

NEW INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT NURSES WORKING IN MANITOBA

As part of the Health Human Resource Action Plan, the Manitoba government is implementing nine new incentives to help retain, recruit and support nurses.

Weekend premium: The \$8-per-hour premium provided to registered nurses and licenced practical nurses who work weekend hours. Since the premium came into effect on Nov. 18, 2022, more than \$5.9 million has been paid to eligible nurses.

Full-time incentive: Nurses who have the equivalent of a full-time position and who work in a qualifying position with a rotation pattern, which includes days and evening/night shifts, will receive an additional premium of up to \$10,000 per year. This came into effect in January 2023 and will be paid out to eligible nurses in January 2024. It is estimated that 3,600 nurses may qualify for this premium, representing an estimated \$36 million.

Professional licensing fees: Nurses working across the province have received a form to claim back the costs of professional licensing fees, which can range from approximately \$600 to \$970. To date, more than \$1.1 million in reimbursements have been processed. In 2023-24, the value of this incentive is estimated at more than \$8.4 million.

Retiring nurse incentive: This will provide up to \$10,000 over two years for nurses who are eligible to retire in the qualifying period (Dec. 1, 2022, up until Dec. 31, 2023) but choose to remain in the workforce, if maintaining or accepting a full-time position. This incentive came into effect in December 2022 and will be paid in two instalments to eligible nurses, beginning with the first instalment to be made within six months of starting employment. It is estimated that more than 700 nurses may qualify for this incentive.

Returning nurse incentive: This will provide up to \$10,000 for nurses previously employed with the public health-care system who return to the workforce, if they accept a full-time position with a public employer for a period of two years. This came into effect in December 2022 and first payments to eligible nurses will be made within six months of starting employment.

Refer-a-nurse program: A current nurse who refers a prospective nurse to a Manitoba employer will be eligible to receive a \$1,000 referral bonus. Details are currently being finalized and will be shared in the coming weeks.

Provincial float pool: This initiative was negotiated in the most recent collective agreement with the Manitoba Nurses Union and creates a pool of nurses that can support staffing needs across the province. These nurses receive a premium for shifts worked away from their home site. Job postings are now active and numerous applications have been received.

Travel nurse incentive: This incentive will increase the premium currently paid to travel locum nurses, who are nurses who travel to work and cover shifts in remote locations, to \$10 per hour. This is an important human resource need that must be filled. The Manitoba government is also currently exploring options to support northern and remote nurses who live and work in the same communities, with more details to be provided as soon as possible.

Wellness incentive: All nurses will receive additional funds in their health spending account to be used for their own health and wellness including \$500 for full-time and \$250 for part-time nurses. The estimated investment in this incentive is more than \$6.9 million in 2023-24. This program is currently rolling out to nurses across the province but, to date, more than 6,400 full-time nurses and more than 2,300 part-time nurses have received these funds.