



SURVEY REPORT



BILINGUAL NURSING STAFF NEEDS OF *LTCF IN NOVA SCOTIA

MAY 2022

*LTCF: Long Term Care Facilities

Report prepared by :

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The Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNÉ) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the economic advancement of the Acadian and Francophone community in Nova Scotia. Founded in 1999, it is the only provincial Francophone economic development organization in Nova Scotia.

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Note: An English version of this report is available on the CDÉNÉ website.

"In this document, the words of masculine gender applied to persons refer to both men and women"

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Summary

• Context:

In light of the current situation, and given the shortage of bilingual (French and English) nurses, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDÉNÉ initiative comes to attract internationally trained bilingual nurses, in order to ensure the equitable and safe delivery of healthcare services to the francophone community in NS, while collaborating in the implementation of government strategies in the health field.

To this end, a study was conducted to assess the need for bilingual nurses in healthcare facilities in Nova Scotia.

• Abstract:

This report presents the results of a survey conducted by le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNÉ) to assess the need for bilingual (French and English) nurses in healthcare facilities in Nova Scotia.

The survey questionnaire was designed and developed by the CDÉNÉ in consultation with a working committee comprised of:

- Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse.
- Nova Scotia Health Authority.
- Université Sainte-Anne.

The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- To provide an overall assessment of the nursing staff at the level of the health facilities targeted by the survey.
- Determine the percentage of bilingual nurses.
- Identify the needs of health care facilities for nurses and bilingual nurses.
- To study the employment and recruitment trends of internationally educated bilingual nurses.
- Identify barriers to the recruitment process for internationally educated nurses.

• Key survey findings:

- Bilingual nurses at the Health facilities that responded to the survey represent only 12.76% of the total number of nurses (see Table 2).
- Respondents anticipate a 71.80% increase in their current need for bilingual nurses over the next 3 years (see Table 4).

- 60% of respondents from long-term care facilities believe that nursing resources are currently insufficient for the workload and needs of residents.
- 60.8% of long-term care facilities reported having no mechanisms in place to collect data on the languages spoken by residents.
- 95.5% of the facilities have no English-French translation services and 90.5% have no English-French interpretation services.
- The linguistic composition of residents in LTCFs is as follows:
 - 85.3% of residents are Anglophone.
 - 8.9% of residents are Francophones.
 - 5.8% of residents are bilingual (French-English)
- Most respondents expressed support for hiring bilingual nurses.
- The majority of respondents also indicated that they were having difficulty filling vacancies and that there were fewer candidates in the local labor market.
- 76.19% of the healthcare facilities had no experience in international recruitment to hire staff trained outside of Canada.
- The majority of respondents indicated that the barriers to international recruitment are:
 - The time required to undertake the procedures and paperwork for international recruitment. As well as administrative difficulties in obtaining a work permit and a license to practice the profession (a regulated profession).

• **Recommendations:**

- Promote access to French language health care services for the Francophone and Acadian community in Nova Scotia.
- Develop a recruitment strategy for internationally trained bilingual nurses in collaboration with the various partners of the CDENÉ.
- Facilitate the international recruitment of internationally educated bilingual nurses.
- Create a bridging program in French for practical nurses at the Université Sainte-Anne level, since such a program exists only in English (at NSCC).
- Collaborate with health stakeholders in NS to encourage health facilities to collect data on the languages spoken by patients and provide translation and interpretation services.

1. Background and objectives

One of the challenges facing the health sector in Nova Scotia is how to project the bilingual human resources need of private and public long-term care facilities. CDÉNÉ decided that it would be useful to undertake a bilingual human resource needs survey with questions related to the human resources recruitment capacities and needs for bilingual (French and English) health professionals in Nova Scotia.

With the assistance and participation of an advisory committee, a survey containing 26 questions was designed to evaluate actual and estimated future requirements for bilingual French-English nursing professionals in the health sector in Nova Scotia.

