
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2025HLTH0013-000194
March 11, 2025

Ministry of Health

British Columbia is taking action to attract doctors, nurses from U.S.

VICTORIA – The Province is taking new steps to attract more doctors and nurses from the U.S. by fast-tracking credential recognition and launching a co-ordinated, targeted recruitment campaign.

In 2024, B.C. connected more people to a primary care provider than ever before.

“With the uncertainty and chaos happening south of our border, we have an unprecedented opportunity to attract skilled health-care workers interested in moving to Canada,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Health. “Our message to doctors and nurses working in the U.S. is that now is the time to come to British Columbia. We will welcome you to our beautiful province where together we can strengthen public health care, deliver services for people and build healthy communities.”

The Province is working with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC on a direct process to enable U.S.-trained doctors, who hold certification from the American Board of Medical Specialties, to become fully licensed in B.C. without the need for further assessment, examination or training. This will remove barriers faced by U.S. doctors on their path to become licensed and begin practising medicine in the province, following similar changes recently adopted by Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The Province expects these changes to be implemented in the next few months, following consultations underway on proposed bylaw changes.

The Province is also working with the BC College of Nurses and Midwives to make it faster and easier for U.S.-registered nurses to work in British Columbia. Unlike the current process, U.S. nurses will soon be able to apply directly to the college for licensure, helping expedite timelines. The college will then review their education, registration, exam completion and regulatory history through the U.S.’s national nurse-licensure and disciplinary database.

To attract U.S.-based doctors and nurses to come work in B.C., the Province is immediately ramping up targeted recruitment efforts. This will be followed by a co-ordinated marketing campaign in the states of Washington, Oregon and California in spring 2025, in collaboration with health authorities, regulatory colleges and other partners. The Province will highlight job opportunities in the areas they are the most needed, such as cancer care and emergency departments, while promoting rural communities facing worker shortages.

This initiative builds on recent marketing campaigns undertaken in the U.K. and Ireland last year to attract health professionals to B.C., and complements the work that B.C. is doing to fast-track credential recognition for health professionals from other countries and provinces.

These actions build on the progress B.C. has made in recent years to strengthen primary care

by connecting more people to a family doctor or nurse practitioner. First launched in 2019 and expanded to all communities in 2023, the Health Connect Registry has helped connect people to primary care providers in their community. In 2024, a record of nearly 250,000 people were attached to a primary care provider, representing approximately 680 matches per day. This is an increase from the 186,000 people connected in 2023 and 131,000 people connected in 2022.

“Our government is working hard to strengthen health care by hiring and training more family doctors and nurse practitioners so you get better, faster care when and where you need it,” Osborne said. “We’re starting to make significant progress with more people connected to primary care providers in 2024 than ever before. There is still more to be done – and that’s why we are ramping up our efforts to recruit health-care workers from other jurisdictions.”

The Province has been working to recruit and train more family doctors and nurse practitioners to meet the increasing demand for primary care driven by B.C.’s growing and aging population. There are 1,001 new family doctors in B.C. since the launch of the new physician payment model in 2023. Since 2018, the number of nurse practitioners has almost tripled in B.C. to more than 1,200, including 178 new nurse practitioners registered in 2024.

Recruiting more nurses will also support the Province and the BC Nurses Union in implementing minimum nurse-to-patient ratios throughout B.C., making B.C. more competitive in terms of places for nurses to practise in Canada.

Learn More:

To learn more about the provincial campaign, job opportunities or register for navigational services, visit: <https://bchealthcareers.ca/>

To learn more about B.C.’s actions to strengthen health care, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/health-care>

To sign up to be matched with a family doctor or nurse practitioner on the Health Connect Registry, visit: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry>

To learn about the Province’s primary care strategy, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/bcs-primary-care-system>

To learn more about B.C.’s nurse-to-patient ratio, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024HLTH0044-001553>

Two backgrounders follow.

Contact:

Ministry of Health
Media Relations
250 952-1887

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

BACKGROUND 1

For Immediate Release
2025HLTH0013-000194
March 11, 2025

Ministry of Health

What people are saying about connecting people to primary care providers, recruiting more doctors, nurses

Sunita Dhir, parliamentary secretary for international credentials –

“Making it easier for internationally trained health-care workers, especially doctors, to deliver services for people in British Columbia is one of our government’s top priorities. That’s why we’re working to reduce barriers, while ensuring all physicians practising in B.C. have the education and skills to provide the high-quality health care people need. We’re taking action to get internationally trained doctors working and providing the services our communities need.”

