



Best Provinces in Canada for Healthcare Workers



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Introduction

Healthcare workers are the backbone of our healthcare system. They provide the necessary support across the nation to keep our hospitals, clinics, and other facilities running smoothly.

As the healthcare industry faces continued staffing shortages, recruiting these professionals is a major challenge. In order to help Human Resources (HR) professionals better recruit and retain their healthcare workforce, we've conducted a study to find the top provinces for Healthcare workers in Canada.

The purpose of this study is to assist healthcare workers in making informed decisions about where to work in Canada based on a variety of employment and lifestyle factors. While also helping HR professionals in understanding the regional nuances and differences that affect recruitment, retention, and policy in the healthcare sector.

This report delves into multiple facets affecting healthcare workers, including compensation, working hours, commuting times, and cost of living, across the provinces. Find out what province ranks the highest and lowest for healthcare workers.

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Key Findings

Top Provinces for Healthcare Workers:

- Quebec leads as the best province for healthcare workers, followed by New Brunswick and Saskatchewan. This high ranking is directly related to the favourable work conditions, quality of healthcare services, and provincial policies supporting healthcare professionals.
- The lower positions of Ontario and Prince Edward Island highlight the impact of high living costs, longer work hours, and lower compensation per hour. Leading to less favourable working and life conditions for these healthcare workers.

Other Insights

Healthcare workers in Newfoundland and Labrador report the highest annual average hours worked, likely due to staff shortages and recruitment challenges. While the best compensation is found in British Columbia and Quebec, which correlates with their higher costs of living and demand for skilled professionals.

Provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan offer shorter commutes, enhancing job satisfaction and life quality, whereas longer commutes in Ontario and Quebec could adversely affect work-life balance.

Economically, Quebec presents the lowest cost of living, making it attractive for healthcare workers, in contrast to Ontario and British Columbia where higher living costs require balancing with competitive salaries.

Additionally, higher crime rates in provinces like Manitoba and Saskatchewan may deter healthcare workers, influencing their choice of workplace location.



Overall, the Top Provinces in Canada for Healthcare Workers

The leading provinces for healthcare workers are Quebec, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan, all providing excellent work conditions, opportunities, and healthcare policies. Quebec, ranking first, stands out with favourable working hours, high hourly compensation, and an affordable cost of living. Built from supportive provincial policies.



"Quebec's healthcare ministry is the largest employer of the Province. Quebec has a well-established healthcare system with a focus on universal healthcare coverage and is strongly supported by international student bodies as most hospitals are backed by some of the best universities in the world. The province invests significantly in healthcare infrastructure, services, and resources, which helps attract and retain healthcare professionals."

Sebastien Notari, Head of Sales at Evolia

New Brunswick and Saskatchewan follow closely, offering better commuting conditions compared to Quebec.

Provinces like Ontario and Prince Edward Island rank lower due to high living costs, long working hours, and average hourly compensation. This indicates staffing shortages and misaligned pay for the required hourly work.

British Columbia, despite its high compensation rates, also faces challenges.



"The fast evolution of BC's demographics, notably outside the main hubs of Vancouver and Victoria, in addition to the quick increase in the cost of living, probably impacted this ranking." He highlights the need for improvement in work-life balance: "As BC now ranks amongst the highest compensations offered, I believe the next steps will be to find ways to offer a better work-life balance to their workers. This can come from hiring additional staff, but also by implementing policies offering more flexibility to cover shifts in different locations." Self-scheduling practices, according to Max, can significantly enhance shift coverage and employee morale: "Self-scheduling practices can also greatly help fill more shifts while keeping employee morale high. We saw over 10% more shifts being filled in the healthcare organizations which leveraged Evolia to introduce self-scheduling in Quebec."

Max Trudel, COO of Evolia



Top & Bottom Provinces for Healthcare Workers:

- Quebec leads as the best province for healthcare workers, followed by New Brunswick and Saskatchewan. This high ranking is directly influenced by strong pay, favourable working hours, and lower cost of living that these provinces have strived for with provincial policies supporting healthcare professionals.
- The lower positions of PEI and Ontario highlight the impact of high costs of living, Ontario and British Columbia highlight the impact of high living costs, long working hours, and less favourable pay in PEI's case, as they rank last in compensation per hour for healthcare workers; despite advanced healthcare infrastructures.

Overall Ranking: Best Provinces for Healthcare Workers

1. Quebec	6. Nova Scotia
2. New Brunswick	7. Alberta
3. Saskatchewan	8. Manitoba
4. Newfoundland and Labrador	9. Prince Edward Island
5. British Columbia	10. Ontario



Specialized Care Facilities

Specialized Care Facilities is a subset of healthcare workers in Canada. We've pulled their rankings based on the same weighted criteria to compare how this specific industry compares to other healthcare workers.

- Quebec also tops the list for nursing and residential care facilities, indicating a robust sector with potentially better employment conditions across the board for healthcare workers.
- Saskatchewan and Manitoba also rank well, suggesting focused improvements or investments in residential care services within these provinces.