This Advisory committee was comprised of:

Marc Tassé: Executive Director of CDÉNÉ; (replaced Julie Oliver)

Pierre Roisé : Executive Director of Réseau Santé NÉ;

Gaston Saulnier: Quality Lead for the Nova Scotia Health Authority;

Souhaël Bouallagui: (Acting) Executive director of College Studies at Université Sainte-Anne.

The Advisory Committee was accompanied by **Mourad El achhab**, Coordinator of CDÉNÉ's Nursing sector international qualifications recognition Project.

The objective of the survey was to identify bilingual nursing staffing needs in long-term care facilities in Nova Scotia. Nursing staff continues to be defined as Registered Nurses (RN), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), and Nurse Practitioners (NP). The category of Continuing Care Assistants (CPA, PSW) was included in this survey because Long-term Care Facilities rely more on CCAs.

An Online survey was made available on the Survey Monkey Survey website from March 10 through to March 24th, 2022.

Managers or human resources representatives of healthcare facilities were invited to complete the survey. Some questions offered multiple choices while others were open-ended questions in order to obtain some personal comments and opinions. Several were closed questions requiring a yes or no answer.

All one hundred and thirty-three (133) long-term care facilities managing 6 953 beds were contacted. In order to maintain confidentiality in this report, CDÉNÉ avoided using identifiers such as location names in this report. Twenty-one (21) long-term care facilities (15.78%) answered the survey. Given the number of responses received, this sample may be considered representative. The responses from participants are anonymous.

The survey was completed by 7 respondents (33.33%) from Western Nova Scotia (west of HRM), 6 respondents (28.57%) from Eastern Nova Scotia (From Pictou, Guysborough Counties east to Cape Breton. And, finally 8 respondents (38.09%) from Central Nova Scotia (Cumberland to the Halifax Regional Municipality).

2. Survey methodology

The survey questionnaire was designed and elaborated by CDÉNÉ in consultation with an advisory committee of stakeholders in the health sector.

All 133 long-term care facilities in Nova Scotia were approached to complete the survey using the online software Survey Monkey between **March 10 and 24, 2022**.

Follow-up e-mails from CDÉNÉ were sent to all 133 long-term care facilities between March 18th and March 21st. All survey respondents (21) are included in this report. The rate of return from respondents representing the hospital sector was very low and therefore were excluded from the survey findings in this report.

Finally, the survey results were analyzed and a written report of its findings was made public in May 2022.

3. Survey results

3.1 Survey respondents

Twenty-one (21) or over fifteen percent (15.78%) of long-term care facilities completed the survey. The participating facilities comprised twelve (12) completed surveys originating from the private sector (57%) and nine (9) respondents (43%) are from the public or non-profit sector. The completion rate of the survey is over 90% and very few respondents skipped questions. No respondent abandoned the survey.

3.2 Residents in LTCFs and services provided

When asked about the language composition of their long-term care facility, the results were as follows:

- 85.3 % of residents speak English only.
- 8.9 % of residents speak French only.
- 5.8 % of residents are bilingual (French-English).

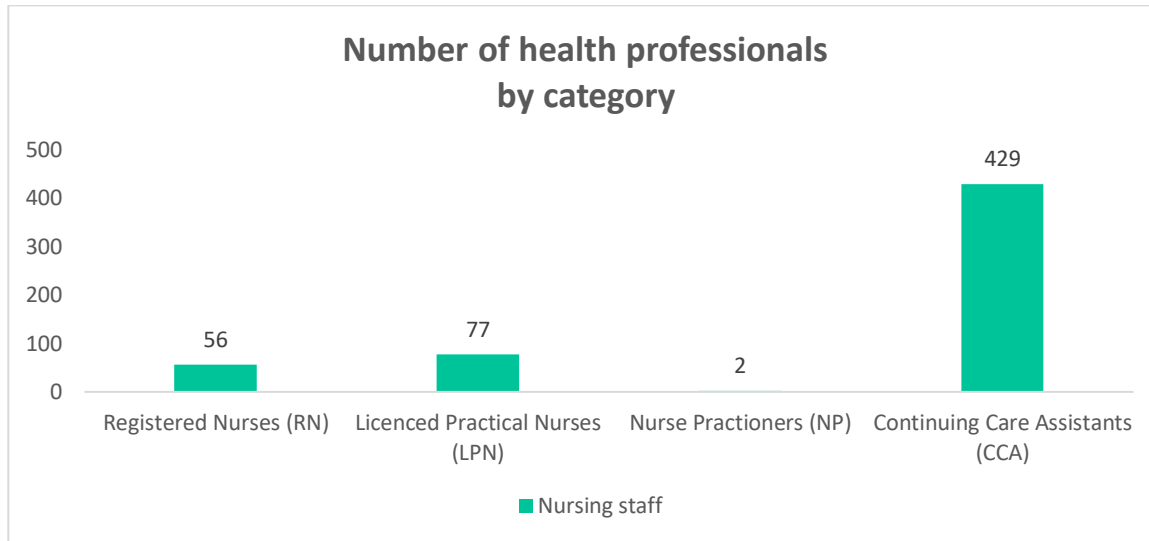
It is important to note that the responses in this section were inconsistent such as the language composition percentage of the facility compared with the number of residents who speak English only, French only, French and English.