Dr. Charlene Lui, president, Doctors of BC –

“We know how valuable it is for patients to have their own family doctor. The attachment system implemented in mid-2023 has made it easier for patients to connect to a family doctor. Proof that this streamlined process is working is demonstrated through the hundreds of thousands of patients now attached. While there is still work to do, it’s clear that family medicine is in a better place than it was just a few years ago.”

Angela Wignall, CEO, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC –

“Nurse practitioners, as well as nurses of all designations, are vital to the delivery of accessible, high-quality primary care to British Columbians, and it is important to celebrate that more people in B.C. being matched with the care providers they need. We applaud the work of the ministry in expanding and strengthening primary care through investment in nursing. By backing nurse practitioners and nurses, we are ensuring that every person in the province can access timely, compassionate care.”

Patrick Rowe, registrar and CEO, College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC –

“These proposed amendments are part of the work we are doing at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC to innovate and modernize our bylaws so that we can help address B.C.’s health-human-resourcing issues. We will continue to work with government and other health partners to look for opportunities to ensure British Columbians receive more accessible and timely care.”

Cynthia Johansen, registrar and CEO, British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives –

“Following the success of our registration pathway for all internationally educated nurses, we’re looking to refine where we can. Registered nurses Canada and the United States share many similarities in education, practice and regulation. We’re exploring how to leverage those similarities and common systems to remove unnecessary requirements – and associated fees –

to enable U.S.-registered nurses to join the B.C. health-care system in a matter of weeks.”

Dr. Maryam Zeineddin, president, BC Family Doctors –

“The LFP (longitudinal family physician) Payment Model proves that transformative change is possible as it created a compensation option for family physicians who provide longitudinal, relationship-based, family medicine care to a known panel of patients. Patients want a family doctor they trust, someone who understands their health journey. This model empowers family doctors to build those relationships.”

Adriane Gear, president, BC Nurses Union –

“Our work with government to establish minimum nurse-to-patient ratios will change the delivery of care in this province for the better, but it depends on having enough nurses working in the system. As we continue to advocate for further investments to expand the number of nurse education seats, today’s announcement is exciting, timely and signals the deep commitment of this government to exhaust every opportunity to bring the nurses we need to our province to make ratios a reality across the province.”

Dr. Habib Ur-Rehman, physician who recently moved from the U.K. to B.C. –

“Moving to B.C. wasn’t just about finding a place to work, it was about finding a place that values primary care. From the moment we arrived, we’ve been embraced by a community that not only welcomes family doctors but truly celebrates them. The beauty, the people and the government’s commitment to health care make this feel like home. We’re honoured to be part of this change and excited for the future ahead.”

Jill Hastings, patient, who was recently matched to a primary care provider –

“After being diagnosed with breast cancer back in 2022, it was a terrifying experience, particularly without a family doctor. However, after my completing my second treatment, I was gratefully matched to a family doctor. Having a family doctor has brought me a lot of relief and consistency. Now being cancer free, my doctor has all of my medical history, making it easier for further care and to focus on preventative medicine.”

Contact:

Ministry of Health
Media Relations
250 952-1887

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

BACKGROUND 2

For Immediate Release
2025HLTH0013-000194
March 11, 2025

Ministry of Health

Facts about connecting people to primary care providers, recruiting more doctors and nurses

- Overall, 675,000 people have been matched to a family doctor or nurse practitioner since the launch of the primary care strategy in 2018 and Dec. 31, 2024.
- B.C. has the second-highest ratio of family doctors per capita of all provinces, including more than 5,300 family doctors providing longitudinal primary care.
- From 2017 to 2023, B.C. has had both:
 - the fastest-growing nursing workforce; and
 - the fastest-growing physician workforce among major provinces.
- The longitudinal family physician payment model, launched in February 2023:
 - provides an alternative compensation model that values the time family physicians spend with patients;
 - supports physician agency and choice;
 - addresses resourcing for family medicine clinics;
 - provides payment for time spent on indirect care and administration; and
 - recognizes the complexity of longitudinal care.
- Since January 2025, physicians with full unrestricted licensure in other Canadian jurisdictions can become licensed within a week in B.C., whereas previously the process could take more than a month.
- Once all documentation is received from the applicant or issuing jurisdiction, it takes one to two days for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC to issue a licence.

Contact:

Ministry of Health
Media Relations
250 952-1887

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect