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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2026HLTH0018-000361  
April 1, 2026

Office of the Premier  
Ministry of Health

### **More than 600,000 people connected to primary care since 2023, over 500 U.S. health professionals hired**

Nature, world-class communities, balanced lifestyle attracting health-care professionals to B.C.

VICTORIA –

#### **Summary**

- *More than 600,000 people have been connected to a family doctor or nurse practitioner since 2023*
- *Upwards of 77% of British Columbians now have a primary care provider and approximately 4,000 more people are being matched each week*
- *As of February 2026, more than 500 U.S.-trained health professionals have accepted job offers within B.C.'s public health-care system – 100 more since last month's announcement*
- *B.C. now has the most doctors per capita in Canada with more than 15,000 physicians, which equates to 271 physicians per 100,000 residents, increasing the number of family doctors by nearly 1,500, which represents growth of 23% from 2017 to 2024*
- *In 2025, the nursing workforce increased by 3,300, bringing the total to 78,750, while the number of nurse practitioners has tripled from 550 in 2018 to more than 1,650 to date*

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More than 600,000 people who did not have a family doctor or nurse practitioner in 2023 have been attached to a primary care provider a number growing by 4,000 people each week. In 2025 alone, 223,000 people got matched to a primary care provider.

This is part of the Province's work to strengthen the public health-care system, including training, recruiting and retaining more health-care professionals. As of February 2026, more than 500 health-care professionals from the U.S. have been hired.

"Primary care is how people get answers early, stay healthier, and avoid more serious issues down the road. That's why connecting more people to family doctors and nurse practitioners across B.C. has been a top priority," said Premier David Eby. "At the same time, more doctors and health professionals from the United States are choosing B.C. because they can focus on patients in a strong public system that values their work. That means shorter waits and better care when you need it most."

#### **Connecting more people to a primary care provider**

People are encouraged to register on the Health Connect Registry if they are looking for a family doctor or a nurse practitioner.

More people are getting a primary care provider through provincewide efforts to train, recruit and retain more health-care workers, including from the U.S.

Now, 77% of British Columbians are now attached to a primary care provider. People are encouraged to register on the Health Connect Registry if they are looking for a family doctor or nurse practitioner.

“This past year, we’ve made strong progress – expanding training here at home while also bringing more health-care professionals to B.C. from the U.S. and around the world,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Health. “More and more people are getting connected to a primary care provider, and communities are seeing new doctors, nurses and allied health professionals delivering care in hospitals, clinics and community settings. There’s more work ahead, but these results show we’re moving in the right direction and they strengthen our resolve to keep going.”

### **Attracting health professionals from the U.S.**

As of February 2026, more than 500 U.S. doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and allied health professionals have accepted job offers within B.C.’s public health-care system.

This includes:

- 109 doctors, and specifically more than 25 family doctors
- 315 nurses
- 51 nurse practitioners
- 29 allied health professionals

From March 2025 until February 2026, B.C. received more than 2,900 job applications from U.S. health-care professionals.

These U.S. health-care professionals are joining a growing and talented health workforce that is providing more services to people in communities throughout the province, including rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

### **Strengthening B.C.’s health workforce**

B.C. is recruiting family doctors, nurse practitioners and registered nurses faster than the population is growing.

The Province now has the most doctors per capita in Canada with more than 15,000 physicians, which equates to 271 physicians per 100,000 residents. There are now more than 7,800 family doctors in B.C.

The nursing workforce increased by 3,300 nurses in 2025, bringing the total to 78,750 nurses. The number of nurse practitioners who can take on primary care patients has tripled from 550 in 2018 to more than 1,650 to date.

### **Quotes:**

#### **Stephanie Higginson, parliamentary secretary for primary care access –**

“Our government is taking strong action to train, recruit and retain more health-care workers

and we are seeing the results of that work as we connect hundreds of thousands of people to primary care providers each year. We will continue this important work because we know that people deserve timely access to primary care close to home.”

**Dr. Victoria Wilkins, U.S. pediatrician who moved to Victoria in June 2025 –**

“I am a pediatrician and I specialize in Fragile X syndrome. In June 2025, my family and I moved from Utah to beautiful B.C. My pledge to myself when I came here is that I would do everything I could to help reduce the wait to see a pediatrician. I’m fulfilling that commitment by working in multiple practices where additional support is needed and am working with the VICAN program at Queen Alexandra Hospital.”

