



February 16, 2016

Association of Registered Nurses of BC

### **ARNBC Anticipates Further Innovation and Collaboration in Healthcare**

VICTORIA--Today's provincial budget introduced a modest increase to the health budget of \$523 million, which was within the expectations of the Association of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (ARNBC), the only nursing organization in British Columbia that represents all of B.C.'s approximately 40,000 registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs).

"We were not anticipating huge increases in the health budget this year," said Zak Matieschyn, ARNBC President. "Health already consumes nearly half of the provincial budget and it is our job as leaders and innovators within healthcare, to consider how we can make transformational changes to the system without requiring big increases in the healthcare budget each and every year."

As a member of the BC Coalition of Nursing Associations (BCCNA), ARNBC has been working with government and other stakeholders to identify strong, innovative solutions that will further transform healthcare, strengthen the nursing profession and ensure British Columbians continue to enjoy some of the best health outcomes in the world. Collaboration has occurred around the BC Ministry of Health document [Setting Priorities for the B.C. Health System](#) and the subsequent [policy papers](#) (February 2015) as well as a number of policy forums and ongoing meetings between the BCCNA, government, the health authorities and other stakeholders.

ARNBC applauds government on several changes that will have a direct impact on the social determinants of health – including eliminating Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums for all children effective January 1, 2017, expanding the supply of affordable housing and increasing income assistance rates for Persons with Disabilities.

"As nurses, we applaud any change that puts money back into the hands of families – particularly those that are already struggling to meet the cost of living," said Matieschyn. "While these measures are a good start there is still work to do to improve key social determinants of health that impact overall health outcomes such as access to nutritious food, stable employment, affordable housing, more substantial increases for Persons with Disabilities and good transit. We look forward to sharing the nursing perspective on these issues in the months ahead."

The Budget and Service Plan also place emphasis on the need for increased coordinated team based care with the key objective of reducing preventable hospitalization. Nurses are often the 'go to' member of the team for physicians, patients and other healthcare providers and we look forward to continuing the rich dialogue with government around how we can enhance team-based care in order to improve the health outcomes of British Columbians.

Nursing understands both systemic challenges and patient needs, which gives us a unique and important lens on health care. The 'staying the course' direction laid out in this Budget and Service Plan suggests that government believes it is on the right track with its transformative policy changes. ARNBC is proud to have a strong voice in those conversations and 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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