North East **LHIN** | **RLISS** du Nord-Est

Action Plan

NE LHIN Task Force on the PSW Workforce

November 2018

Ontario

Local Health Integration Network

Réseau local d'intégration des services de santé

Contents

Acknowledgements 3

Background 4

Methodology 4

Action Plan Overview 6

Priority Area | Program Oversight and Coordination 6

Priority Area | Collaboration and Innovation 6

Priority Area | Working Conditions and Compensation 7

Appendices 8

Appendix A - Action Plan 9

Appendix B – Listing of Preliminary Recommendations 15

Appendix C – Evaluation Results 18

Acknowledgements

The North East LHIN extends its appreciation to Leah-Ann Lightfoot, Personal Support Worker (PSW), for her active participation and contribution as a member of the Task Force directly representing the PSW workforce.

The input and guidance of the Task Force was instrumental in preparation of this Action Plan. The Task Force was comprised of the following members:

Reggie Caverson | Workforce Planning for Sudbury & Manitoulin

Rina Clark | Patients & Family Advisory Committee – NE LHIN

Jonathan Coulman | Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation

Heather Cranney | Canadian Red Cross (Community Support Services)

Mary Deschene | Extendicare - Van Daele (Long-Term Care Homes)

Marliese Gause | The Friends (Community Support Services)

Ronald Gervais | Patients & Family Advisory Committee – NE LHIN

Beverley Harding | CBI Home Health (Service Provider Organization)

Marie Leon | ICAN (Community Support Services)

Leah-Ann Lightfoot | Personal Support Worker

Jo-Anne McCool-Maki | Patients & Family Advisory Committee – NE LHIN

Kim Morris | Collège Boréal (Education)

Jo-Anne Palkovits | St. Joseph's Health Centre (Long-Term Care Homes)

Jodi Phillips | Care Partners (Service Provider Organization)

Linda Tiido | The Friends (Community Support Services)

Background

The Task Force on the Personal Support Workforce was established by the North East LHIN to steer the development of an Action Plan to mitigate some of the Personal Support Worker (PSW) workforce recruitment and retention challenges being experienced in the North East.

Methodology

Environmental Scanning

The environmental scan examined current mitigation efforts along with findings and recommendations stemming efforts from other regions as well as initiatives being facilitated within the provincial policy framework. This activity highlighted that measures are required within: training / education; promotion and recruitment; working conditions; and the policy/regulation environment.

Although there are sector-specific challenges, the findings suggest that the following are elements which are common across sectors:

Recruitment	Retention	Sustainability
• Shrinking pool of qualified candidates • Difficulties accessing training / education • Some PSWs work multiple jobs • Employers are competing for same candidates • Wage disparity / working conditions between sectors • Challenging workload	• Inadequate compensation (wages, benefits) • Inconsistent scheduling practices and work hours • Unsupportive and non-patient centered workload allocation (aiming for outputs rather than outcomes • Unsupportive environment / involvement • Limited training and development opportunities • Few opportunities for bridging / upgrading to other occupations (e.g. Home Support Worker (HSW), Health Care Aide (HCA), etc.)	• Perception of poorly valued profile of PSWs (promotion) • Less desirable compensation and working conditions • Need for improved Human Resources practices (onboarding, support & supervision, team integration) • Few Incentives to attract and retain • Perception of punitive approaches to outputs based monitoring | need to focus on outcomes and quality care, rather than predominantly on quantity and volumes

Formulating Recommendations

Environmental scanning and ensuing Task Force working sessions led to the identification of two (2) priority areas.

Total Compensation | which includes the following elements: - Pay, wage - Working conditions - Employment stability / consistency - Manageable workload - Support and recognition - Retention - Advocacy	**Collaboration and Innovation** | which includes the following concepts: - Shared Human Resources, aiming to increase stability - Access to Training & Education - "Growing Your Own" workforce - Awareness building, promoting the occupation - Collaboration on recruitment efforts - Client education (managing expectations)

The Task Force engaged in a series of input gathering activities (surveys and working sessions) which led to the identification of possible activities and tactics with potential to address the two priority areas identified above.

Appendix B – Listing of Preliminary Recommendations presents a list of the 24 recommendations and/or ideas for change generated by the Task Force. These were brought forth into the group's priority setting and action planning activities.

Priority setting

An adaptation of the Action Priority Matrix was utilized where each preliminary recommendation was evaluated according to the potential impact on mitigating the challenges and coinciding effort involved.

