

NPAA



Nurse Practitioner  
Association of Alberta

# Nurse Practitioner Integration in Rural Alberta

Presentation to Rural Municipalities  
Association  
Jared Friesen NP  
March 19, 2019

# RMA Health Policies Statements

*“The Government of Alberta should work to implement the recommendations found in the Rural Health Services Review Final Report.”*



# RMA Health Policies Statements

*“Rural municipalities must continue to collaborate with relevant professional associations to recruit healthcare professionals to rural Alberta (ex. Alberta Health Services, Rural Physician Action Plan, College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta).”*



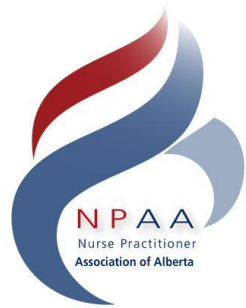
# RMA Health Policies Statements

“The presence of hospitals and emergency services in rural communities provides not only health benefits, but broader community benefits. These include attracting new residents, stimulating economic growth, and providing opportunities to educate the new generation of health professionals.”



# RMA Health Policies Statements

“The RMA champions the rural municipal perspective on health services through regular participation in several province-wide committees (ex. EMS Advisory Committee, Seniors Lodge Advisory Committee).”



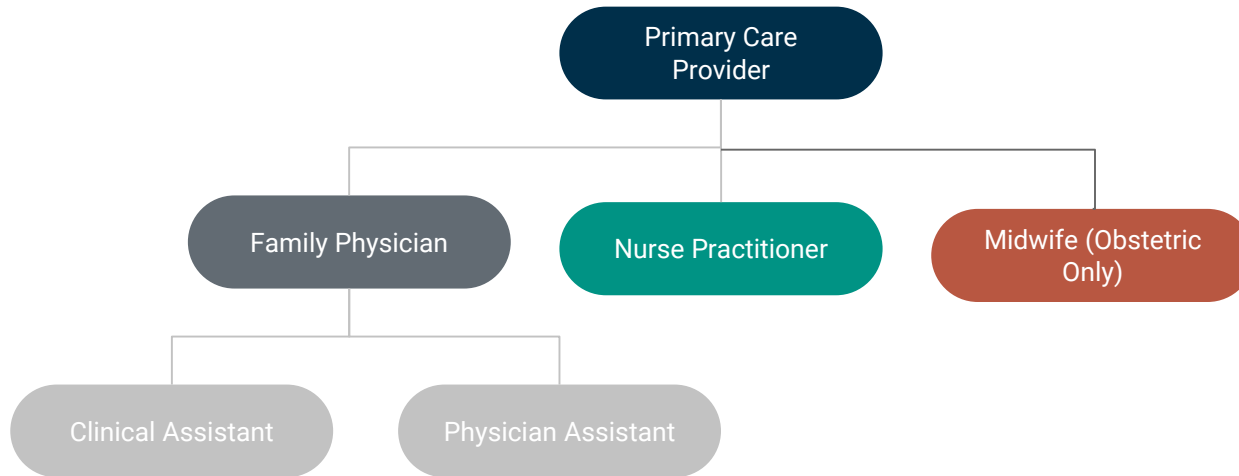
# What is “Primary Health Care?”

“Primary Health Care” is the **first place** people go for healthcare or wellness advice and programs, non-emergent treatment of a health issue or injury, and to diagnose and manage a health condition.” -Alberta Health, 2019

Primary Health Care includes all the services in your community that support the day-to-day health needs. Some examples include:

1. A visit to your “Primary Care Provider” (**Family MD or Nurse Practitioner**)
2. A consultation with a specialist
3. Advice from a Pharmacist
4. An appointment with a dietician or a therapist.

