

In Alberta, Nurse Practitioners are Master's or PhD prepared health professionals who provide essential healthcare services such as primary care, outpatient clinic-based care, or hospital care. Nurse practitioners are completely independent health professionals and require no outside supervision of their practice. They bring a wealth of knowledge to provide high-quality care in a variety of settings. Nurse practitioners practice uniquely by viewing health of the whole person, with emphasis on education, communication, and disease prevention. Nurse practitioners work in collaboration with their clients and other health-care providers to provide patient-centred care. They are able to work with clients across the age ranges and throughout the province.

Nurse practitioners strive to limit health care costs as much as possible; working to improve health while saving individuals and our health system money.

Nurse practitioners are responsible for their own practice. They are required to communicate with clients about health findings and diagnoses, further required testing and referral to other health-care professionals, and are responsible for client follow-up. Nurse practitioners work with clients to help manage symptoms, to help clients understand their medications, to consider alternative therapy options, and rehabilitation strategies. Nurse Practitioners work with their clients to help them be as healthy as they can be.

Why would I want to see a Nurse Practitioner for my health care?

Here are just a few reasons:

- People who see Nurse Practitioners for their health care often have fewer emergency room visits, shorter hospital stays and lower medication costs.
- 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. They can often spend more time with patients than other providers.
- Nurse Practitioners listen to patients and strive to understand how their health problems are affecting each aspect of their life.
- Patients of Nurse Practitioners report very high satisfaction with the care they receive.
- Nurse Practitioners can improve access to health care.
- In hospitals, Nurse Practitioners work with specialists and provide additional care to enhance recovery and a return to health. They ensure that all of the patient's medical and nursing needs are being met while in hospital, and can ensure adequate care will be in place after discharge. They are also known for their ability to communicate, teach and counsel patients and families in these settings.

Do I need a family doctor, too?

Nurse Practitioners are completely independent health professionals who can perform a wide range of services, very similar to the care that a family doctor provides. There is no reason that a Nurse Practitioner cannot be an Albertan's primary care provider. Nurse practitioners order and read x-rays and other tests, order and read laboratory tests, perform procedures (such as) and prescribe medications. In a family physician's office they are able to manage skin lesions, repair injuries, complete pap smears, perform minor surgeries and generally complete all of the tasks which you would expect at a family doctor's office.

What can Nurse Practitioners do?

The knowledge and skills of a Nurse Practitioner are extensive. They can care from well-babies and families in doctor's offices to critically ill patients in Intensive Care Units. They can order tests, diagnose problems, provide or order treatments, refer to specialists and provide follow-up or ongoing care. Depending on the setting in which they work, NPs can do everything from check-ups to specialized injections. Some of these abilities include minor surgeries, stitches, casts, intubations, mental health care, inserting IUDs, Medical Assistance in Dying, and much more! Nurse Practitioners can perform comprehensive physicals (check-ups), treat illnesses, screen for health problems, and manage chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, etc. They can monitor the health of babies, children, adults, and the elderly, and treat their illnesses should they get sick.

Nurse practitioners are accountable for their own practice. It is their responsibility to communicate with clients about results and diagnoses, treatment plans, further testing, referral to other health-care professionals if needed, and are responsible for follow-up. Nurse practitioners counsel clients on symptom management, health maintenance, medication management, alternative therapies, rehabilitation strategies and other health programs.



Alberta NP Michelle Jeannotte at work in clinic

Where do Nurse Practitioners work?

You will find Nurse Practitioners in hospitals, urgent care centers, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, maternity clinics, community clinics, and primary care offices. Nurse Practitioners may at times work in clinics in the community with a team of other health care professionals. Currently, most Alberta NPs work in hospitals because lack of a funding model with the government highly limits where they are able to practice. This lack of a provincial funding model prevents Nurse Practitioners to have their own clinic in the community and is limiting access to Nurse Practitioner care. If you'd love to see more NPs in the community, follow the link to [Get Involved](#) and write to your local MLA. The NPAA is working hard to remove this barrier. Stay tuned!