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POSTER PRESENTATION

REHABILITATION HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND EDUCATION STRATEGIES

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PURPOSE: To conduct a literature synthesis to identify recruitment, retention and education strategies from grey and peer-reviewed literature applicable to rehabilitation professionals. To determine the feasibility and importance of these strategies for the development of a rehabilitation Health Human Resource strategy in Ontario. **RELEVANCE:** Given the increase in prevalence of patients with chronic and complex multi-system disorders and a shift in client transition patterns from hospitals to community, rehabilitation will need to be matched with increased human resources. Rehabilitation professionals including Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Speech-Language Pathologists were shown to be in the top ten positions for which Ontario hospitals reported recruitment difficulties. **METHODS:** 1) Literature synthesis: Medline, CINAHL, on-line catalogues and publications from organizations were searched. In addition hand searches for articles based on reference lists of retrieved articles were conducted. All documents and relevant articles were reviewed in terms of their potential application for the rehabilitation setting. The information was collated, tabulated and synthesized based on a multidimensional interactive allied health workforce recruitment and retention conceptual model. 2) Expert Panels: Two expert advisory panels were convened; one examining recruitment and retention and the other education. We used a modified Delphi panel process to review the results of the literature synthesis and rate the feasibility and importance of the strategies. **RESULTS:** From 73 strategies we grouped 40 recruitment and retention strategies across three components: Quality of Worklife and Work Environment (n = 19); Workload and Skill Mix (n=6); and Financial Incentives and Marketing (n=15). From 34 strategies we grouped 24 education strategies under: Education and Training (n=11) and Professional Development (n=13). The expert panels further reduced these strategies. **CONCLUSION:** Key factors that need to be considered prior to strategy implementation include: geographical setting, practice environment/location, gender and generational differences, inter-professional collaboration and financial issues.