# Primary Care Provider



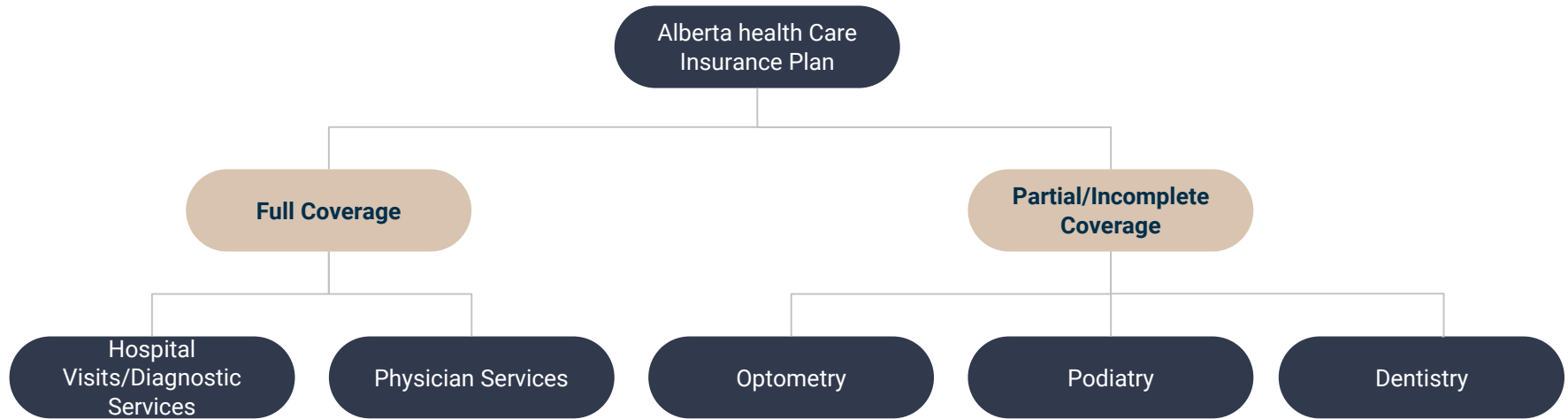
# Background: Physician Access in Rural Alberta

- In 2017, Alberta employed 5532 Family MDs
- Only 7.5% (665) of Alberta Family MDs practice outside of a Census Metropolitan Area
- In 2017 16.4% of Albertans lived in Rural Alberta
- 0.7% (n: 27) of Physician Specialists practice outside of a Census Metropolitan Area
- Canada's physician/population ratio ranks 28 out of 35 nations
- 26% of Canadian Physicians graduated outside of Canada (Only 4% of Alberta NPs graduated outside of Alberta)





# Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan: What is covered?



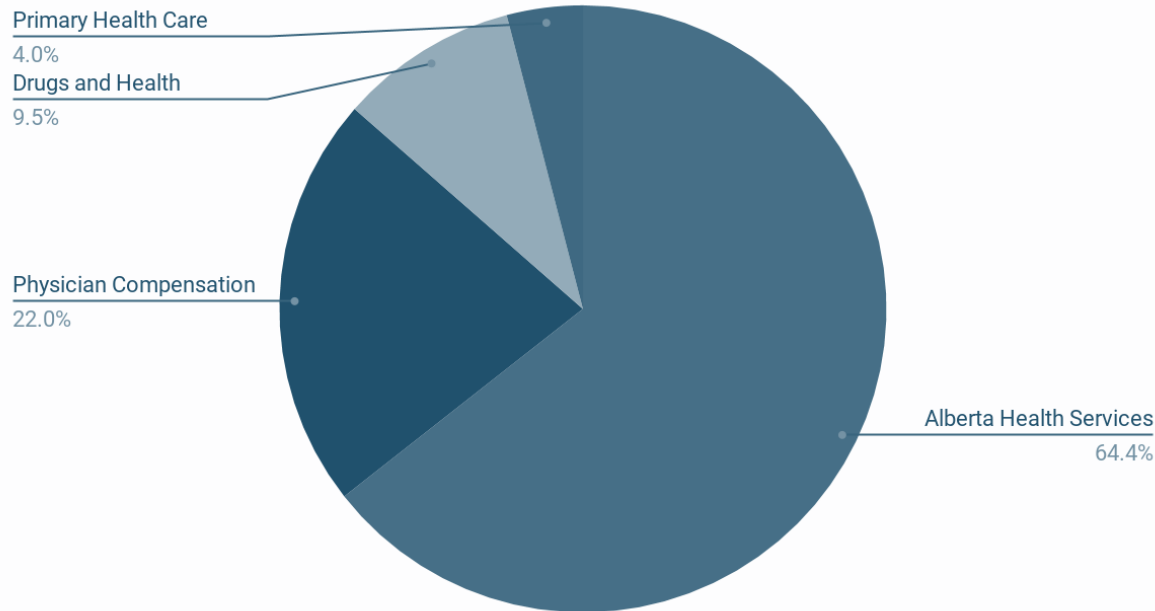
# Health care in Rural Alberta

- Access to healthcare services are essential in the development of healthy communities
- Communities are defined by community sustainability, which is directly linked to a municipality's financial viability and access to essential services, including healthcare, for residents and businesses
- Albertans experience decreased access to primary care services, especially in rural Alberta



# Alberta Health Funding/Budgets

Alberta Health Spending: 2017-18 (% of \$21.4 Billion)



# What is a Nurse Practitioner



## Nurse Practitioner Association of Canada (2018)

“In Canada, Nurse Practitioners (NPs) are licensed by jurisdictional nursing regulators. NPs are graduate prepared healthcare providers who practice autonomously and independently. NPs provide direct care to patients to diagnose and manage disease/illness, prescribe medications, order/interpret laboratory/diagnostic tests, and initiate referrals to specialists.”

