

Modernize Clinical Training Space in Hospitals and Academic Health Sciences Centres

Budget 2025 made clear that the federal government is keen to attract and retain talent at home and abroad and has lauded Canada as a place with a skilled, adaptable, and well-educated workforce. Nowhere is this more obvious than the healthcare sector and the government should regard health infrastructure as key to support healthcare learners across the country.

The health sector is one of Canada's largest employers, with more than [2 million workers in 2023](#). Still, in a [federal government report](#) studying Canadian health workforce education and training, the report concluded that Canada is going to experience a significant gap in the health workforce and will likely worsen if no action is taken within 10 years.

It will be a challenge to close the gap even if health professional education and training capacity at universities and colleges increases across Canada, because there will also need to be the equivalent increase in hospital-based clinical training space capacity to support more learners.

Most health professionals in Canada begin their education as a student in a lecture hall, and most continue to practice, refine, and master techniques and procedures in a hospital, a clinic, and in the field. In particular, healthcare providers spend a lot of their time in skills and simulation labs in affiliated teaching hospitals, which offer safe, controlled, and realistic settings to hone their skills and learn to provide high quality care. Without modernizing and expanding clinical training spaces at hospitals, it will be much more difficult to expand training seats for healthcare providers.

Why this matters now

Clinical education spaces in hospitals and academic health sciences centres, whether it be classrooms or microsurgery suites, are important for students and medical providers alike. Healthcare training spaces are critical for attracting and retaining Canada's health care talent.

Since most medical schools in Canada are located on the campus of their affiliated teaching hospital (e.g., The University of Ottawa Medical School is located on the campus of the Ottawa General Hospital), skills labs are also located on the hospital campus (e.g., The Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Halifax, affiliated with Dalhousie Medical School has a [Skills Centre at the QEII](#)). This means, health infrastructure is integral to health professional education and training right from the very beginning.

Many hospitals in Canada which train students, residents, and continuing educators have and need more dedicated space for learning, including at rural, remote, and Northern sites. It might not be surgical simulation suites, but simulation programs for Emergency Departments to practice mass casualty emergencies. But even classroom space, debriefing rooms, and locker rooms are also critical to ongoing medical education of all healthcare workers.

Further, teaching hospitals must meet certain accreditation standards to train and educate. Hospitals undergo accreditation assessments, including the evaluation of their educational environment to support healthcare learners. A hospital can risk losing their accreditation to train providers if their infrastructure does not meet prescribed standards. This could invite challenges to recruit and retain healthcare workers, affect hospital-based research, and provide accessible patient care.

What the federal government can do

1. **Prioritize clinical space and hospital-based simulation centres when considering health infrastructure projects.** Health infrastructure should consider projects which modernize clinical space to promote team-based care, create dedicated teaching and simulation facilities in clinical environments, and build research and innovation capacity that is directly tied to patient care.

Strategic investments in health infrastructure to support clinical education help hospitals and health authorities recruit and keep staff and expand training seats for key professions. It is essential for training the next generation of healthcare workers and attain highly skilled healthcare providers for hospitals to have world-class academic training centres on their campuses.