The majority or 57.15% of long-term care facilities reported that they did not have data collection mechanisms for languages spoken by residents. 95.2% of the facilities do not have English-French translation services nor English-French interpretation services.

3.3 Human resources

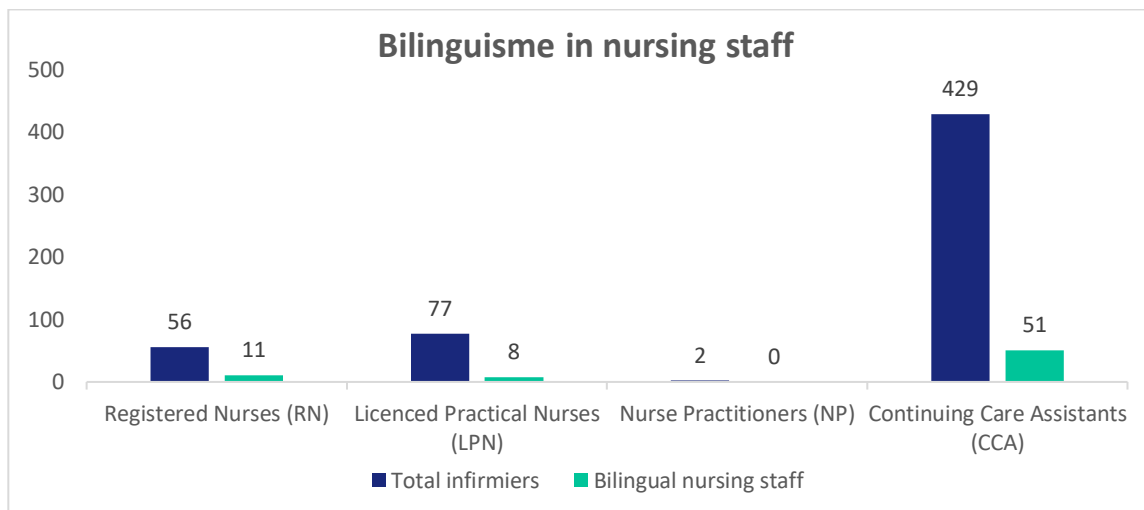
The participating Long-term healthcare facilities indicated that they have approximately 56 Registered Nurses, 77 Licensed Practical Nurses, 2 Nurse Practitioners, and 429 Continuing Care Assistants. Please note that long-term care facilities rely more on Continuing Care Assistant staff.

