



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

Forty-five additional nurse practitioners hired for B.C.

BURNABY –There will soon be 45 new nurse practitioners working around British Columbia, as part of government's commitment to substantially increase the number of nurse practitioners working in the province, Health Minister Margaret MacDiarmid announced while in Burnaby to see how a new local nurse practitioner will help in the community.

"Nurse practitioners play an important role within the health care system, providing high-quality health services to British Columbians in a variety of settings, especially in primary and community care settings," said MacDiarmid. "Today's announcement means more nurse practitioners will be able to work here in British Columbia and ensure their skills are used to serve the health-care needs of patients and families."

The new nurse practitioners are being funded by a \$22.2-million initiative, first announced in May, which committed to fund 190 nurse practitioner positions over the next three fiscal years.

The nurse practitioners will be working in primary health-care settings, including medical clinics, mental health clinics, residential care and First Nations' health services. It's expected these nurse practitioners will start working as soon as possible, once contracts are signed with health authorities.

"We know that many nurse practitioners have been frustrated by the lack of opportunities for the profession in the province, and this will go a long way towards solving that problem. My hope is that more British Columbians will find out how nurse practitioners can help them better access the health-care services they need," said Rosemary Graham, president of the British Columbia Nurse Practitioner Association.

Nurse practitioners were introduced to B.C. in 2005 to assist in improving access to primary health-care services. Currently, 249 nurse practitioners are registered with the College of Registered Nurses of B.C. The latest statistics shows 72 are currently not practicing within their chosen career. B.C. has the ability to educate up to 45 nurse practitioners a year, 15 at each of the University of British Columbia, the University of Northern British Columbia and the University of Victoria.

In October 2012, the ministry announced new regulations to allow nurse practitioners to admit and discharge patients from health-care facilities, working in collaboration with physicians and other health-care providers. British Columbia is the second jurisdiction in Canada to have qualified nurse practitioners admit and discharge patients from hospitals, after Ontario.

A backgrounder follows.

BACKGROUNDER

Forty-five additional nurse practitioners hired for B.C.

The nurse practitioners will be working in primary care settings around British Columbia and are hired based on population base, including:

Fraser Health – 10

Vancouver Coastal Health – nine

Vancouver Island Health Authority – seven

Interior Health – six

Northern Health – five

Provincial Health Services Authority – five

Providence Health Care – three

A complete list of where the nurse practitioners will be working can be viewed at

www.primaryhealthcarebc.ca/resource_np.html.

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