
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2022HLTH0004-000250
Feb. 20, 2022

Ministry of Health
Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training
Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation

Hundreds of new nursing training seats coming provincewide

VICTORIA – British Columbians will soon benefit from more nurses to support their health-care needs as 602 new nursing seats are being added to public post-secondary institutions throughout the province.

This investment is a key pillar of the StrongerBC’s Economic Plan, which aims to close the skills gap with a generational commitment to accelerate talent development and skills training for British Columbians.

“Healthy communities are the backbone of a strong economy,” said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation. “If we don’t look after people, our economy won’t succeed. That’s why the StrongerBC Economic Plan commits to strengthening health care by investing in training more people for a high-care, low-carbon future that works for all British Columbians.”

A total of 602 new nursing seats will be added to approximately 2,000 seats currently in nursing programs in B.C.’s public post-secondary institutions. The new seats include 362 registered nursing seats, 40 registered psychiatric nursing seats, 20 nurse practitioner seats and 180 licensed practical nurse seats at 17 public post-secondary institutions. As part of this expansion, new seats will support health-care assistants who want to train as a licensed practical nurse (LPN), and LPNs looking to move into a career as a registered nurse (RN).

“The past two years have shown us just how critical our health workforce is. By supporting post-secondary institutions like the University of Victoria, University of British Columbia, University of the Fraser Valley, Thompson Rivers University, Northern Lights College and Selkirk College, we’re not only expanding the future nursing capacity in the province, but creating pathways to incredibly rewarding, long-term and family-supporting careers,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health.

Government provided \$5 million to public post-secondary institutions in 2021-22 to begin the expansion of nursing seats throughout the province. The University of British Columbia (UBC), Thompson Rivers University and UBC Okanagan welcomed additional students in September 2021, with new and expanded intakes at more public post-secondary institutions opening up over the next year and a half.

“Nurses are integral to health care,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training. “Apart from providing life-saving care, nurses monitor and assess patients’ conditions, act as patient advocates, educate and inspire. Expanding the number of nursing seats means more students can pursue their dreams and launch a career that makes a difference in people’s

lives every day.”

This expansion builds on recent investments in growing health programs in the province. Government has also provided approximately \$8.7 million in 2021-22 to support health educational training programs, including the expansion of specialty nursing and the launch of a new nursing program in the northeast.

Additionally, to help grow the next generation of nurse leaders who will teach, mentor and support these new nursing students, government is providing an initial \$475,000 to support graduate nurse education at UBC, UVic and UNBC. The funding will provide for the development of faculty and nurse leaders, with a plan for ongoing faculty and leadership support being developed in partnership with education and health-sector experts.

Training new nurses is only one way the Province is addressing the nursing shortage in British Columbia. A Provincial Health Human Resources Strategy is under development, which will set out actions to grow, recruit and retain the health-care workers needed to meet the health-care needs of British Columbians in the future.

In Budget 2021, the Province has committed to invest \$96 million over three years to support expanded post-secondary education and training capacity for the health profession workforce. Along with the 602 new seats in post-secondary institutions to meet the growing demand for nursing services, the Province is working with post-secondary institutions to expand health-care assistant training as part of the Health Career Access Program. Further expansions in a range of health education programs are also underway.

The StrongerBC Economic Plan moves British Columbia forward by tackling the challenges of today, while growing an economy that works for everyone. The long-term plan builds off B.C.’s strong economic recovery and works to address two long-standing challenges – inequality and climate change – by closing the skills gap, building resilient communities, and helping businesses and people transition to clean energy solutions. The plan sets two main goals for the province – inclusive growth and clean growth – and puts forward six missions to keep B.C. on track.

Quotes:

Aashna Thapar, nursing student, College of New Caledonia –

“I am choosing to become a nurse because I want a career where I can make a real difference in people’s lives - offering hope, care and comfort, often during some of their most difficult days. Having additional nursing seats in communities across B.C. will give even more students like me the opportunity to follow this essential career path.”

Aman Grewal, president, BC Nurses’ Union –

“Nurses are, indeed, the backbone of health care, but more often than not, their backs are breaking due to the staffing crisis. We recognize this investment as a step in the right direction and look forward to working together with all parties to build on today’s announcement for the future.”

Quick Facts:

- There are approximately 40,000 registered nurses working in British Columbia.
- B.C. has 650 registered nurses per 100,000 population.
- Between 2017 and 2020, the number of registered nurses providing publicly funded health services increased by 2,259 or 6%, while the number of licensed practical nurses increased by 1,141 or 12%.

Learn More:

To read more about the StrongerBC Economic plan visit: www.strongerbc.gov.ca/plan

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Public post-secondary institutions receiving seats

Some of the 602 new nursing seats will be offered every other year, or on a schedule that best meets the needs of the local community.

The anticipated intake timelines for new nursing seats are as follows. Some expansions will be phased in over two to three years; the planned expansion is included below. Timelines and programs are subject to institutional, ministerial and regulatory college approvals.

BC Institute of Technology
New seats: 96 registered nursing
First intake: September 2022

Camosun College, in partnership with University of Victoria (UVic)
New seats: 16 registered nursing, pathway for license practical nurses (LPNs)
First intake: September 2023

Coast Mountain College
New seats: 24 licensed practical nursing
First intake: every two years beginning September 2023

Coast Mountain College, in partnership with UNBC
New seats: 8 registered nursing
First intake: September 2022

College of New Caledonia (Quesnel) in partnership with UNBC
New seats: 8 registered nursing
First intake: September 2022

College of the Rockies, in partnership with UVic:
New seats: 8 registered nursing
First intake: September 2022

Kwantlen Polytechnic University
New seats: 75, including 35 internationally educated nursing refresher and 40 bachelor of science in nursing, advanced entry
First intake: January 2023

Kwantlen Polytechnic University
New seats: 40 registered psychiatric nursing
First intake: September 2023

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
New seats: 18 HCA-to-LPN laddering
First intake: fall 2022

Northern Lights College
New seats: 16 licensed practical nurse, pathway for HCAs
First intake: September 2022 or 2023

North Island College in partnership with VIU
New seats: 24 LPN-to-RN laddering
First intake: September 2023

North Island College
New seats: 8 and 24 HCA-to-LPN laddering
First intake: January 2023

Okanagan College
New seats: 48 HCA-to-LPN laddering
First intake: January 2023

Selkirk College
New seats: 18 licensed practical nursing
First intake: January 2023

Thompson Rivers University
New seats: 10 registered nursing, pathway for LPNs
First intake: September 2021

Thompson Rivers University
New seats: 15 nurse practitioners
First intake: January 2023

University of British Columbia (UBC)
New seats: 30 registered nursing
First intake: September 2021

UBC Okanagan
New seats: 15 registered nursing
First intake: September 2021

University of the Fraser Valley
New seats: 16 LPN-to-RN laddering
First intake: September 2023

University of Northern BC
New seats: 24 registered nursing
First intake: September 2023

UVic
New seats: five nurse practitioner, pathway for Masters-trained nurses
First intake: September 2022

Vancouver Island University
New seats: eight seats and 24 LPN-to-RN laddering
First intake for LPN-to-RN laddering: May 2022
First intake for registered nursing: Fall 2022

Vancouver Island University
New seats: 24 HCA-to-LPN laddering
First intake: May 2023

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