



CanCOVID Speaker Series

Event Summary



The Pandemic Exposes Critical Gaps in Health Workforce Data Infrastructure

Speaker

Ivy Bourgeault, PhD

Objective

To provide an overview of the Speaker Series presentation on 'The Pandemic Exposes Critical Gaps in Health Workforce Data Infrastructure' led by Dr. Bourgeault, who presented results of an investigation into the state of the health workforce and decision-making related to the health workforce in Canada. The findings suggested arguing in favour of improving health workforce data infrastructure to allow for better planning and decision-making practices.

Key Messages

- Healthcare workers' mental health has deteriorated during the COVID-19 pandemic and has exacerbated the endemic levels of burnout in the health workforce.
- Available health workforce data exists in silos and lack standardization. For example, Canada has good data on physicians and their practices, but this cannot be integrated with data on nurses or other practitioners. Even less is known about unregulated workers, such as personal support workers, and the substance use health workforce. There are no data on the racialization of health workers, Indigenous identity of health workers, language of service, and levels of disability.
- Nationally coordinated registration exist in other countries, such as Australia, and they have been successful in planning for supply and demand needs of the population. This existing infrastructure helped inform a more effective pandemic response, through calling on recently retired healthcare workers who could assist in the national vaccine rollout, as well as assessing the impact of the pandemic on the health workforce training pipeline.

Implications/Next Steps

- Health workforce data should be standardized and cut across multiple professions and areas of work. A minimum data standard is critical to these efforts. Qualitative data can help to address unquantifiable issues that impact health workforce planning. Together, standardized quantitative and qualitative data will aid in planning and decision-making to help protect the health workforce.

[Click here to view the recording of this event.](#)