# Nurse Practitioner Role

The Nurse Practitioner role requires

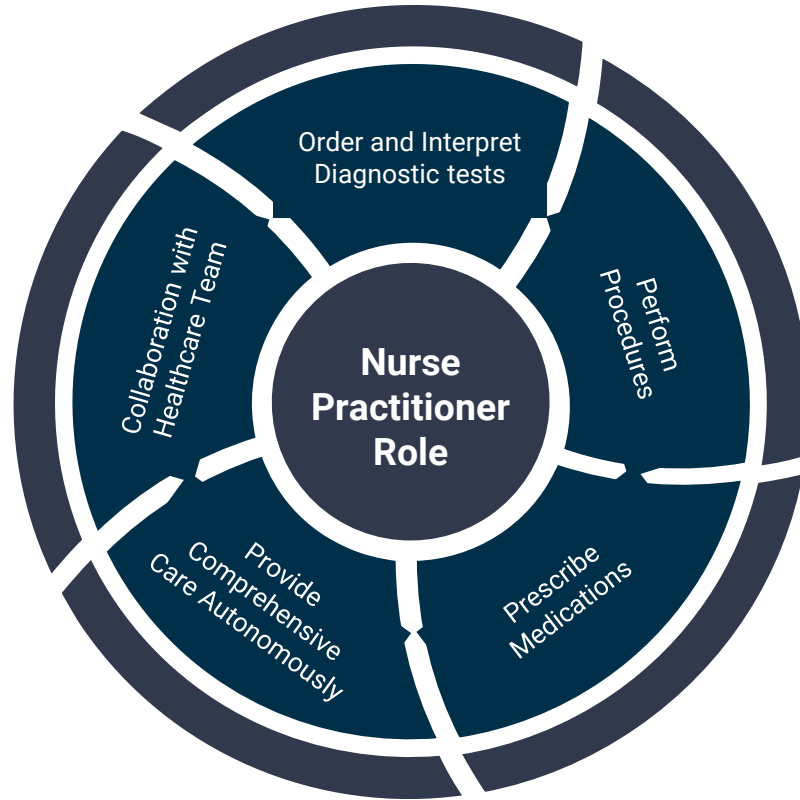
- Advanced knowledge and decision making skills
- NP scope of practice is extended beyond the RN
- Advanced skill and diagnostic reasoning similar to physicians



# Nurse Practitioner Role

- NPs are not physician substitutes; they work in collaboration and consultation with physicians, nurses, and other health professionals
- Alberta has a growing need for primary healthcare providers, especially in Rural Alberta
- NPs are a clear solution with a track record of providing patient centered quality health care for over four decades.





# Perspective: NP utilization in United States and Alberta

## U.S.A.

270 000 NPs in U.S.  
1/1206 American's

**18% Rural**

- 66% Employed in Primary Care
- 4.8 % Employed in Acute Care
- 17 % in Adult Outpatient Clinics (AANP, 2018)

## Alberta

500 NP in Alberta  
1/8572 Albertan's

**93.2% Urban**  
**6.8% Rural or Remote**

- 55.8% Employed in Hospitals
- 23.8% in Community Care (CIHI, 2017; AHS 2018)

## Canada

5274 NPs in Canada  
1/6960 Canadians

**77.7% in Urban Settings**  
**16.3% Rural or Remote**

- 33.5% employed in Community Health
- 35.4% employed in hospital settings (CIHI, 2017)



# Advocacy for NP Integration in Alberta

# Advocacy for NP Integration

Al Kenmere, President-AAMDC (2017):

“As the representative of Alberta’s rural municipalities, the AAMDC understands the challenges that many rural communities face in attracting and retaining qualified health professionals. There is no question that doctors play an integral role in supporting positive health outcomes, but the AAMDC understands that for many Albertans, nurse practitioners can provide a comparable level of service. Any policy shift that improves the quality of life in rural communities will be supported by the AAMDC.”



November 6, 2017

Eric Lavoie  
President, Nurse Practitioners Association of Alberta

Via email to [president@albertanps.com](mailto:president@albertanps.com)

Dear President Lavoie,

**Re: AAMDC Support of Sustainable Funding Model for Nurse Practitioners in Alberta**

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC), I would like to notify you of the AAMDC’s support of the position taken by the Nurse Practitioners Association of Alberta (NPAA) calling for the development and implementation of a nurse practitioner funding model that better supports flexible and collaborative care among all types of health professionals, rather than one that relies on the presence of a doctor for health care access within a community. This model could take many forms, including nurse practitioners operating independent practices to improve access in communities with or without doctors, or a collaborative clinic in which doctors, nurse practitioners, and other health professionals work side by side.