Table 1



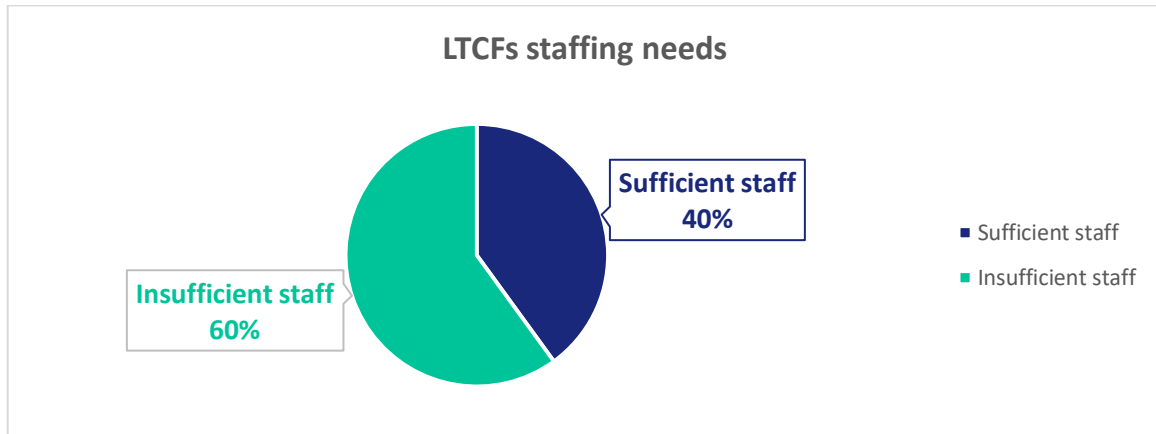
The following table compares nursing staff resources with bilingual personnel by category:

Table 2



Sixty percent (60%) of respondents from Long-term care facilities believe that nursing staff resources are presently insufficient for the workload and needs of residents while forty percent (40%) are of the opinion that they have sufficient nursing staff. Please note that those that indicated having sufficient resources tend to be smaller long-term care facilities with less than 10 residents.

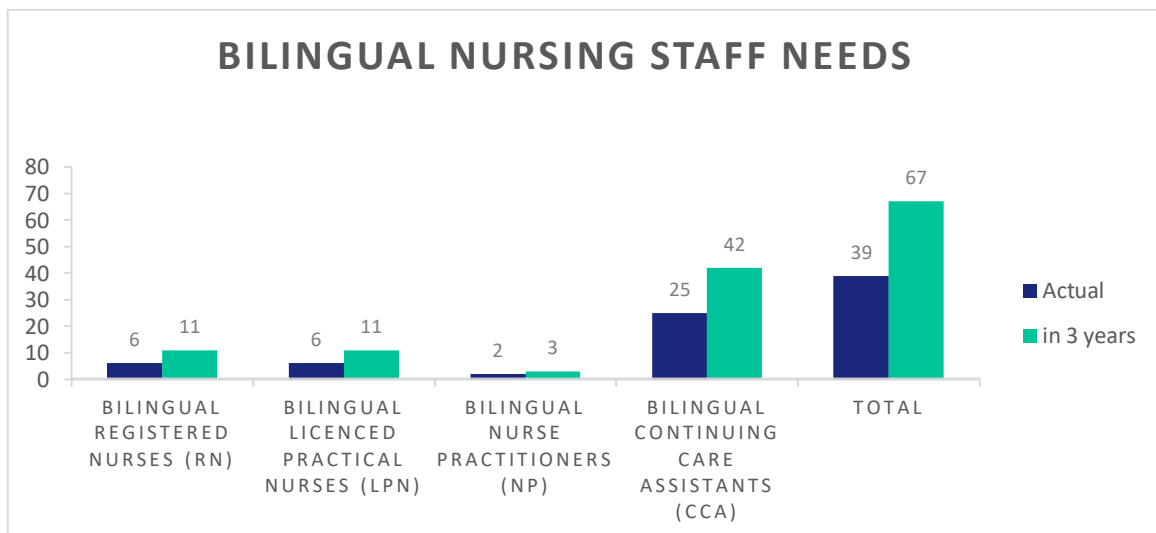
Table 3



Most respondents tend to be positive toward hiring bilingual nursing staff. About half of the respondents consider having bilingual staff as an asset. Regarding the benefits of having bilingual nursing staff, most indicated the importance of providing health care in the language spoken by patients, as this will optimize communication and the patient-nurse relationship. Others mentioned the need for bilingual nurses, especially in Acadian villages where there is a largely francophone community.

