

Potential Future Crisis in Health Human Resources in Nova Scotia?

A Critical Look at Key Policy Documents related to Labour Shortages and Labour Mobility in Healthcare.



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Background

- *On the Move: Employment-related Geographical Mobility (ERGM) in the Canadian Context* is a SSHRC funded project. It is a comprehensive exploration of the full spectrum of employment-related mobility from international to local mobility.
- The Nova Scotia sub-component, *The Employment-Related Geographic Mobility of Professional and Paraprofessional Healthcare Workers* focuses on the mobility and working conditions of professional (i.e. physicians and nurses) and paraprofessional (i.e. personal care workers) healthcare workers in Nova Scotia.
- **As part of our NS study we examined key Nova Scotia and Canadian policy documents related to health human resources and labour mobility.** These documents were examined in order to understand the policy environment that might have implications for future health human resources in Nova Scotia.

Methods

This study examined public domain documents that were collected from:

1) keyword searches in EBSCOhost, MEDLINE, ScienceDirect, and WorldCat.org, amongst others (September 2012-April 2013). Keywords included (but were not limited to) healthcare, human resources, Nova Scotia, labour mobility, demographics, immigration, outmigration, healthcare jobs, and various permutations and combinations thereof.

2) the official websites of government agencies and background papers. These included Statistics Canada, Health Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Labour Mobility Coordinating Group, the Government of Nova Scotia, and the Healthcare Human Resource Sector Council.

Four categories of relevant policy documents were identified, namely:

- Health Human Resources
- Migration
- Healthcare Credential Recognition
- Labour Mobility

Results

- Different documents acknowledge the potential for future healthcare labour shortages, and suggest there is a sense of urgency to addressing the issue.
- Various policies and programs are under development and/or consideration in response to the potential shortage of healthcare human resources. Possible responses to shortages are migration and interprovincial movement of healthcare workers yet these responses have challenges.

Migration- A Solution to Labour Shortages?

Migration policies significantly impact the movement of healthcare workers across international borders and depending upon the policy can negatively effect their employment. Policies are variable and are often:

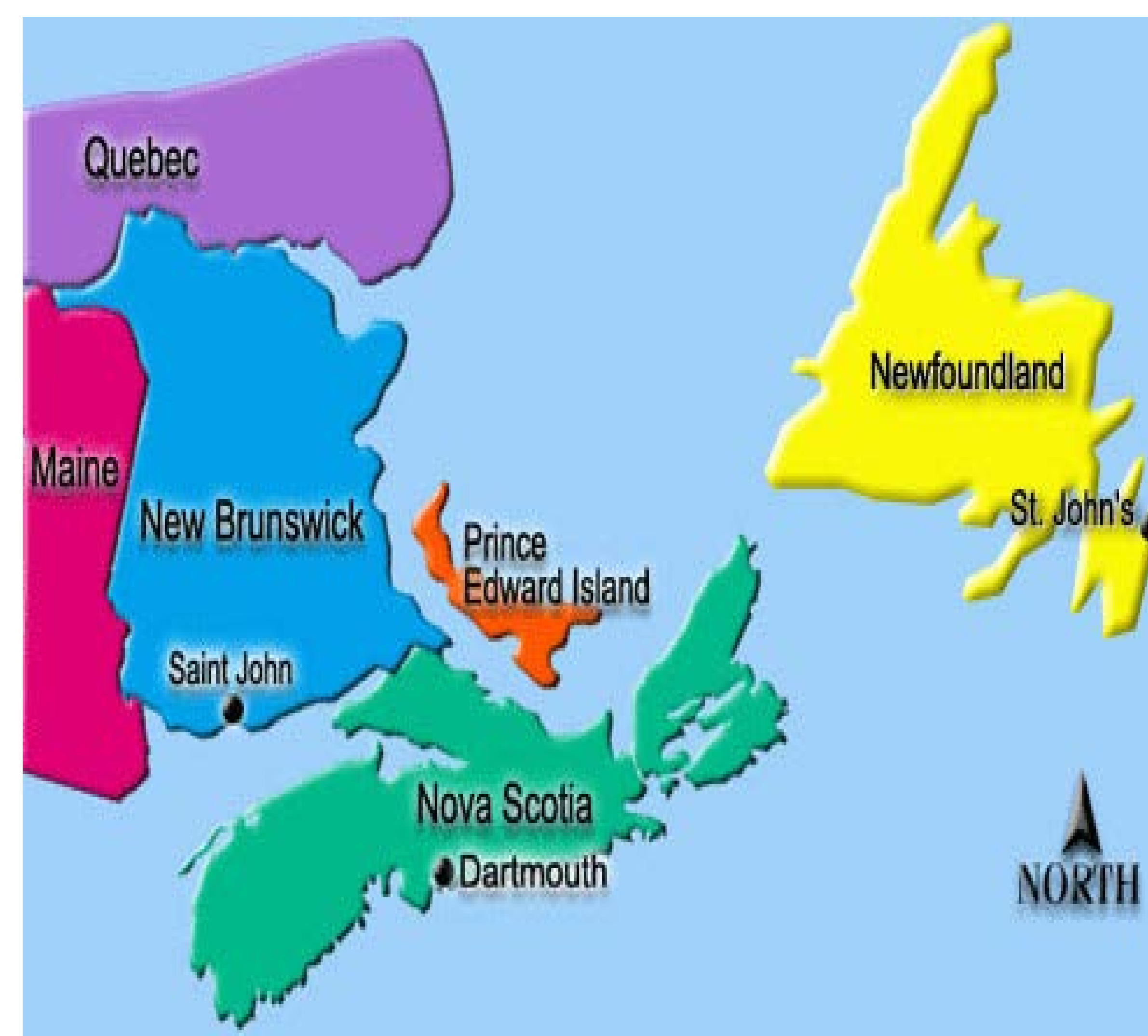
- subject to rapid changes;
- complicated by the division of responsibilities between the jurisdiction e.g. federal, provincial, territorial regulations; and/or
- contradict one another.

Interprovincial Movements – A Solution to Labour Shortages?

Credential recognition can potentially impact the interprovincial movements of Canadian-trained professionals.

Key Nova Scotia Demographics Related to Potential Future Crises in Health Human Resources.

- An ageing and declining population and increasing retirements.
- Fewer healthcare graduates.
- Heightened healthcare needs.
- Ageing health workforce.
- Out-migration of healthcare professionals.
- Negative impacts on healthcare workers of essential services legislation.



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