

## Survey says: The more students know about careers in health, the more interested they become

by Gloria Welton

photos courtesy of PEIHSC



Did you know there are over 60 health careers to pick from on PEI?

Did you know that many health occupations are in high demand across North America?

The PEI Health Sector Council (PEIHSC) surveyed 1,331 students from eleven high schools across the Island during the 2007-2008 school year. The **Grade 12 Exit Strategy Survey 2008** measured student awareness of the many careers in health and whether they were considering a career in health.

“The results of the survey indicated that students are very aware of the high profile careers in health such as doctor, nurse, and pharmacist,” says Mark DeMone, HR & Communications Advisor with the PEIHSC. “But after being told about the many other occupations in health to choose from, the students’ interest increased.”

### Are high school students planning for post-secondary education?

“This survey gave us a snapshot of the options students are considering as they leave high school,” says Mark.

The survey asked students if they were planning to continue their education following high school.

The vast majority of the students (93 percent) said they did plan to pursue post-secondary education.”

Students’ post-secondary plans:

- 763 (57 %) - university
- 253 (19 %) - college
- 178 (13 %) - trade school, articulated/joint degrees, military, or law enforcement
- 137 (10 %) - no response or ‘other’

### Post-secondary education in health leads to jobs

“Education is expensive and it is costly to be on an educational path that does not lead to employment,” says Mark.

“A growing amount of research indicates that many students who plan to take post-secondary education will end up working in jobs for which they are overqualified.

“Over-qualification is generally not an issue in the health sector, since the majority of jobs require university or college education. The message we want to get to students or anyone considering a career change is that many educational paths in the health sector lead to jobs that are in high demand and pay well.”

### Many students are interested in a career in health

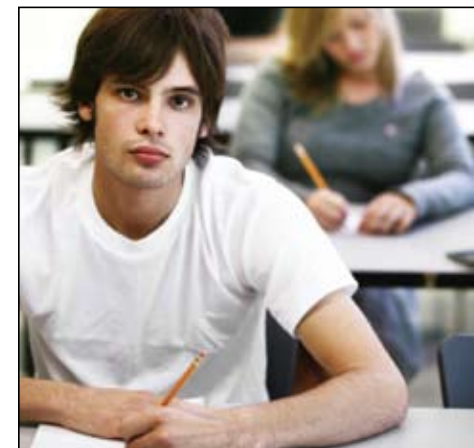
“The survey asked students to indicate their interest in a number of sectors,” says Mark. “During this section of the survey, the students taking part were not aware that it was measuring interest in health careers. Of the 1,331 students surveyed, 33 percent indicated an interest in a career in health. Construction came second at 14 percent, followed closely by tourism, bioscience, and culture.”

“We asked those who did not indicate an interest in health careers if they had considered it in the past,” says Mark. “It was amazing to see that 30 percent of students indicated they had considered a career in health at some point in the past. It is clear that educational requirements are a major deterrent to students considering a health career. We think that students have limited awareness of the actual options in this sector. While many occupations in the health system do require advanced education, a number have less stringent educational requirements.”

### Can more information help increase the interest in health?

The survey also attempted to find out if student interest in health occupations changed when provided with more information. “Students were given a description of 62 health occupations and were asked to indicate any that were of interest,” says Mark. “The results showed that interest grew when students were given a small amount of information about the many occupations in health.

The PEIHSC is making an effort to better inform students about career choices in this sector. “We are taking steps to support high schools by providing information about careers in the health sector that teachers can pass on to students,” says Mark.



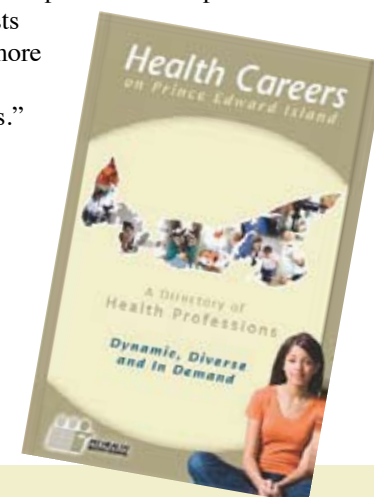
### Who influences career decisions?

“Canadian research tells us that parents, guardians and friends are big influences on students’ career choices,” says Mark. “We wanted to find out if that was the case for Island students. “We found that parents were the most influential. 66 percent of students said they were influenced to some degree by their parents and guardians, 39 percent said they were influenced by their friends, and 35 percent were influenced by career promotions campaigns.”

### Booklet available: Health Careers on PEI

In response to the results of the survey, PEIHSC published a directory of 62 health careers practiced on PEI. This booklet lists brief job descriptions, salary range, academic requirements, and educational institutions that offer programs leading to those careers.

“Our goal is to get this information to students, teachers, parents, guardians, school counsellors, employment counsellors, and anyone considering a career change,” says Mark. “In the future, we plan to do an updated version that lists even more health careers.”



To view the **Health Careers on PEI** booklet on-line, visit [www.peihsc.ca](http://www.peihsc.ca)

For further information about the 62 careers in the health sector on PEI or for a copy of the **Health Careers on PEI** booklet or the **Grade 12 Exit Strategy Survey 2008 Report**, call 367-4460.

The PEI Health Sector Council is funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement ([www.lmda.pe.ca](http://www.lmda.pe.ca))

[www.employmentjourney.com](http://www.employmentjourney.com)