The group considered the following elements when assessing a value on the **Impact scale:**

- *Alignment with the purpose of the Task Force*
- *Potential of advancement or alignment with the identified Priority Domains / Action Areas*
- *Supports / aligned with documented findings / challenges (e.g. Rapid Scan, Survey results, Research, provincial work, etc.)*
- *Aligned with our system's priorities*
- *Potential to improve access/delivery to/of safe and quality care*

The following factors were considered in attributing a value on **Effort** scale:

- *Number of stakeholders involved*
- *Anticipated buy-in / stakeholder support / commitment*
- *"Springboard" from existing success or staring a "new" initiative*
- *Accessibility of resources (financial, in-kind, sponsorship)*

The results of the priority setting effort are visually presented in *Appendix C – Evaluation Results*. Actions were formulated by the Task Force subsequent to a review of these in considering current context.

Action Plan Overview

This Action Plan highlights a need for action through Collaboration and Innovation initiatives, along with a focus on improving Working Conditions and Compensation. These are the two main priority areas identified by the Task Force in response to its mandate to identify tactics to help mitigate challenges within the retention, recruitment, and overall sustainability of the PSW workforce in the North East LHIN region.

The need for a formal oversight and coordination structure is to be highlighted as third priority area, in order to support the implementation of the Action Plan.

Priority Area | Program Oversight and Coordination

Action | Regional PSW Workforce Steering Committee

A regional structure representing key stakeholders is required to ensure coordination and leadership on the implementation of the measures identified in this Action Plan.

Priority Area | Collaboration and Innovation

Action | Workforce Training and Development

1) Affordable and Accessible Training
    a. Refine and implement training solutions which are either facility-led or community-based initiatives
    b. Leverage existing fast-track training capacity
    c. Facilitate access to / development of additional (specialized) training

2) Review, optimize and leverage the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's PSW Training Fund

3) Collaboration on Workforce Development
    a. Outreach to Boards of Education to incorporate PSW curriculum in co-op / dual credit courses
    b. Facilitate collaborative relationships to integrate internationally trained / immigrant workforce

Action | Workforce Capacity

1) Initiate formal capacity planning and establish a supply / demand monitoring approach
2) Establish collaborative agreements for emergency coverage, and partnerships to ensure care delivery to patients.

Action | PSW Career Awareness and Promotion Strategy

1) Develop a value-based PSW recognition program
2) Create a Multimedia Campaign to improve the image of PSW and the value of this workforce
3) Develop a PSW Ambassadors' Program

Priority Area | Working Conditions and Compensation

Action | Improving Working Conditions

1) Foster or encourage mentorship and recognition programs (PSWs and Supervisors)
2) Develop a regional employee satisfaction monitoring program
3) Create initiatives to assist with the reduction of employment related expenses and to promote recognition incentives for exceptional contributions (sector specific)
4) Improve workload distribution and job stability (sector specific) | incorporate other roles

Action | Compensation

1) Identify where enhancements are required and feasible
2) Develop business cases to inform policy and decision makers

Appendices

- Appendix A - Action Plan
- Appendix B – Listing of Preliminary Recommendations
- Appendix C – Evaluation Results

Appendix A - Action Plan

This Action Plan includes a list of initiatives intended to support the implementation of the various Actions suggested by the Task Force.

The tables below include the following column headers:

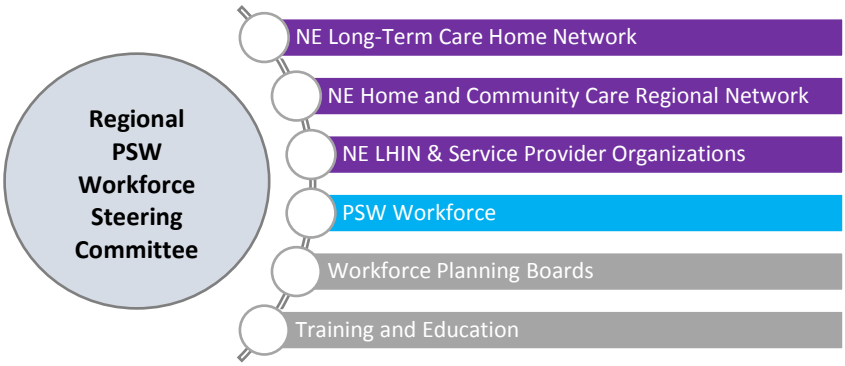
Initiative	In-Scope	Timing	Lead	Partners	Resources
Includes the name of the activities to be implemented.	Listing the type of activities that should be included in the development of the implementation plan.	Suggesting when the implementation should start: *Immediate = within 3 months* *Short-Term = within 6 month* *Medium-Term = within 12 to 18 months*	Identification of the sponsoring organization(s).	Identification of the key stakeholders required to support the implementation	Estimate of the resource requirements to implement the initiative(s)

Priority Area | Program Oversight and Coordination

Action | Regional PSW Workforce Steering Committee

A Regional oversight and implementation entity is required to steer, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Action Plan.