The following table indicates the actual and projected bilingual staffing needs of long-term care facilities for the next three years. The responses indicate an increase in bilingual staff requirements in long-term care facilities. A majority (56%) believed that bilingual nursing staff should increase to meet the needs of French-speaking residents.

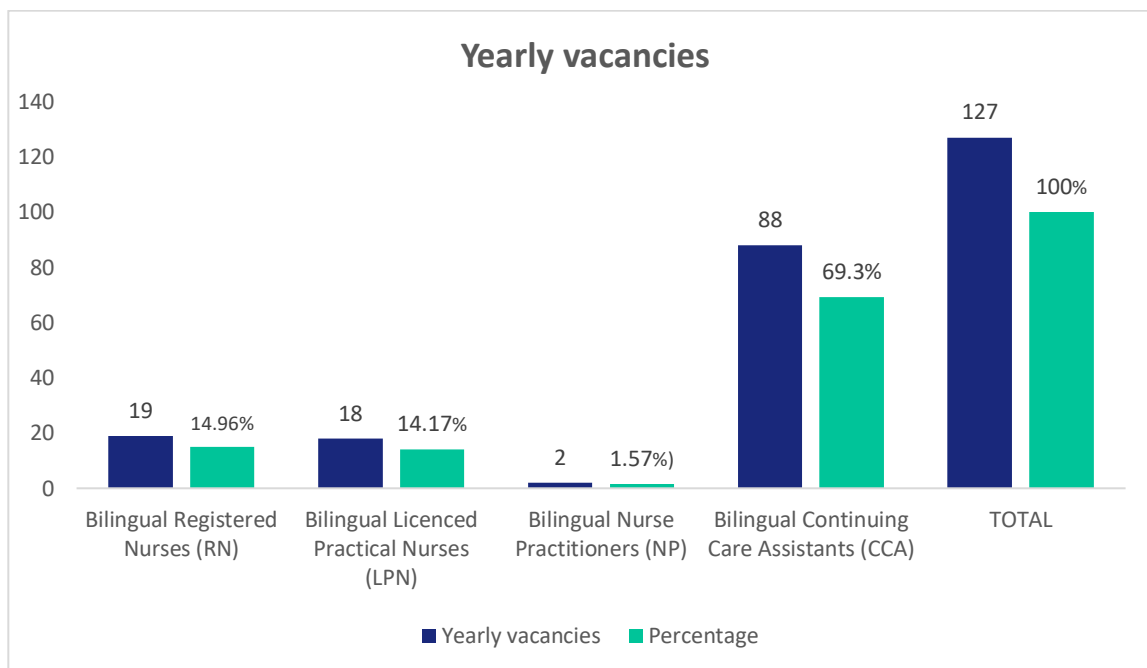
Table 4



3.4 Recruitment and retention of the nursing staff

As mentioned previously, 56% of respondents indicated that additional bilingual staff is needed to meet the present and projected 3-year needs of residents in long-term care facilities. The majority of respondents also indicated being challenged to fill vacant positions and having fewer applicants in the local labor market pool. The reasons for departures include stress and illness. Other respondents mentioned the facility being located in a rural community and lacking housing and/or public transportation. Long-term care facilities are equally active in recruitment and retention efforts in both public and private facilities. They have over 127 yearly vacancies to fill however, vacancies are largely for Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs).

Tableau 5



3.5 International Recruitment

International recruitment is an available option to solve some human resources challenges of filling vacancies and attracting and retaining healthcare professionals in the sector. In the past three years, the vast majority of respondents (76,19 %) did not have any experience with international recruitment activities to hire staff educated outside Canada. Over fourteen percent (14.38%) rarely had experience with international recruitment activities, while only 5% of the contacted LTCFs indicated that they frequently use international recruitment activities. The same percentage of LTCFs (5%) do so on a regular basis to recruit internationally educated nurses.

Table 6



The majority of respondents indicated that the barriers that hinder international recruitment are:

- The time required to undertake administrative procedures and measures for international recruitment.
- Administrative difficulties related to obtaining a work permit and license to practice the profession.

