



# DIRECTOR REPORT

To: Health Care Scholarship Committee

Report Number: DR-HCSC-004

From: Chair Veach

Date: October 4, 2024

Subject: PRRD Health Care Scholarship Review

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## PURPOSE / ISSUE:

The purpose of this report is to propose adjustments to the current scholarship programs with Northern Health Authority to better support healthcare students and enhance recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals in the region.

### \*RECOMMENDATION #1:

~~That the Health Care Scholarship Committee recommend that the Regional Board terminate the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Peace River Regional District and the Northern Health Authority and have staff investigate either entering into a new MOU with local educational institutes or take over doing this solely in house.~~

**\*This recommendation was considered and defeated at the October 4, 2024 Health Care Scholarship Meeting.**

### RECOMMENDATION #2:

That, in response to feedback received from students, that the Health Care Scholarship Committee recommend that the Regional Board amend the current health care scholarships provided by the Peace River Regional District as follows:

Northern Lights College Health Care Scholarship from 20 @ \$1,000 each to 6 @ \$3,000

Licensed Practical Nurse LPN from 10 @ \$1,000 each to 6 @ 5,000

Career Professional Development Scholarship from 13 @ \$1,000 - \$1,500 each to 7 @ \$2,000 - \$2,500 with a 1-year return of service agreement.

## BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

### Recommendation #1

The PRRD's Healthcare Scholarship Committee was created in 2016 to help recruit and retain healthcare professionals to the region. However, PRRD Healthcare Scholarships go unawarded each year. The Health Care Scholarship Committee directed communications staff to raise awareness of Health Care Scholarships in January of 2021.

From January to April 2021, staff met with Northern Lights College Foundation and Northern Health Authority, which administers some of the scholarships on behalf of the PRRD, to collaborate on outreach. An MOU signed in 2020 between the PRRD and Northern Health Authority commits both parties to develop brochures for the scholarship. It also commits both parties to make joint promotional activities and materials available for review and approval.

Since that time the PRRD communications department has added a Scholarships and Bursaries web page onto the PRRD's public website, has given it an extensive overhaul to approve accessibility and navigation, as well as added a tab navigation system onto the web page for each of the six available scholarships. The PRRD also ran a radio campaign from March 5 to June 30 of 2021 with a total of 86 spots. This radio campaign advertised the health care scholarships and was executed on CJDC, CHRX, CKNL, and Moose FM.

On June 25, 2024, PRRD Communications contacted the Communications Department at Northern Health requesting their collaboration and adoption of the new PRRD Brand Kit. The PRRD Communications Department also created a new social media calendar with key messaging and graphic assets, and this database was shared with Northern Health Communications. Currently there has been little to no response from Northern Health.

Testimonials for the Health Care High School Scholarships were obtained from Northern Lights College Foundation and added to the web page and used for social media.

While there have been some social media advertisements of the Health Care Scholarships done by Northern Health Authority, scholarships still go unawarded each year leading to a carry-over of close to \$70,000 in unused funds.

### Recommendation #2

During the lunch session held at the Dawson Creek District Hospital with Northern Health and the Health Care Scholarship Committee, Directors had an opportunity to meet with some of the nursing staff and students and discuss the current scholarship matrix. During these discussions the following comments were made by students and staff of the program:

- *Northern Lights College Health Care Scholarship (20 = \$1,000 each):* Students in attendance noted that the cost of school fees and books fees has increased over time, and that it would be more beneficial to the students if this scholarship was either broken in 6 = \$3,000 each or 4 = \$4,000 each as this would be financially beneficial for covering registration, books, or entry level course fees.
- *Licensed Practical Nurse LPN (10 = \$1,000 each):* Students noted it would be more beneficial if this scholarship was the same as the *RN/RPN (6 = \$5,000 each)* as there was still a return of service requirement, but that \$1,000 would barely cover the cost of books for most course loads.
- *Career Professional Development Scholarship (13 = \$1,000 - \$1,500 each):* Students noted that it may be beneficial for the PRRD to look at changing this scholarship to 7 = \$2,000 - \$2,500 with a 1-year return of service agreement.
- Students also noted that it would be great to see an Indigenous focused scholarship as well for First Nations students from the area.

If the scholarship amounts are amended as suggested, the associated changes to budget will be included in Draft Budget for Function 180.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:**

- Not Applicable to Strategic Plan

External Links:

1. [Report ADM-HCSC-008, Nursing Recruitment and Retention – Focus Group Results](#)  
(January 28, 2022 Health Care Scholarship Meeting, Agenda Item 10.1)

Deferred from October 4, 2024 Health Care Scholarship Committee