As the representative of Alberta’s rural municipalities, the AAMDC understands the challenges that many rural communities face in attracting and retaining qualified health professionals. There is no question that doctors play an integral role in supporting positive health outcomes, but the AAMDC understands that for many Albertans, nurse practitioners can provide a comparable level of service. Any policy shift that improves the quality of life in rural communities will be supported by the AAMDC.

We look forward to conveying the NPAA’s position when the opportunity arises in our own advocacy efforts, and would be happy to discuss it with you further.

Sincerely,

Al Kemmere  
President

# Advocacy for NP Integration

## **Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (2015)**

*Requests the Government of Alberta allocate funding to models of remuneration that support the integration of nurse practitioners within the Alberta healthcare system.*

Communities need access to essential services such as health care

Communities require innovative solutions to recruit healthcare professionals to improve access to rural communities.

AUMA recommended government fund NP's.

<https://auma.ca/advocacy-services/resolutions/resolutions-index/promoting-use-nurse-practitioners-within-alberta-healthcare-system>

# Advocacy for NP Integration

## Alberta Chambers of Commerce (2016)

### Issue:

*Alberta's current funding mechanisms do not effectively support Nurse Practitioners to alleviate current or future demand on primary health care.*

[https://chambermaster.blob.core.windows.net/userfiles/UserFiles/chambers/2087/CMS/2016\\_policies/Alternate\\_Relationship\\_Plan\\_for\\_Nurse\\_Practitioners.pdf](https://chambermaster.blob.core.windows.net/userfiles/UserFiles/chambers/2087/CMS/2016_policies/Alternate_Relationship_Plan_for_Nurse_Practitioners.pdf)

### Recommendation:

- 1. Develop an Alternate Relationship Plan (ARP) for Physicians and Nurse Practitioners that would provide direct funding for both.*
- 2. Reallocate funds from existing budgets for Alberta Health and Physicians Services to ensure Nurse Practitioner role integration and utilization in areas of need and/or for populations of need.*



# Advocacy for NP Integration

## Canadian Competition Bureau

- Remove restrictions that prevent NPs from operating independently.
- Patients have to pay out of pocket for NP services versus other health care services paid for by government.
- NP services are of high quality with a potential for lower cost to the health system but are not utilized due to no government reimbursement model.
- Reducing barriers that prevent independent nurse practitioner model, which could potentially result in a greater number of patients receiving care, with shorter wait times.

<http://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/04203.html>



# Advocacy for NP Integration

## Report: Rural Health Services Review 2015

- Develop funding models that support delivery of primary health care by other health care providers in rural Alberta.
- Enable the rural physician action plan (RPAP) to recruit all health care providers (NPs, midwives and Physician assistants) to provide services in rural Alberta.
- Establish appropriate funding mechanisms and infrastructure for nurse practitioners, physician assistants, midwives and allied health providers in rural Alberta.
- Promote growing your own health workforce in rural communities.

<http://www.health.alberta.ca/initiatives/rural-health-care-review.html>



# News



Minister of Health, Sarah Hoffman, Announced on March 1, 2019

Primary Care Network Nurse Practitioner Support Program

\$38.5 Million Dollars over three years

- Support existing primary care NPs
- Hire 50 new NPs into primary care
- NPs will carry patient panels autonomously and independently

# Alberta Health Announcement

## What it does

**Largest one-time investment in primary care NPs in Alberta history.**

**Will provide primary healthcare services to tens of thousands of Albertans**

**Will give NPs a chance to demonstrate value added in primary care which may encourage future investment into this cost-saving healthcare service**

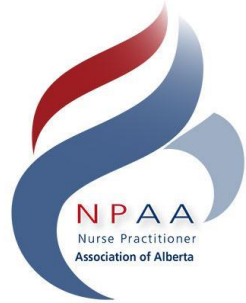
**Supports community development by ensuring primary healthcare access.**



# NPAA

# Recommendations

- Increase advocacy for broad integration of Nurse Practitioners in rural Alberta, including recruitment and retention initiatives
- Advocate for funding models (i.e. Alternative Relationship Plans) and practice infrastructure which support sustainable and equitable Nurse Practitioner practice in Alberta communities
- Advocate for removal of legislative barriers which limit Nurse Practitioner practice in rural Alberta communities (i.e. Mental Health Act, Hospitals Act, etc).



# Questions & Discussion