Overall Ranking: Best Provinces for Nursing and residential care facilities



1. Quebec

2. Saskatchewan

3. Manitoba

4. Newfoundland and Labrador

5. Ontario

6. Alberta

7. Prince Edward Island

8. Nova Scotia

9. New Brunswick

10. British Columbia



Healthcare Employees are Working an Average of 2% More in 2022 Than 2020

There is a noticeable variation in annual hours worked across provinces, highlighting different challenges and work-life balances. Newfoundland and Labrador top the list with the most hours worked at 1,745, likely indicating a high demand for healthcare services or shortages in healthcare staffing. On the other hand, Nova Scotia reports the fewest hours at 1,379, suggesting better staffing or efficient healthcare management.

Annual average number of hours worked, EMPLOYED, BOTH SEXES (2022)



1. Nova Scotia 1,379h

2. New Brunswick 1,455h

3. Quebec 1,539h

4. British Columbia 1,566h

5. Manitoba 1,578h

6. Saskatchewan 1,598h

7. Alberta 1,599h

8. Prince Edward Island 1,605h

9. Ontario 1,627h

10. Newfoundland and Labrador 1,745h



Newfoundland and Labrador consistently saw the highest number of hours worked, increasing from 1,695 in 2020 to 1,745 in 2022, pointing at the potential of an ongoing staffing shortage.

In contrast, Nova Scotia, which had some of the lowest hours worked, saw a reduction from 1,402 in 2020 to 1,379 in 2022, suggesting improvements in staffing and retention.



Annual average number of hours worked, EMPLOYED, BOTH SEXES

Healthcare Workers - ALL	2020	2021	2022
Canada - ALL	1,559	1,604	1,596
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,695	1,732	1,745
Prince Edward Island	1,647	1,701	1,605
Nova Scotia	1,402	1,375	1,379
New Brunswick	1,560	1,474	1,455
Quebec	1,509	1,538	1,539
Ontario	1,586	1,641	1,627
Manitoba	1,575	1,612	1,578
Saskatchewan	1,550	1,593	1,598
Alberta	1,541	1,631	1,599
British Columbia	1,523	1,558	1,566

HR Implications for Work-Life Balance

In provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador, where longer work hours are prevalent, businesses should prioritise initiatives that promote work-life balance. This includes flexible schedules, wellness programs, and mental health supports to address burnout and staffing shortages.



Compensation Drastically Changes by Province

Compensation for healthcare workers across Canadian provinces increased from 2021 to 2022, with British Columbia leading the change, showing a rise from \$40.06 to \$41.1 per hour.

Quebec and Alberta also saw strong increases, indicating a competitive effort to keep up with the rising cost of living and healthcare talent shortages. Notably, Prince Edward Island had a substantial relative increase in compensation, though it remains one of the lower-paying provinces.



Compensation per hour

Healthcare Workers - ALL	2021	2022
Canada - ALL	\$38.61	\$40.06
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$37.27	\$37.82
Prince Edward Island	\$31.79	\$34.56
Nova Scotia	\$34.84	\$36.46
New Brunswick	\$35.62	\$36.88
Québec	\$38.90	\$40.90
Ontario	\$39.08	\$40.31
Manitoba	\$34.30	\$36.07
Saskatchewan	\$36.79	\$37.83
Alberta	\$38.99	\$40.55
British Columbia	\$40.06	\$41.10

HR Implications for Compensation Strategies

In provinces like British Columbia and Ontario, where the cost of living is high, HR teams need to consider compensation packages that are not only competitive but also reflect the local economic conditions. This may include offering higher salaries, housing allowances, and relocation assistance to offset the high living costs.

Comprehensive compensation strategies that go beyond salary and include benefits such as retirement plans, paid vacation, paid sabbatical, etc. can make these areas more appealing despite their higher cost of living.



Ready to Spend Only 15 Minutes Commuting?

Newfoundland and Labrador have the shortest average commuting times, which could enhance overall job satisfaction and work-life balance for healthcare workers there. Ontario has the longest commuting time, especially via public transit, which could impact daily life and job satisfaction negatively.

Total Average Commuting Duration



1. Newfoundland and Labrador 15,3 minutes

2. Saskatchewan 16,5 minutes

3. New Brunswick 17,1 minutes

4. Prince Edward Island 17,2 minutes

5. Nouvelle-Écosse 19,7 minutes

6. Manitoba 20,1 minutes

7. Alberta 21 minutes

8. British Columbia 21,8 minutes

9. Quebec 22,8 minutes

10. Ontario 24,5 minutes



It's also interesting to see the breakdown of commute times through transit. In larger cities like Toronto or Vancouver, there are more healthcare workers that commute by transit. Transit introduces commute times that are close to or well over double that by other methods of commuting, like cars.



Total Average Commuting Duration - BY TRANSIT

Province	Public transit
Ontario	46,2
Canada - ALL	43,3
Alberta	43
Quebec	42
British Columbia	41,9
Manitoba	36,5
Nova Scotia	33,5
Newfoundland + Labrador	32,8
Saskatchewan	32,7
New Brunswick	31
Prince Edward Island	26

HR Implications:

- Flexible Scheduling: For regions with longer commute times, such as Quebec and Ontario, introducing flexible work schedules can help employees avoid peak commuting hours. This flexibility can help to improve work-life balance and daily well-being, reducing the burden that commuting to work puts on employees.
- Transportation Benefits: In urban centres with longer commute times, healthcare employers could offer transportation benefits such as transit subsidies or even a shuttle service.