At a minimum, the Regional PSW Workforce Steering Committee (Committee) should be comprised of the PSW workforce, workforce planning boards, the education and training sector along with representation from the NE LHIN's sector-specific coordination tables.



While being accountable to the North East LHIN, the Committee's mandate should be based on the provision or support, guidance and oversight of progress. It should have the ability to strike implementation teams and to ensure that these groups are appropriately resourced to proceed with the implementation of agreed-upon projects (Actions).

Priority Area | Collaboration and Innovation

Action | Workforce Training and Development

Calling for collaboration among employers, prospective PSWs and the education sector, this action requires an approach to allow for accessible and affordable training, maximizing current funding along with adding additional financial resources to sustain a multi-year strategy which also requires the region to collaborate on workforce development activities.

Initiative	In-Scope	Timing	Lead	Partners	Resources
Affordable and Accessible Training • Allow for the training of new PSWs to be accessible in terms of options and affordability; • Ensure that dedicated training and education funding is secured in order to be leveraged to cover training and education costs for new and existing PSWs and supervisors; • Review the past and current practices and proceed with employer-sponsored (paid to train) programming including, but not necessarily limited to: - "Grow Your Own PSW" (work as you learn / upgrade on skills) - Prior-learning assessment initiatives - Expansion of in-house training capacity - Initiatives led by rural and northern / indigenous communities	Refine and implement training solutions which are either facility-led or community-based initiatives Leverage existing fast-track training capacity Facilitate access to / or the development of additional (specialized) training	Immediate and ongoing			
Fully leverage the PSW Training Fund	Review, optimize and leverage the Ministry's PSW Training Fund	Short-Term			
Collaboration on Workforce Development	Outreach to Boards of Education to incorporate PSW curriculum in coop/dual credit courses Facilitate working relationships to integrate internationally trained / immigrant workforce	Short-Term			

Action | PSW Workforce Capacity

The Task Force is highlighting a need for an in-depth analysis with the aim of understanding how our system's existing resources are being leveraged to fulfill the current demand for services. Anticipating demand for services in the near-term and long-term is essential to guide workforce development efforts as well as to inform decision making processes. The assessment of the effectiveness of our system's existing resources is expected to highlight opportunities for some realignment to meet urgent pressures in certain sectors. This will also set a baseline to be used in anticipating care planning and delivery in the near future.

In assessing capacity, the system's is required to assess and anticipate its ability to provide services to our Indigenous and French language populations.

Initiative	In-Scope	Timing	Lead	Partners	Resources
Workforce Capacity A comprehensive review of the effectiveness of existing resources will provide objective information to support collaborative approaches required to meet urgent service pressures.	Undertake formal capacity planning and establish a supply / demand monitoring approach	Medium-Term			
	Establish collaboration agreements for emergency coverage and partnerships to ensure service delivery	Short-Term			

Action | PSW Career Awareness and Promotion Strategy

With an ultimate goal of supporting an increase in the supply of workers to meet the present and future demands, this three-pronged approach will require collaboration between employers, employees, the education sector and provincial bodies. Direct involvement of the PSW workforce is necessary in the formulation the Strategy, as well as with the implementation of its measures.

Initiative	In-Scope	Timing	Lead	Partners	Resources
PSW Career Awareness and Promotion Strategy • Counter the stigma associated with the occupation • Highlight the impact of PSWs' contribution to the healthcare system and describe their value • Make PSW a career of choice by increasing the value of these occupations • Increase awareness of the diverse employment and training opportunities • Increase enrolment of target populations in training programs • Target audiences would also include Indigenous and French language populations • Repatriate previously trained PSWs that have left the occupation. "e.g. a Come Back to Care campaign"	Develop and implement a multimedia campaign	Short-Term			
	Develop and administer a value-based PSW Recognition Program	Short-Term			
	Develop and administer a PSW Ambassadors Program	Short-Term			

Action | Improving Working Conditions and Compensation

Although working conditions often differ between service sectors, some measures are necessary to mitigate common factors that are negatively affecting the retention of this workforce. The recognition of the PSW as being an integral member of the care team and the existence of supportive onboarding practices are essential "softer" factors contributing to the retention of the workforce.

