



Contact Lorine Scott
Cell 604-315-0750 (*Text for quickest response.*)
Email lorine.scott@bcnpa.org
Website www.bcnpa.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 8, 2016

BC NURSE PRACTITIONERS CAN HELP IMPROVE WALK-IN CLINIC WAIT TIMES

Increasing the Number of Patients Clinics Can See Daily Does Not Equal Better Health Outcomes

Vancouver, BC, March 8, 2016 – Approximately 700,000 BC citizens are currently unable to find a primary healthcare provider, and by default, go to their local walk-in clinic to access service. BC nurse practitioners (NPs) are ready to be part of the solution.

Walk-in clinics are meant to augment primary health care, and provide patients with access to care for urgent concerns that have occurred outside office hours, but are not severe enough for the hospital emergency.

“Walk-in clinics are not designed to replace regular health care,” says Kathleen Fyvie, President of the BC Nurse Practitioner Association (BCNPA), “This heavy dependency on walk-in clinics is a direct result of the lack of access to full service primary health care. The overall BC health system needs to more effectively and more broadly integrate NPs to ensure more patients are attached to consistent care. NPs create a win-win for patients: they would have access to full service primary health care through an NP, and experience shorter wait times at their local clinic if they need it.”

BC NPs are already successfully providing excellent patient care in many settings, including acute care, speciality and primary care, rural, and urban. NPs are often working with marginalized, hard to reach patients.

NPs are neither "physician extenders" nor registered nurses. NPs have advanced clinical training and hold a Masters or Doctoral degree. They diagnose and manage common episodic and chronic illnesses, providing longitudinal health and wellness care to the same standard as their physician colleagues. In BC, patients may choose an NP or a general practitioner as their primary care provider.

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About the BCNPA: BCNPA is an independent, non-profit professional organization that is nearly 100% run by NP volunteers. As the voice of BC NPs, BCNPA represents the unique perspectives and needs of NPs and their practice in the province's health and social policy system.