Moving to Action: What We Heard

The October 28, 2026, discussion brought together participants from Manitoba and Saskatchewan to explore how mentorship could contribute to nurse retention, and what would be needed to make it effective and sustainable.

Five themes emerged:

1. Relationships and psychological safety come first - Effective mentorship must be grounded in trust, genuine care, reciprocity and meaningful human connection. Participation should be voluntary, expectations clear, and relationships flexible enough to meet individual needs.

2. Mentorship must be supported, not added to existing workloads - Protected time, mentor preparation, manageable workloads, recognition and leadership commitment are essential. Mentors need the capacity and resources to be available when nurses need them. Supports for both mentors and mentees would be beneficial.

3. Clarity and flexibility are both important - Clear roles, expectations and boundaries are needed, particularly between mentorship, preceptorship, education and management. Different mentorship models and communication approaches may be appropriate for different settings.

4. Technology should enable connection, not replace it - Simple, accessible tools could support mentor matching, communication, scheduling, resources and communities of practice. Technology should reduce barriers without adding unnecessary complexity.

5. Mentorship should contribute to broader system learning and action - Success should be measured through nurses' experiences of support, confidence, workplace conditions and retention. Recurring workplace concerns should have a confidential pathway to decision-makers, with accountability and feedback on actions taken.

The discussion reinforced that mentorship can help nurses navigate challenges, but it shouldn't become a substitute for addressing the workplace conditions contributing to those challenges. Participants also emphasized the importance of frontline nurse involvement and identifying opportunities for immediate, practical action.

A potentially powerful feature of this initiative: **mentorship can serve as both an individual support mechanism and a source of organizational learning, provided confidentiality, accountability and feedback mechanisms are built in from the beginning.**

The next phase will focus on exploring how these principles could inform the design, implementation and evaluation of a practical mentorship initiative.

Interested in staying involved?

We welcome your interest in helping shape the next phase of this initiative.

Click here or scan the QR code to share your contact information and let us know how you would like to be involved.