Opportunities exist to engage with stakeholders within a sector or within an employer to review capacity and working conditions. Improvements to working conditions have been observed by:

- effectively integrating other roles to support PSWs,
- reviewing practices related to compensation and work-related costs; and by
- improving workload distribution to improve job stability and to minimize client care disruptions.

A Case for Compensation Enhancements

As there are cross-sector opportunities, each sector has its set of factors that influence the operational environment. Collaboratively, employers within service sectors have an opportunity to develop business cases which are required to inform decision makers on the need for change relating to operational policy, regulations, funding and the need for innovation in service delivery models.

Initiative	In-Scope	Timing	Lead	Partners	Resources
Improving Working Conditions					
System-wide implementation An approach is required to support employers to introduce / enhance mentorship, support and recognition of their PSW and supervisor workforce. The system is also called to develop an approach to establish a base-line measurement and monitor improvements to employee engagement and satisfaction. Results will be used to inform ongoing efforts in mitigating the challenges and to measure the impact of implemented measures.	Mentorship and recognition program (PSWs and Supervisors)	Medium-Term			
	Develop a regional employee satisfaction monitoring program	Medium-Term			
Sector-specific implementation	Improve workload distribution and job stability and leveraging other roles.	Immediate			

Initiative	In-Scope	Timing	Lead	Partners	Resources
Improvements to employer or sector specific work environments need to take into consideration how the workload is assigned, managed and resourced. Although sector-specific, employers are asked to introduce measures to help reduce the work-related expenditures for this workforce along with the formalization of performance / retention incentives where feasible.	Initiatives to assist with the reduction of employment related expenses and incentives for exceptional contributions or retention.	Immediate			
Business Cases for Enhancements The Task Force has highlighted the need to develop a business case for enhancements, taking into account employer capacity (or lack thereof) to enhance compensation elements (wage, benefits, work related and living costs) for this workforce. It is to be noted that while the case should be made, it should not be done in isolation of the need to enhance the support and supervisory functions to avoid wage grid compression effects.	Identify where enhancements are required and feasible (within and/or between sectors) taking into account, for example: - operational policy and regulations; - funding and sustainability; and - the need for innovation in service delivery models. Develop business cases to inform policy and decision makers	Immediate and ongoing			

