
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Advanced Education and
Labour Market Development

PROVINCE ESTABLISHES NORTHERN NURSING SIMULATION LABS

PRINCE GEORGE – The Province is investing \$960,000 in the Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program to establish simulation laboratories that will provide nursing students with learning opportunities to enhance their skills in caring for adult and pediatric patients with complex medical issues, announced Shirley Bond, MLA for Prince George-Mount Robson.

“Nurses play a vital role in our healthcare system. This technology will allow us to provide expanded training opportunities for nursing students across northern B.C., as well as additional professional development activities for the nurses who work at Northern Health,” said Bond. “Another essential component of this simulation laboratory will be the ability to broadcast to other rural and remote communities.”

In the past, geographic differences in health service delivery could limit opportunities for nursing students to work with patients requiring highly specialized care. Now, nursing students studying in Prince George, Quesnel, Terrace, and Fort St. John will be educated using state-of-the-art, high-fidelity patient simulators that will provide them with complex adult and pediatric care experiences. The Northern Baccalaureate Nursing Collaborative is a partnership comprised of programs at the University of Northern B.C., Northwest Community College, and College of New Caledonia.

“The simulation laboratory is a critical tool to assist training nurses in best practices for the benefit of northern British Columbians,” said Pat Bell, MLA for Prince George North. “With this innovation, we are continuing to support programs that enhance nursing and student nursing training that will lead to better health outcomes for patients in our northern healthcare system.”

Simulation is being used more regularly in health education as a means to increase the capacity and quality of practice education. Patient simulation exercises create learning experiences that are not otherwise readily available in the health care setting, and provide students with the opportunity to practice techniques repeatedly without risking patient safety. Students learn to master techniques prior to entering the clinical environment and are therefore more confident, enabling them to focus on problem solving and patient interaction instead of the mechanics of patient care procedures.

“The introduction of patient simulations is an important step forward in enhancing nursing education and nurse professional development,” said Dr. Charles Jago, president of the University of Northern British Columbia. “It attests to the strength of the collaboration between UNBC, northern colleges and Northern Health.”

The multi-site simulation project will also provide professional development activities for nurses at Northern Health. There will be unique opportunities to broadcast simulation laboratory activities to rural and remote communities within the health authority as part of this project.

Students in Terrace will be the first to experience a simulation laboratory, followed by Quesnel, Prince George, and Fort St. John.

Since 2001, government has doubled the number of funded nursing seats – in 2008 alone, over 400 nursing spaces were added. Government has also added 24 nursing programs across B.C. for registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, nurse practitioners, and masters and PhD students.

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