



Health Systems Planning Report

PHD-C 8-2026

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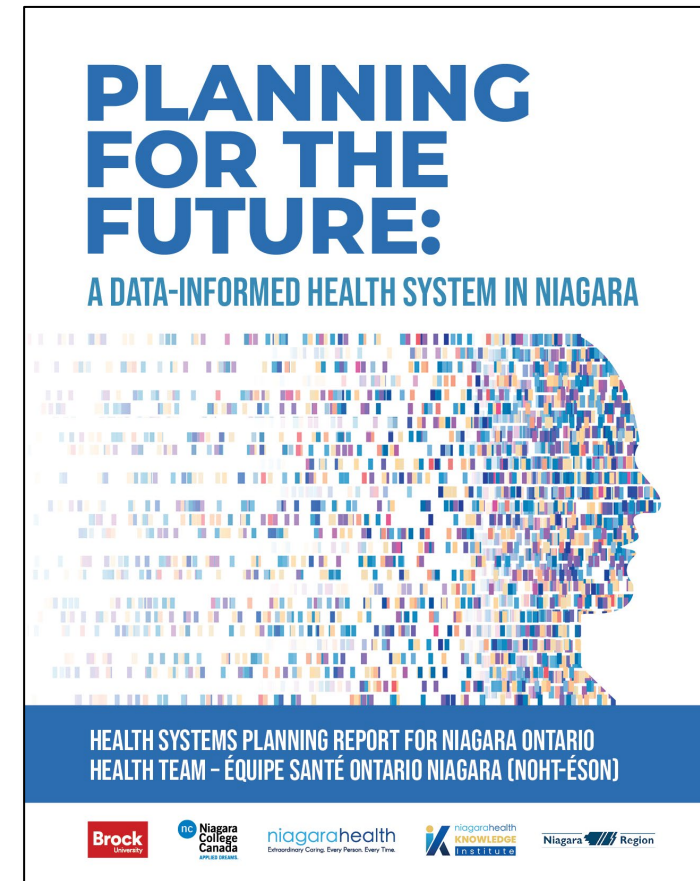
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Planning for the Future: A Data Informed Health System in Niagara

Purpose and Intended Use of Report

- Establish baseline picture of health
- Support coordinated, evidence-informed planning (five to 10 years)
- Identify patterns, pressures, and gaps relevant to planning



A Niagara-wide collaborative effort



Health System Capacity Defined using CIHI's “4S” Capacity Components

1. Stuff
2. Space
3. Staff
4. Systems

Check for updates


ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Defining Health System Capacity: A Rapid Review

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Abstract
Health systems provide essential resources to optimize, maintain, or restore the health of populations. The extent to which a health system can meet the needs of a local community can be considered the system’s “capacity”; however, it is unclear what this constitutes. We conducted a standardized rapid review to understand how health system capacity has been conceptualized in academic and grey literature. We conducted duplicate screening and data extraction. We summarized document characteristics descriptively and definitions/frameworks narratively. We identified 22 relevant documents; three (14%) provided a definition and 20 (91%) provided a framework. Each definition provided was unique. We synthesized reported frameworks into 11 key elements of health system capacity. We identified an infrequent and inconsistent conceptualization of health system capacity in published literature; however, this review may be used as a starting point for defining and describing key elements of capacity.

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CIHI Capacity Components across the Continuum of Care



Public health



Primary care



Emergency
Medical
Services
(EMS)



Acute
care
(hospitals)



Home and
community
care



Long-term
care, hospice,
palliative care



Mental health
and substance
use services



Housing-related
supports
(shelter/supportive
housing; navigation)

Nine Themes Emerged Regarding Health System Gaps

- Increasing chronic disease burden
- Improving primary care access
- Understanding mental health and substance use
- Communicable disease and outbreak preparedness
- Addressing health equity and access to care
- EMS pressures
- Hospital system pressures
- Increasing demand for long-term and hospice care
- Understanding homelessness and supportive housing

Recommendations Provided to Address Health System Gaps

- 48 short, medium and long-term recommendations across nine health system gaps are presented for planning consideration
- Informed by findings of assessment and align with Stuff-Space-Staff-Systems CIHI framework

Workforce is one of the most critical determinants of health system capacity



Workforce Planning – what we found

- Demand for nurses, support workers, health managers, dental professionals and pharmacy roles
- Growth in physiotherapy, occupational therapy and massage therapy aligns with aging population
- High demand for Nurse Practitioners and nurse supervisors

Addressing the Gaps



Next Steps

- Coordinated, evidence-informed actions across sectors
- Priority setting, align planning efforts and support integration of care
- Addressing the gaps will require collaboration