

FROM TEXTBOOK TO AI

How ISANS and CyberPatient Are Transforming Healthcare Communication Training in Canada

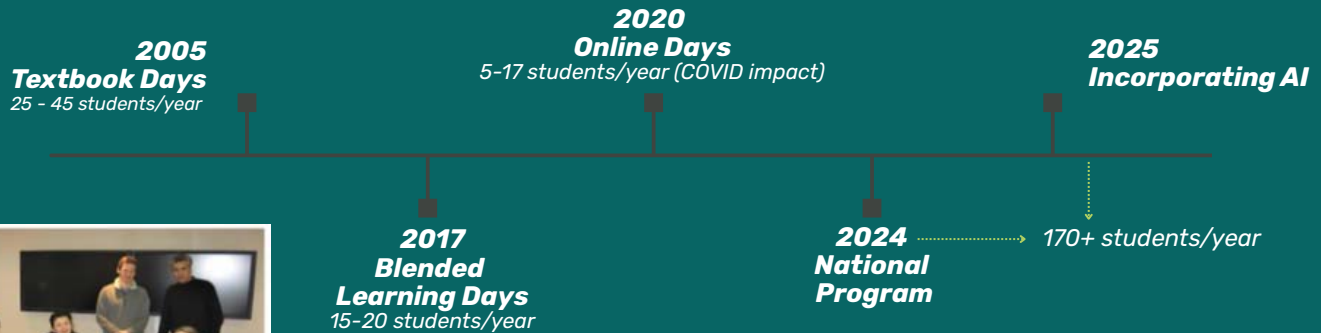
A Case Study in Scalable, Inclusive, and Culturally Sensitive Education
for Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals (IEHPs)



Meeting the Moment in Healthcare Education

For over two decades, the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) has led the way in preparing internationally educated healthcare professionals (IEHPs) for Canada's rigorous communication and licensure standards.

ISANS has evolved from in-house textbooks and site visits to delivering national, AI-supported language programs all in response to learners' changing needs. As healthcare communication grows more complex and barriers like time, distance, and scalability increase, the need for innovative tools becomes clear. That's where CyberPatient comes in.



THE CHALLENGE

Complex Skills, Limited Access

ISANS' earlier programs were highly hands-on, combining simulations, site visits, and in-person instruction. While effective, they faced logistical limits, and the shift to online learning during COVID-19 highlighted both new opportunities and fresh challenges.

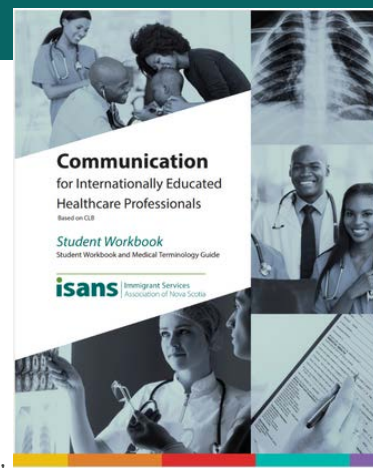
Loss of in-person simulation for patient interactions

Limited scalability of instructor-led roleplays

Barriers for working professionals managing shift work, childcare, and settlement responsibilities

A growing need for **culturally sensitive, region-specific communication practice**

Despite these constraints, the expectations for IEHPs remained high: they still needed to master nuanced, high-stakes communication scenarios from patient handovers and informed consent to breaking bad news, to pass exams and perform confidently in Canadian healthcare settings.



The ISANS textbook developed in 2005

Communicating with Patients	Handout #
• Patient communication principles	HO-D1
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D2
• Patient role-plays	HO-D3
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D4
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D5
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D6
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D7
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D8
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D9
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D10
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D11
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D12
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D13
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D14
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D15
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D16
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D17
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D18
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D19
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D20
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D21
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• Role-play scenarios	HO-D23
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D24
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D25
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D26
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D27
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D28
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D29
• Role-play scenarios	HO-D30

- 3 months (15 hours/week),
- In-person classes
- Weekly visits to healthcare sites



When AI Integration Meets National Ambition

In 2023, ISANS was tasked by IRCC to scale its healthcare communication programs nationally. With new delivery partners across the country and a proven online curriculum, one key piece was still missing: simulated communication practice that was scalable, realistic, and accessible.

Enter CyberPatient, a virtual teaching hospital with over 130 diverse patients, helping students build real-world clinical skills through guided and self-directed case-based learning. It provides a safe space for transitioning from theory to practice, fostering the development and honing of clinical reasoning and communication skills.

Together, ISANS and CyberPatient began integrating these simulations into ISANS' flagship courses, including:

- **Communication Strategies for Patient Interactions (CSPI)**
- **Strategies for CELBAN (Listening, Speaking, Writing, Reading)**
- **Professional Communication Skills for Nurses (PCSN)**

THE SOLUTION

CyberPatient Driving Scalable Simulation Access



ISANS partnered with CyberPatient, a virtual teaching hospital, to provide scalable, on-demand clinical communication practice. With 130+ diverse patient cases, CyberPatient offers both structured click-through simulations and free-form AI-powered conversations, allowing learners to build communication skills in realistic healthcare scenarios.