Cost of living can almost double across Canadian provinces

The cost of living varies significantly across provinces, with Quebec having the lowest and Ontario the highest. This economic factor is crucial as it directly affects healthcare workers' disposable income and overall living standards. Higher costs in provinces like British Columbia and Ontario might offset the benefits of higher compensation in those regions, given how high the monthly cost of living is.

Overall Ranking: Best Provinces for Nursing and residential care facilities



1. Quebec \$2,625.00

2. Newfoundland and Labrador \$2,845.00

3. New Brunswick \$2,918.00

4. Prince Edward Island \$3,080.00

5. Saskatchewan \$3,091.00

6. Manitoba \$3,324.00

7. Nova Scotia \$3,790.00

8. Alberta \$4,115.00

9. British Columbia \$4,557.00

10. Ontario \$4,589.00



HR Implications for your Total Rewards Strategy

Understanding the economic landscape, including the cost of living and local economic conditions, is crucial for HR when crafting compensation packages. In provinces with a high cost of living like Ontario and British Columbia, HR might consider offering above-market average salaries to match the living standards and attract top talent.

Final Thoughts

It's clear that from a cost of living, compensation and work-life balance perspective, Quebec wins when it comes to a great place for healthcare workers. Newfoundland and Labrador follow suit, offering a supportive environment that balances work with wellness.

Conversely, provinces like Ontario and Prince Edward Island face challenges such as high living costs and long working hours, which can reduce overall well-being. Sébastien Notari, suggests a few ways to retain and attract employees in higher cost of living provinces: "First, adding value to the job by implementing flexible scheduling options, such as compressed workweeks and flexible start and end times, can help employees manage long commute times and achieve better work-life balance. Secondly, develop targeted recruitment campaigns that emphasize the unique benefits of working in healthcare in Ontario, despite the challenges, by highlighting the quality of healthcare facilities, career growth opportunities, and the diverse patient population as attractive aspects of the job."

The data not only paints a picture of the state of healthcare in each province but also equips us with insights on how to better serve all healthcare workers, given these provincial differences.



Data Methodology

Data from Statistics Canada was collected and analyzed, to provide a ranking system that is based on a weighted average of the below areas and data sources.

Annual Hours worked, by NAICS Industry

Weight = 25%

Compensation per hour, by Province / Average weekly earnings, by Province

Weight = 30%

Commuting Duration, by Province

Weight = 15%

Cost of Living, by Province

Weight = 30%



Q&A

Sebastien Notari, VP of Business Development at Evolia

- **Quebec leads as the best province for healthcare workers, why do you think that is?**

Quebec's healthcare ministry is the largest employer of the Province. Quebec has a well-established healthcare system with a focus on universal healthcare coverage and is strongly supported by International student bodies as most hospitals are backed by some of the best Universities in the world. The province invests significantly in healthcare infrastructure, services, and resources, which helps attract and retain healthcare professionals.

- **How can provinces like British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, combat the long work hours that are well-above the Canadian averages?**

These provinces have an aging population that require care while the health sector is widely under-served. This is mainly due to the conditions employees work in while the locations are mainly spread across the provinces. One way to overcome these issues is through investments in Workforce planning and development: this would ensure adequate staffing levels and avoid overburdening employees with excessive workload.

- **How can HR teams adjust strategies to attract and retain healthcare employees in provinces like Ontario, where cost of living is high, commute times are high, and work days are long?**

There are a few ways to retain and attract employees in Ontario. First, adding value to the job, by implementing flexible scheduling options, such as compressed workweeks, flexible start and end times, to help employees manage long commute times and achieve better work-life balance. Secondly, develop targeted recruitment campaigns that emphasize the unique benefits of working in healthcare in Ontario, despite the challenges and highlighting the quality of healthcare facilities, career growth opportunities, and the diverse patient population as attractive aspects of the job.

Max Trudel, COO at Evolia

- **How can provinces like British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, combat the long work hours that are well-above the Canadian averages?**

The fast evolution of BC's demographics, notably outside the main hubs of Vancouver and Victoria, additionned to the quick increase in the cost of living probably impacted this ranking. As BC now ranks amongst the highest compensations offered, I believe the next steps will be to find ways to offer a better work-life balance to their workers. This can sure come from hiring additional staff, but also by implementing policies offering more flexibility to cover shifts in different locations. Self-scheduling practices can also greatly help fill more shifts while keeping employee morale high as we saw over 10% more shifts being filled in the healthcare organizations which leveraged Evolia to introduce self-scheduling in Quebec.

If you believe that these few insights can help your business and want to learn more about our solution, or dive deeper into optimising your recruiting processes.

Contact us at info@evolia.com to book a consulting call with one of our recruiting specialists.

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+1 (888) 846 2025

