Purpose

The Specialty Workforce Collaborative (SWC) is a non-hierarchical network that brings together Canada’s medical national specialty societies (NSS), the Royal College, the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC), the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), and other bodies with an interest in medical workforce matters.

Overarching goal: To inform and advance health workforce research and planning.

The aims the SWC are to:
- Enable exchange of information, advice and collaboration among collaborative members and others to enhance health workforce planning, data collection and research
- Develop and enhance the quality and capacity of health workforce research carried out by SWC participating organizations and other interested parties (e.g., methodology, approach, dissemination of findings, etc.)
- Establish a mechanism for gathering and disseminating just-in-time intelligence to support planning and decision-making (including health and education ministries, the Physician Resource Planning Advisory Committee, and deans of medicine)
- Improve health workforce forecasting based on patient needs and promoting the use of new information as part of decision-making processes
- Provide a virtual space and more formal mechanisms for information sharing, issue identification and collaboration among SWC participating organizations.

Key functions

**Identify** areas of research
**Inform and educate** decision-makers, researchers, medical and other health professions, regulatory bodies among others
**Consult and advise** decision-makers, NSS and the Royal College, other health professionals, among others, about workforce planning considerations (e.g., anticipated future workforce needs, population health needs)
**Recruit** needed expertise
**Collect, standardize and optimize** data, research methodologies, common taxonomies e.g. FTE, retirement
**Consult** others outside collaborative re issues, concerns, opportunities
**Connect** other groups with similar issues, residents groups and medical students, CMA (wider stakeholder group), patient groups, regulatory bodies
**Enable** SWC working groups to perform explicit functions

Guiding principles

- Working in the interest of the greater public good (patient-centered care, quality, access, population health, quadruple AIM)
- Respecting the autonomy of each of the constituent bodies
- Fostering consensus where possible
- Promoting and fostering collaboration to ensure alignment and synergy, and preventing duplication and redundancy
- Including patient perspective in research and analysis
**Composition**

The SWC includes certifying bodies, NSS and other national and provincial/territorial organizations (including learner organizations), data holders (e.g., CIHI, CaPER), and system planners/payors/decision-makers.

**Structure**

The SWC is supported by virtual mechanisms and by a coordinating group.

**Virtual**

Given the number of concerned organizations, the need for information-sharing is supported by a number of virtual mechanisms, these may include:

- Information/document sharing platform for:
  - Research Projects
  - Information on research methodologies
  - Question/Answer
  - Contact Lists
- Regular e-mails
- Webinars

**SWC Coordinating Group**

A coordinating group of up to 15 persons from the SWC will support the SWC by doing pre-work for broader consideration by the collaborative, including:

- Plan the annual RC-NSS HRH Dialogue program
- Provide ongoing advice to the RC on its medical workforce related research and analytic efforts
- Assist with issue identification that may be of interest/concern to the NSS as a collective, group/sub-set, or individually
- Explore joint action for discussion with the broader NSS collective, including but not limited to possible research and advocacy
- Provide advice on structure, content and functioning of the SWC’s virtual space
- Assists with ongoing tasks and planning

The Coordinating Group will meet face-to-face at least once yearly and convene by telephone or electronics on a quarterly basis.

**Secretariat support**

The Royal College will play an enabling role for the SWC:

- Responsible for providing and sustaining a virtual infrastructure for SWC
- Support the coordinating group, including in-person meetings (including venue and logistics)
- SWC work plan development
- Tracking and follow-up.