end of action plan tables

Appendix B – Listing of Preliminary Recommendations

Working Conditions and Compensation

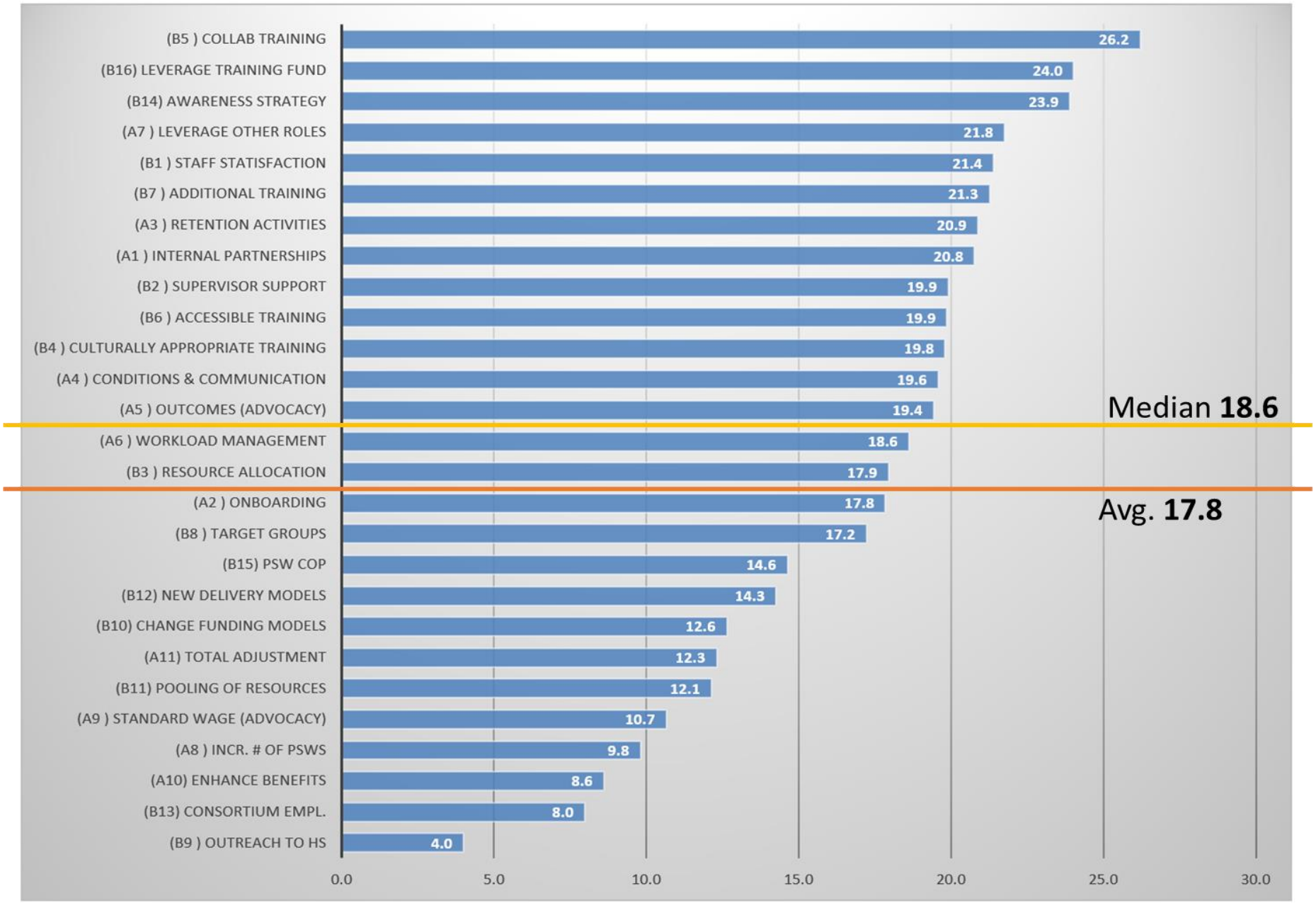
ID	Recommendation	Description
A1	**Internal partnerships with PSWs / Role Recognition / Team member**	Devise a working environment where PSW are formal members of "teams" involved in care planning activities review of client care requirements (feedback loop) Increase awareness and appreciation of PSW work by their colleagues and others
A2	**Improvements to recruitment and onboarding practices**	Change how we are doing business – shared HR/onboarding would free up supervisors to do actual front-line supervision Targeted recruitment / awareness of job → Be cautious about the calibre of people that are recruited – skills, maturity Ensure there is an understanding up front of the expectations of the job
A3	**Formal retention activities**	e.g. Recognize "long serving" PSWs | include incentives (financial and other)
A4	**Improve working conditions and communication**	Clarify expectations between client and PSW Leverage digital health / technology to improve communication and service delivery and monitoring
A5	**Focus on outcomes** (advocacy)	System-level advocacy to remove some of the barriers (outputs vs outcomes) Recognize that PSW work is more than just tasks; relationships are developed
A6	**Improvements to workload management practices / planning**	Improved scheduling, consistency, regular hours Leverage technology Increase supervisor availability / more support for the front line
A7	**Leverage other roles where possible**	Look at ways to alleviate workload in long-term care homes; have other employees do tasks (e.g., clearing tables, putting away laundry) that would free up PSW time
A8	**Increase the number of PSWs Prevent burnout**	Increasing the number of individual PSWs within a facility / available to deliver care (e.g. resident or client / staff ratio) Scheduling a sustainable and safe workload within a full-time schedule
A9	**Advocate for a standard wage for all PSWs**	Advocate for a standard wage across all sectors in the system in the Province
A10	**Enhance benefits / access to childcare options**	e.g., many PSWs don't have child care arrangements that allow them to accept evening or night shifts.
A11	**Devise and implement a "total adjustment" - Improve coverage of travel & work related costs**	Provide sufficient funding (base adjustment) to adjust travel costs according to fluctuating gas prices. Implementation of a competitive wage/travel/occupational and living cost adjustment. Longer distances in less than favourable travel conditions (road conditions / weather) has important negative effects on personal vehicles.

