

June 2025

BCND Update: Lab Services Advocacy

BCND & Lab Services Meeting – May 29, 2025

On May 29, 2025, BCND met with the Ministry of Health (HLTH) Laboratory Services team to continue discussions on improving access to diagnostic services for patients across British Columbia. We would like to acknowledge the HLTH Laboratory Services team for their openness, professionalism, and commitment to meaningful dialogue. Their collaborative approach and willingness to engage with the complexities of access, particularly for underserved communities, has been evident throughout our conversations. We deeply appreciate their responsiveness and thoughtfulness, and we remain encouraged by the constructive and solutions-focused tone they have consistently brought to these meetings.

The meeting focused on advancing discussions around patient access to laboratory services, with particular attention to HPV and cervical cancer screening processes. The group reviewed current screening pathways, including the option for unattached patients to self-collect samples or have a provider assist with sample collection during appointments.

Discussion highlighted the current status quo, barriers patients face, particularly those in rural communities or without primary care providers, and the role that additional practitioners can play in supporting equitable access. There was acknowledgement that while the broader policy framework remains on hold due to a shifting regulatory landscape, there is room to improve care continuity for patients who require further follow-up, such as colposcopy, but fall through the cracks due to systemic limitations.

BCND will continue working to identify laboratory specimen collection sites that offer patient-pay testing and reiterated our ultimate desire to be formally recognized as referring practitioners under the *Laboratory Services Act*. We are encouraged by the shared understanding of the issues that impact patients and the collective desire to support equitable, accessible care across the province. We look forward to ongoing dialogue and continued collaboration.

Next Steps

BCND is:

- Finalizing a regional listing of lab facilities that accept ND requisitions, expected to be released to members this summer.
- Continuing government and stakeholder engagement to push for inclusion in the LSA with a recognition that the shifting regulatory landscape means that some work will be deferred until the new Health Professions & Occupations Act is in force.
- Working with providers in Squamish and Revelstoke to support localized advocacy for additional lab testing sites.
- Addressing administrative and policy issues directly with LifeLabs to improve test access and billing accuracy.

Why This Matters

Access to lab testing is not a luxury, it is a clinical necessity. Whether monitoring chronic conditions, assessing hormone function, or screening for cancer, diagnostics are fundamental to good care.

Without systemic change, patients of NDs will continue to face inequitable costs, care delays, and fragmented experiences. BCND is committed to ensuring that naturopathic doctors can provide comprehensive, integrated care supported by the lab infrastructure and policy recognition their patients deserve.