Some LTCF opinionated that they very rarely have international applicants and that a Bridging Program would be required to integrate candidates into the responsibilities of health care facilities in Nova Scotia. Also, successful candidates must be eligible and must be registered with the Nova Scotia College of Nurses.

It should be noted that a small number of LTCFs had recommendations for changes, as few had experience with international recruitment. Some LTCF managers indicated that the process of obtaining a work permit for Canadian-educated individuals was easier than recruiting internationally, while another stressed that the Nova Scotia College of Nurses needed to work with employers to assist and help internationally educated nurses to obtain the credentials required to work as registered personnel in Nova Scotia.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, in light of the aging population, the need for healthcare professionals in Nova Scotia continues to grow. The challenge remains that the pool of individuals capable of filling local healthcare positions is shrinking and that international recruitment of healthcare professionals remains a complex option to fill vacancies.

It is necessary to provide Nova Scotia's health care facilities in general and for Long-term Care Facilities of Nova Scotia in particular with appropriate bilingual nursing staff in order to promote the well-being and improve the quality of life of the Francophone and Acadian community in Nova Scotia. Furthermore, in order to provide safe health care to this community, emphasis must be placed on the linguistic factor in order to ensure a better quality of care.

Based on the results of this survey, most long-term care facilities do not have systems in place to collect data on the languages spoken by patients. These data can be used to adapt care delivery and to better evaluate the need for bilingual nursing staff.

As for international recruitment, and as our study has shown, most healthcare institutions do not use this option because of the complex and lengthy procedures for obtaining equivalency diplomas and nursing licenses, hence the need to collaborate with healthcare stakeholders to simplify the procedures for recognizing international qualifications.

Our province will rely heavily on a skilled foreign workforce to fill the current shortage, which has been compounded by the pandemic situation. Establishing and implementing a recruitment strategy for internationally educated francophone nursing staff could be a helpful solution to consider. Finally, the Advisory Committee of the CDÉNÉ Nursing Research Project could be very useful for the follow-up activities of this survey and remains open to other health organizations and stakeholders for any proposals on this topic.

5. Appendix

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Important notes

Before you begin completing the survey, please note that:

- The purpose of the survey is to study the need for bilingual (English and French) nursing staff in Nova Scotia.
- The provided responses will be anonymous. Your name and/or contact information (if provided), in addition to the name of your health care facility, will be separated from your responses during the analysis of the results. Also, results will be analyzed and presented in summary form only to study the need for bilingual nursing staff in Nova Scotia.
- Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary. You may choose to answer or not answer some of the questions.
- This survey is intended for managers of health care facilities and human resources representatives of these facilities.
- Nursing staff is defined as: registered nurses (RN), licensed practical nurses (LPN), Nurse Practitioners (NP), and Continuing Care Assistants (CCA, PSW).
- Estimated time to complete the survey is 15 min.
- If you have any questions, please contact us at:
(902) 422-2751 / (902) 990-0220 / melachhab@cdene.ns.ca

* 1. Name of the health care facility:

* 2. Sector:

- ☐ Private
- ☐ Public *

*3. County / Region:

* 4. Which answer best describes your facility?

- ☐ Hospital
- ☐ Long-term care facility
- ☐ Community Health Center

*5 On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being **totally agree** and 5 being **strongly disagree**), please rate the following statement:

Currently in your facility, nursing staff resources are sufficient for the workload and needs of patients/residents.

1 Totally agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Don't agree	5 Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. In the last year, how many vacancies were needed to be filled at your healthcare facility (approximately) for the following categories?

Please enter a number. Decimals, percentages, and non-numeric characters are not accepted.

Registered Nurses (RN)	<input type="text"/>
Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)	<input type="text"/>
Nurse Practitioners (NP)	<input type="text"/>
Continuing Care Assistants (CCA, PSW)	<input type="text"/>

*** 7. What employment trends have you noticed for nursing staff at your healthcare facility over the past 3 years?**

(Please select all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> More voluntary departures of nursing staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased number of applications received for posted positions.
<input type="checkbox"/> More departures of nursing staff due to illness, stress, burnout...	<input type="checkbox"/> haven't noticed any changes.
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty filling vacant positions.	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know.
<input type="checkbox"/> Fewer applications received for posted positions.	

