

BCND Statement on Government Announcement to Streamline Credentialing for U.S. Educated Medical Doctors and Nurses

The BC Naturopathic Doctors (BCND) commend the provincial government's recent announcement to expedite credentialing for U.S. educated medical doctors and nurses. This is an important and thoughtful step toward strengthening BC's healthcare system and addressing the ongoing shortage of health professionals. We have immense respect for our nursing and medical doctor colleagues and recognize how vital their work is in providing high-quality care for British Columbians.

At the same time, it is estimated that more than 700,000 British Columbians remain unattached to a primary care providerⁱ. While initiatives like this are valuable, they are not sufficient to resolve the primary care crisis. There is an urgent need for additional and innovative solutions that include the diverse healthcare providers already serving communities across the province.

Naturopathic doctors (NDs) are already stepping in to fill significant gaps in primary care across BC. NDs provide safe, effective, and regulated healthcare, including chronic disease management, mental health support, hormone and menopause care, addictions aftercare, and preventive medicine. In addition, NDs provide assessment and treatment for common acute conditions, such as bronchitis and urinary tract infections (UTIs), and routinely perform and order screening exams to support early detection and prevention of disease.

For many patients, particularly those without a family doctor or nurse practitioner, NDs are the only consistent provider delivering comprehensive primary care. NDs are running labs, assessing skin conditions, managing chronic and acute concerns, and treating patients appropriately within their regulated scope. In many cases, NDs are already fulfilling the same primary healthcare role that patients would typically rely on a nurse practitioner or family physician to provide.

With better integration into BC's primary care strategy and team-based care models, NDs can immediately enhance access to care, reduce pressure on emergency services, and support healthier communities across the province. We encourage the government to build on its current efforts by recognizing the role NDs play in meeting primary care needs, both now and in the future.

We look forward to collaborating with the Ministry of Health and healthcare partners to explore integrated, team-based and innovative solutions that improve access to primary care for all British Columbians.

Learn more about the role of NDs in BC here: [BCND Open Letter from Dr. Lindsay](#).

ⁱ According to Dr. Charlene Lui, a family physician in Burnaby and president of Doctors of BC in a January 30th 2025 article: <https://vancouver.citynews.ca/2025/01/30/british-columbia-family-doctor-shortage-continues/>