



## Health Career Directory

### Nurse Practitioner

#### Overview

Nurse practitioners (NP) are responsible and accountable for the comprehensive assessment of patients/clients/residents, including diagnosing diseases, disorders and conditions. Nurse practitioners can start treatment including health care management and therapeutic interventions.

They also prescribe medications in accordance with set regulatory standards and guidelines.

They give consultations to other health professionals and practice both independently and together with members of the interdisciplinary health care team. This might involve making referrals to physicians and other services, as appropriate.

Nurse practitioners are a new professional in BC and were first regulated in 2005. Nurse practitioners have a Master Degree from an accredited educational institution in Canada, which prepares a registered nurse to become a nurse practitioner.

Nurse practitioners are not substitutions for physicians, but the roles complement one another in order to improve patient access to care. In a team of NP and physicians, the physicians can then focus on more complex diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

Source: <https://www.crnbc.ca/WhatNursesDo/TypesOfNurses/Pages/NursePractitioner.aspx>

#### Who is suited to become a Nurse Practitioner?

Nurse Practitioners are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:

- strong interest and knowledge of developmental stages, behavioural sciences, pathophysiology, psychopathology, epidemiology, and clinical diagnoses
- ability to communicate and collaborate with patients and families about health findings, diagnosis, treatment, self-care and prognosis
- ability to collaborate, consult with and refer patients to doctors and other health professionals, as needed
- ability to self-direct, interact, and adapt effectively with other professionals in complex, dynamic and stressful environment
- ability to self-assess performance and assume responsibility and accountability for professional development, education or consultative assistance

- Strong social skills, leadership ability, transfer knowledge, teach, coach, and mentor others
- compassionate and patient
- must have a clean record, no prior criminal background.

They should enjoy:

- working in a health care environment
- a genuine interest in caring for people
- working one on one with people who are unwell to help improve their health
- working collaboratively with others in a team environment
- using standard and specialized equipment to gather assessments to provide proper care, and the performance of components, assemblies, and systems
- analyzing and diagnosing problems.

### **Who employs Nurse Practitioners?**

Nurse Practitioners work in a variety of practice settings. Currently, most NPs in BC work in primary care clinics as members of an interdisciplinary team. For example, they work with physicians, addictions counsellors, registered nurses, license practical nurses, social workers, respiratory therapist, and other allied health professionals.

There are an increasing number of positions for NPs in acute care settings in highly specialized areas, such as emergency room and critical care units. Only a small number of NPs work in public health, or in school systems where they work to prevent diseases and to promote healthy lifestyles.

Nurse practitioners work hours varies depending on the clinical settings they practice in. They are, however, responsible for their patients beyond normal working hours. Therefore, they usually carry a pager or have a way for their patients to contact them when urgent care is needed.

Nurse Practitioners are employed by:

- one of the six regional health authorities/employers of BC in both rural and urban settings, and in acute care and community settings.
- health care research and development facilities
- doctor's offices as part of the medical team.

### **Salary**

\$88,000 - \$110,000 annually

### **Required Training and Education to Become a Nurse Practitioner**

In order to become registered as a nurse practitioner in British Columbia, applicants must:

- currently be practicing as a registered nurse in BC or be eligible for practicing registration
- be a graduate from a CRNBC recognized nurse practitioner program or equivalent. A Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Process (called PLAR) has been developed to assess all applicants who are not graduates of BC recognized programs.
- Pass a written and practical examination.

In BC there are three 'streams' or populations that nurse practitioners are eligible to work in:

- family, which covers infants to older adults

- adult, which covers adults and older adults
- pediatrics, which covers infants to adolescents.

Source: <https://www.crnbc.ca/WhatNursesDo/TypesOfNurses/Pages/NursePractitioner.aspx>

## **Career Advancement**

Nurse Practitioner is a relatively new profession. However, for those who seek more career advancement, NPs can move to management roles, clinical specialist roles, or leadership roles within their team framework.

## **Resources:**

### **Education Programs**

Currently, the three universities in BC for Masters of Nursing for NPs only prepare NPs for the 'family' stream, which covers infants to older adults. This prepares NPs to work in primary care settings.

University of British Columbia  
<http://www.nursing.ubc.ca/>

University of Northern British Columbia  
<http://www.unbc.ca/>

University of Victoria  
<http://www.uvic.ca/>

### **Financial assistance and bursaries**

For information about student bursaries from the Registered Nurses Foundation, please visit: <http://www.rnfb.ca/bursary-info-and-application/> Application deadline is mid-September.

Bursary winners will be notified by mid-December.

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit: [http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada\\_student\\_loan/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml)

### **Additional Resources:**

College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia  
<https://www.crnbc.ca/Pages/Default.aspx>

Registered Nurses Foundation of BC  
<http://www.rnfb.ca/bursary-info-and-application/>