**Dr. Christina Drostin, U.S. family doctor who moved to Victoria in July 2025 –**

“I am a family doctor who moved from the U.S. to B.C. last July. When I asked my partner where in Canada we should go, she immediately cried out ‘Vancouver Island, of course!’ At my new job at a local community health centre, I have the joy of establishing new patients to my panel as a family doctor. I am grateful and happy to be living and working here in Victoria.”

**Dr. Avi Kopstick, Canadian pediatrician who worked in the U.S. and moved to Kelowna in August 2025 –**

“I’m originally Canadian, though I completed most of my postgraduate medical training in the United States. I moved to B.C. last year and now work at Kelowna General Hospital on the pediatric ward and in the NICU. There’s a real sense of growth and momentum in the Interior when it comes to pediatric care, and I’m very grateful to Interior Health and the team at KGH for making the transition so smooth.”

**Marita Grove, U.S. nurse practitioner who moved to Richmond in 2023 –**

“The close connection to nature, while remaining in a world-class city and a more balanced lifestyle were what my family and I needed, and that is why we moved from Boston to B.C. I now work at Foundry in Richmond, providing low-barrier primary care services to youth. In 2023, I took on a leadership position at Vancouver Coastal Health Authority that has allowed me to build an advanced understanding of the B.C. health system and pay it forward to new U.S. nurse practitioner applicants and new hires.”

**Learn More:**

To learn about the March 2026 update on attracting doctors, nurses from the U.S., visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2026HLTH0015-000275>

To learn more about health career opportunities in B.C., visit: <https://bchealthcareers.ca/>

To learn more about B.C.'s actions to strengthen health care, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/health-care/>

Two backgrounders follow.

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## BACKGROUND 1

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### **Attracting more health-care professionals from the U.S.**

As of February 2026, more than 500 U.S.-trained health professionals have accepted job offers within B.C.'s public health-care system.

These doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and allied health professionals are joining hospitals and clinics throughout the province, including:

- 110 in Fraser Health
- 88 in Interior Health
- 141 in Island Health
- 30 in Northern Health
- 61 in Vancouver Coastal Health
- 2 in First Nations Health Authority
- 39 in the Provincial Health Services Authority
- 33 in Providence Health Care

Examples of communities where they have been hired are Abbotsford, Burnaby, Surrey, Mission, Fort St. John, McBride, Prince George, Terrace, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Cowichan, Nanaimo, Victoria, Port Alberni, Courtenay, Grand Forks, Kamloops, Oliver, Penticton, Vernon, Vancouver, Powell River and Richmond.

This progress update is part of the Province's "Team BC" approach in which health authorities, regulatory colleges, local governments and communities work together to recruit more health-care professionals from the U.S.

British Columbia is an attractive destination for U.S. health-care professionals. In addition to an evidence-based approach to public health, support for reproductive rights, and a strong public health-care system, the province also boasts a high standard of living, with free public health care and K-12 education, subsidized and licensed child care, top-ranking universities and diverse, safe communities.

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## BACKGROUND 2

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### **Training, recruiting more health-care professionals for B.C.**

Through B.C.'s Health Human Resources Strategy, government is training, recruiting and retaining more health-care professionals.

Government is fast-tracking credential recognition so internationally trained health professionals can join B.C.'s health-care system quicker. More than 1,200 internationally trained doctors were licensed to practise here in 2025. Many of them were helped by streamlined licensing processes for U.S.-trained and certified physicians and a Practice Ready Assessment B.C. program that now offers 96 seats annually, triple the capacity of a few years ago. More than 3,400 internationally educated nurses have received full or provisional registration since January 2023 to January 2026.

As well, more training seats have been added in B.C.'s post-secondary institutions, so people can get the education they need closer to home. This includes:

- adding a total of 88 undergraduate medical education seats, 40 at the University of British Columbia and 48 at the new medical school at Simon Fraser University between 2023 and 2026
- adding 160 postgraduate residency positions in family medicine, enhanced skills and priority Royal College specialties between 2022 and 2028
- investing in more than 450 permanent and more than 250 one-time seats for allied health occupations since 2017
- adding more than 770 new training seats for midwives, registered nurses, psychiatric nurses, practical nurses and nurse practitioners since 2019

This is all part of the Province's efforts to strengthen B.C.'s public health-care system, so people get the health services they need when they need it and closer to home.

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