Collaboration & Innovation

ID	Recommendation	Description
B1	**Initiatives to enhance / review staff satisfaction**	Peer support within and between providers | A network Establish a peer support program / buddy system Develop best practices guidelines and management support (training). Process to regularly review staff satisfaction and engagement across organization. Consider providing incentives to organizations exhibiting higher levels of staff satisfaction and engagement.
B2	**HR Management / supervisor support**	Trained leadership tailored to PSWs: Supervisors are often nurses; that profession tends to be more hierarchal, with a clinical focus rather than hands-on approach, and with an emphasis on the College of Nurses criteria. Ideally, employers should look at internal structures and develop joint standards. This could assist PSWs in feeling more pride about their profession.
B3	**Optimize resource allocation**	Best practices, innovation in service delivery practices, delivery models, collaboration between providers Reduce growing amount of time spent on recruitment
B4	**Culturally appropriate training**	Adequate access to culturally appropriate services is variable for Aboriginal people, depending on the type of service and the location of service provision. Some First Nations employers are having difficulty recruiting First Nations people to work in their communities.
B5	**Collaborative Training / Grow Your Own**	more partnerships between community colleges and service providers – hybrid learning (boot camps, online, part-time program for those working) Grow-our-Own initiatives | gather critical success factors from recent initiatives | promote the spread
B6	**Accessible / affordable training**	Employer sponsored training (paid to train) Increase pool of students - what can be done at college level to support students; many can't afford to go without an income to go to school.
B7	**Access to training to assist working in managing on-the-job challenges**	E.g. access to support / training to deal with challenging clients/family members, dementia, communication, conflict management, crisis intervention, etc.
B8	**Target under-represented groups**	Work with FN/Aboriginal service providers and Francophone communities to develop targeted promotional campaigns Access immigrant, foreign students pool of potential workers
B9	**Awareness building - Outreach to high-schools**	Training in high schools – introduction to health services – elevate profession Work with boards of education to improve exposure of students to the occupation through job fairs, co-op placements, community service hours, etc.
B10	**Change the funding models for all sectors** (advocacy?)	Advocate for different funding models for long-term care, community support services agencies, home and community care, with emphasis on full-time work rather than hours of service

ID	Recommendation	Description
B11	**Collaboration / pooling of resources between smaller providers**	integration of efforts in smaller centres
B12	**New service delivery models**	in retirement homes, neighbourhood models; increased collaboration between CSS and HCC
B13	**Establish a consortium employer**	Consortium hires full-time PSWs and shares among employers
B14	**Promotion / Awareness Strategy**	Counter the stigma associated to the occupation and move away from "dire" messaging (high demand due to understaffing, poor retention, poor working conditions) Collaborate with educational institutions / training providers / provincial bodies Collaborate organizations that hire PSWs – focus on positive messaging / outcomes / career choice Emphasize the diversity of work / clients
B15	**Establish a community of practice (CoP) for PSWs**	Establish a working group to establish a CoP for PSWs in the North East. This should take into account the presence / activities of existing provincial organizations to determine if / how the NE "Chapter" of such bodies could be established.
B16	**Leverage existing resources (PSW Training Fund)**	Working with the NE HCC Regional Network and / or the PSW Training Fund "bankers" - to ensure that the fund's access and use in the system is maximized. - to develop a document / plan to serve as a system navigation tool which outlines the various options to access training programs / funding sources.

Appendix C – Evaluation Results


(B5) COLLAB TRAINING 26.2
(B16) LEVERAGE TRAINING FUND 24.0
(B14) AWARENESS STRATEGY 23.9
(A7) LEVERAGE OTHER ROLES 21.8
(B1) STAFF STATISFACTION 21.4
(B7) ADDITIONAL TRAINING 21.3
(A3) RETENTION ACTIVITIES 20.9
(A1) INTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS 20.8
(B2) SUPERVISOR SUPPORT 19.9
(B6) ACCESSIBLE TRAINING 19.9
(B4) CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE TRAINING 19.8
(A4) CONDITIONS & COMMUNICATION 19.6
(A5) OUTCOMES (ADVOCACY) 19.4
Median 18.6
(A6) WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT 18.6
(B3) RESOURCE ALLOCATION 17.9
(A2) ONBOARDING 17.8
Avg. 17.8
(B8) TARGET GROUPS 17.2
(B15) PSW COP 14.6
(B12) NEW DELIVERY MODELS 14.3
(B10) CHANGE FUNDING MODELS 12.6
(A11) TOTAL ADJUSTMENT 12.3
(B11) POOLING OF RESOURCES 12.1
(A9) STANDARD WAGE (ADVOCACY) 10.7
(A8) INCR. # OF PSWS 9.8
(A10) ENHANCE BENEFITS 8.6
(B13) CONSORTIUM EMPL. 8.0
(B9) OUTREACH TO HS 4.0
0.0
5.0
10.0
15.0
20.0
25.0
30.0

North East **LHIN** | **RLISS** du Nord-Est