



ARNBC: INCREASED COLLABORATION TO ENABLE HEALTH TRANSFORMATION

VICTORIA--Today's provincial budget and associated Ministry of Health 2015/16 – 2017/18 Service Plan introduced a modest increase to the health budget and spoke to the need for increased collaboration between health professions. However, they fell short of recognizing the importance of nursing as a key contributor to health care, according to the Association of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (ARNBC), the only nursing organization in British Columbia that represents all of B.C.'s 37,000+ registered nurses and nurse practitioners.

“While we appreciate that government recognizes the need to integrate all health professions in care delivery, we continue to be disappointed with the lack of recognition of the ideas and innovations that all health professions, including nurses, can bring to health care planning,” said Julie Fraser, ARNBC President. “While physicians play a vital role in delivering quality care, we believe that there is enormous untapped potential for government in developing stronger collaborative opportunities with other health professions.”

In addition, ARNBC noted the following key themes:

- The nursing profession has long understood how the social determinants of health impact the health outcomes of British Columbians. Changes introduced today to child support payments for single parents on assistance/disability is an excellent example of evidence-based social policy which attempts to alleviate the underlying causes of poor health. For example, under the current system, for every dollar a single mother receives from child support, she receives a dollar less from social assistance. The new policy would allow a single mother in this situation to keep both support payments and social assistance. ARNBC applauds this change in policy and looks forward to further evidence-based social policy initiatives.
- The budget included modest increases for health, but clearly notes that new and innovative ways of delivering health care must be implemented to manage the cost of health care. However, this type of transformative change requires investment and oversight. ARNBC believes that nurses have the knowledge and experience to provide the innovative and groundbreaking solutions needed to make these transformative changes, but urges government to recognize the need for associated funding. We will continue to work on behalf of our members and patients to ensure that nursing is allowed opportunities to support innovative change.
- In a departure from last year's budget and Service Plan, nurse practitioners were not mentioned this year. ARNBC continues to believe that nurse practitioners are an important solution for the provision of accessible primary care and that significant barriers remain to their full integration into B.C.'s health care system. We hope that government will continue to focus attention and resources on strengthening the role of the nurse practitioner in British Columbia.

“ARNBC was privileged to participate in the 2015 Budget Lockup for the first time in our history,” said ARNBC Executive Director, Joy Peacock. “This is a strong indication that government is interested in engaging nurses in further dialogue, and we look forward to being a key participant in implementing the Service Plan.”

Nursing understands both systemic challenges and patient needs – which gives us a unique and important lens on health care. The implications of this budget on nursing will be evidenced as government develops the processes and programs to support the budget and Service Plan. The new directions laid out in the 2015/16 – 2017/18 Service Plan suggest that government is moving to a more collaborative model of decision-making. ARNBC looks forward to nursing playing an important role in sharing our expertise, innovation and ideas for how to improve the care of all British Columbians.

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