CyberPatient's role in the ISANS program is twofold:

Structured, Click-Through History Taking

Using a guided format to select questions categorized by clinical relevance, learners are able to:

- Reinforce theory through structured practice
- Build critical thinking and prioritization
- Increase awareness of clinical context
- Improve English through exposure to both written and spoken, culturally appropriate communication

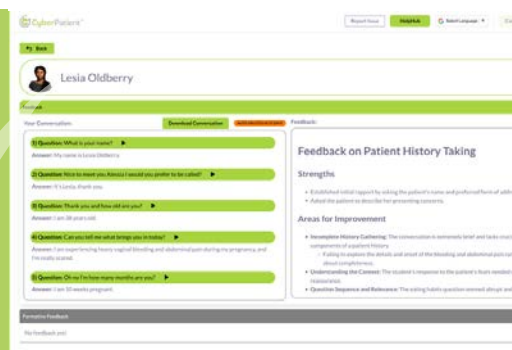
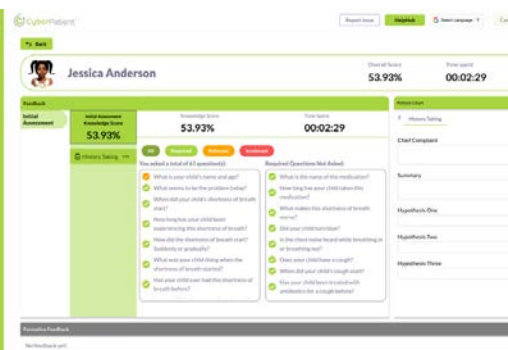
AI-Powered, Free-Form Communication

Learners hold real-time conversations with AI-driven patient avatars and are able to:

- Boost confidence in speaking English
- Practice real-time communication with natural, unscripted patient dialogue
- Build cultural awareness with diverse patients
- Enhance empathy and rapport through emotionally intelligent conversations

Both simulations offer instant feedback for instructors and learners to:






- Quickly identify and correct mistakes
- Track progress in real time
- Reinforce learning through immediate application

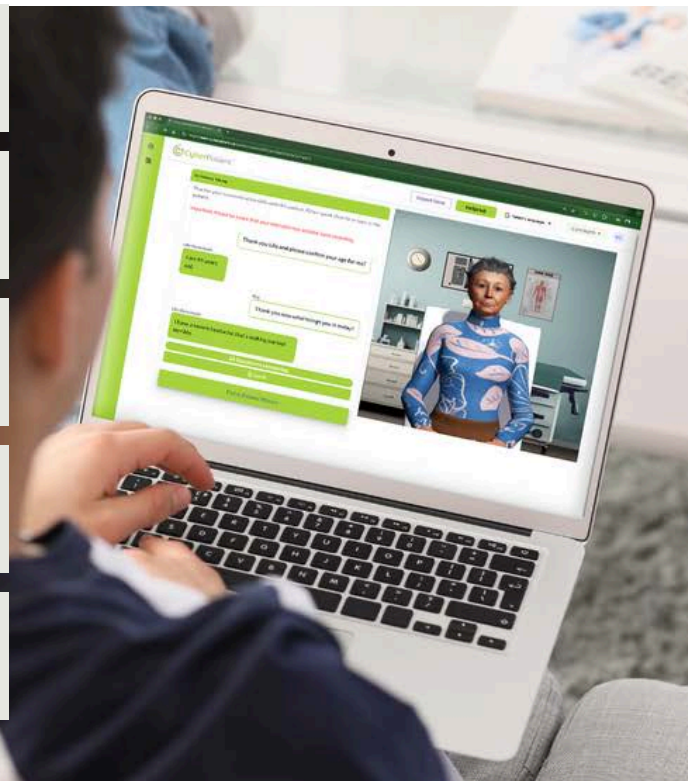


THE IMPACT

A Program Ready for the Future

By integrating CyberPatient, ISANS has transformed how internationally educated healthcare professionals (IEHPs) prepare for Canadian clinical environments. The outcomes are measurable, scalable, and future-proof:

-  **Nationwide Access**
High-quality communication training available across Canada, regardless of location
-  **Flexible Participation**
Self-paced learning that fits around learners' personal and professional obligations
-  **Simulation Without Limits**
24/7 access to realistic, scalable practice without depending on human simulation
-  **Efficient, Personalized Coaching**
Instructors focus more on coaching and feedback, with less time spent on logistics
-  **Cultural & Clinical Readiness**
Learners gain confidence and cultural competence to provide patient-centred care in Canada



THE CONCLUSION

From Challenge to Opportunity

By partnering with CyberPatient, ISANS enhances its ability to deliver flexible, innovative, and effective healthcare communication training. This collaboration shows how thoughtful integration of technology can bridge gaps in simulation-based education, turning logistical challenges into opportunities. More than a tech solution, CyberPatient serves as a strategic partner in supporting IEHPs on their journey to licensure and beyond, demonstrating how AI, when applied with care, can humanize education at scale.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS



ISANS helps immigrants build their future in Nova Scotia and beyond through employment, language, and integration programs. With a focus on innovation and accessibility, ISANS supports internationally educated healthcare professionals (IEHPs) in successfully entering Canada's healthcare system.



CyberPatient, developed by Interactive Health International, is a virtual teaching hospital offering immersive, case-based simulations that build clinical confidence, communication skills, and cultural competence for healthcare learners worldwide.