☐ Other (please specify)

*** 8. In the past 3 years, has your healthcare facility hired bilingual nursing staff educated outside of Canada?**

- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Quite frequently

- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Our facility has not hired bilingual nursing staff educated outside of Canada.

9. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being **very easy** and 5 being **very difficult**), how would you rate the process for hiring bilingual nursing staff educated outside of Canada? *

1 Very easy	2 Easy	3 Neutral	4 Difficult	5 Very difficult	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 10. In your opinion, what barriers may hinder the recruitment process for internationally educated bilingual nursing staff? (Please select all that apply).

- ☐ Applicants don't meet the minimum English language requirements.
- ☐ Lack of motivated applicants for posted positions.
- ☐ Lack of minimum skills required for posted positions.
- ☐ International recruitment is a time-consuming process.
- ☐ Administrative difficulties related to obtaining a work permit/license to practice the profession...
- ☐ The repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic: travel restrictions, delays in processing files...
- ☐ Don't know.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

11. Our healthcare facility has approximately:

Please enter a number. Decimals, percentages, and non-numeric characters are not accepted.

Registered Nurses (RN)	<input type="text"/>
Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)	<input type="text"/>
Nurse Practitioners (NP)	<input type="text"/>
Continuing Care Assistants (CCA, PSW)	<input type="text"/>

12. The number of bilingual (English and French) nursing staff in our facility is approximately:

Please enter a number. Decimals, percentages and non-numeric characters are not accepted.

Registered Nurses (RN)	<input type="text"/>
Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)	<input type="text"/>

Nurse Practitioners (NP)

Continuing Care Assistants (CCA, PSW)

*** 13. Do you have any recommendations for changes to the requirements for internationally educated nursing staff, in order to facilitate the international recruitment process?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. Please provide recommendations for changes to the requirements for internationally educated bilingual nursing staff in order to facilitate the international recruitment process.

*** 15. Does your healthcare facility collect data on languages spoken by your clients/residents?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. What is the approximate percentage of French-speaking residents/patients in your facility?

Please enter a number. Decimals and non-numeric characters are not accepted.

17. Answer this question only if your facility is a long-term care home, otherwise, go directly to the next question.

Please enter a number. Decimals and non-numeric characters are not accepted.

What is the total number of residents in your long-term care home?

If known, what is the approximate number of residents who speak only English?

If known, what is the approximate number of residents who speak only French?

If known, what is the approximate number of residents who speak

English and French?

18. Do you have an English – French translation service (written documents from one language to another) in your healthcare facility?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*** 19. Do you have an English - French interpretation service (orally from one language to another) in your healthcare facility?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*** 20. Would you say that having bilingual nursing staff in your healthcare facility is an asset?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21. In your opinion, what are the benefits of hiring bilingual nursing staff?

*** 22. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being **totally agree** and 5 being **strongly disagree**), please rate the following statement to describe the current situation in your facility:**

Bilingual (English/French) nursing staff is sufficient to meet the needs of French-speaking patients/residents.

1 Totally agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Don't agree	5 Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 23. Do you think that the number of bilingual nursing staff should increase to meet the needs of French-speaking patients/residents at your Healthcare Facility?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

24. Please specify your immediate needs for bilingual nursing staff.

Please enter a number. Decimals, percentages and non-numeric characters are not accepted.

Registered Nurses (RN)

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)

Nurse Practitioners (NP)

Continuing Care Assistants (CCA, PSW)

25. Please specify your needs for bilingual nursing staff in the next 3 years.

Please enter a number. Decimals, percentages and non-numeric characters are not accepted.

Registered Nurses (RN)

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)

Nurse Practitioners (NP)

Continuing Care Assistants (CCA, PSW)

26. Is there anything you would like to add? If so, please specify your comment