.4 years for all supervisory positions.



The average number of years of education (over and above high school graduation) plus relevant work experience required is 4.6 years.

# Appendix C: Strategic Goals At A Glance

## 1. Informed Decision-Making Related to Workforce Planning, Recruitment, and Retention

- Identify factors that contribute to talent acquisition, hiring, and retention challenges, such as high turnover and vacancies.
  - Monitor and analyze trends in the national labour force and within the HSS System workforce in support of effective organizational and labour force planning.
  - Collaborate with staff to gain feedback related to recruitment and retention to identify opportunities for improvement.
- 

## 2. Developing and Supporting Indigenous and Northern Populations in the Pursuit of Health and Social Services Careers

- Inspire Indigenous and Northern populations to pursue careers within the HSS System as HSS professionals.
  - Promote and access GNWT programs geared towards the development and attraction of Indigenous and Northern populations.
- 

## 3. Enhanced Attraction and Recruitment Strategies and Tools

- Establish meaningful connections with students and graduates considering the HSS System for future employment opportunities, with an emphasis on hard-to-fill positions.
  - Create, support, and evaluate recruitment strategies and initiatives that attract quality talent to the HSS System.
- 

## 4. Increased Employee Engagement through Organizational Change and Leadership Development

- Support an organizational culture focused on cultural safety and anti-racism within the HSS System.
  - Promote employee engagement as part of the organizational culture, empowering employees to effectively contribute to the role, team, environment, and HSS system.
  - Support managers in developing stronger leadership competencies to lead and engage employees through improved trust and confidence.
- 

## 5. Support Quality Training and Targeted Development

- Strengthen the workforce through equal access to quality training.
  - Increase formal and informal learning experiences to assist employees in achieving career milestones through targeted developmental opportunities.
- 

## 6. Enhanced Health, Safety, and Wellness Support Systems

- Launch formalized Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee structures throughout every worksite.
- Develop a communicable disease program to address various communicable hazards encountered by staff within the HSS System.
- Leverage and expand upon existing mental health resources available to HSS System employees, while increasing accessibility.



# Appendix D: Year 1 Highlights

## 1. Informed Decision-Making Related to Workforce Planning, Recruitment, and Retention

- Entry survey being finalized for roll-out in early 2022/23 FY.
  - Ongoing delivery of exit surveys, as of summer 2021.
  - Quarterly vacancy reviews being completed, with decreased timelines and increased analysis.
  - Screening Criteria Project 100% current, based on NTHSSA & TCSA positions.
- 

## 2. Developing and Supporting Indigenous and Northern Populations in the Pursuit of Health and Social Services Careers

- 2022 Health and Social Services Career Guide to be finalized by June 2022.
  - Graduate Transition Program being finalized for 2022/23 FY roll-out.
  - Clinical Observership and Job Shadowing Guidelines for HSS System to be finalized by June 2022.
- 

## 3. Enhanced Attraction and Recruitment Strategies and Tools

- First 2 residents of Family Medicine Residency Program graduate in 2022. 2 new residents starting July 2022.
  - The PracticeNWT website had 45,735 unique users in 2020/21, an increase of 190% from the previous year.
  - PracticeNWT social media has 2,474 followers as of March 2022.
- 

## 4. Increased Employee Engagement through Organizational Change and Leadership Development

- DHSS and Finance engaged on discussions around including cultural competence, inclusive leadership, and anti-racism within the GNWT Core Competency model.
  - Centralized Orientation Program on track for June 2022 roll-out, alongside the one-year Onboarding Program.
  - Bookboon launched in February 2022, providing learning library to all HSS System employees.
- 

## 5. Support Quality Training and Targeted Development

- Learning Management System build underway. Looking to begin first phase with NTHSSA, in the summer 2022.
  - Elsevier Clinical Solutions launched November 2021, as clinical solution resource.
  - Ongoing delivery and intakes for the Professional Development Initiative (PDI) and Targeted Academic Support Program (TASP).
  - Community Health Nurse Competency Development Program modules completed in March 2022, to launch shortly.
- 

## 6. Enhanced Health, Safety, and Wellness Support Systems

- Key performance indicators developed for Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees.
- COVID-19 Immunization Policy and standard operating procedures implemented fully.

