



# NURSE PRACTITIONERS: EXPANDING ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE WHILE BENDING THE COST-CURVE IN HEALTHCARE.

**THE PROBLEM:** 25% of Albertans cannot access primary care, leading to care being provided by walk-in clinics, urgent care and emergency departments. Albertans are not getting optimal care as guaranteed by the Canada Health Act.

## HOW NPS CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION:

NPs are trained to be General Practitioners and can help fill the needs of Albertans by providing “timely and geographically feasible access” to care ensured by the Canada Health Act (Health Canada, 2010). NPs can manage the same number of patients as a family physician with similar outcomes, improved cost effectiveness and equal or better patient satisfaction.

*“Provide Albertans with increased choice of medical practitioners by increasing the number and scope of nurse practitioners in Alberta and allowing nurse practitioners the ability to bill directly to Alberta Health.”*

**2019 UCP Platform**

	NURSE PRACTITIONER	FAMILY PHYSICIAN
Act as most responsible provider	✓	✓
Health screenings (pap, prostate)	✓	✓
Manage chronic health conditions	✓	✓
Order x-rays and act on results	✓	✓
Order blood work and act on results	✓	✓
Prescribe medications & narcotics	✓	✓
Prescribe substance over-use therapies (e.g. suboxone)	✓	✓
Procedures such as stitches, casting, injections, biopsies	✓	✓
Specialist referrals	✓	✓
Driver's Medicals, disability forms, WCB assessment	✓	✓

## WHAT IS A NURSE PRACTITIONER?

Nurse Practitioners are Masters or PhD prepared health professionals, who have expanded their nursing role to provide advanced health care in communities, clinics and hospitals. Nurse practitioners are completely independent health professionals and require no outside supervision of their practice. They combine medicine and nursing to provide care that engages Albertans in their own health.

## WHAT NPS NEED FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA:

1. Any model needs to be equitable, allowing NPs to work to their full capacity
2. The model needs to be sustainable (a grant-based model should lead to more permanent changes to legislation to allow for an NP ARP-style funding approach)
3. Decisions about where positions will be available should not be any more restrictive than how physician positions are distributed

## NURSE PRACTITIONER FAQs

- Nurse Practitioners have been shown to provide safe, comprehensive, and cost-effective health care services equal to family physicians.
- Nurse Practitioners place a significant focus on teaching patients about their health conditions and treatment recommendations
- Nurse Practitioners listen to patients and strive to understand how their health problems are affecting them
- Patients of Nurse Practitioners report very high satisfaction with the care they receive
- People who see Nurse Practitioners for their health care often have fewer emergency room visits, shorter hospital stays and lower medication costs
- There are over 500 Nurse Practitioners in the province of Alberta
- Nurse Practitioners Improve access to healthcare