



Nurse Practitioners
Association of Canada

Association des
infirmières et
infirmiers praticiens
du Canada

NPAC-AIIPC
1205-1033 Marinaside Crescent
Vancouver, BC
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Position Statement

Use of Inclusive Language

Background

The Canadian Institute for Health Information (2024) estimates that approximately 5.4 million Canadians do not have access to a family physician or nurse practitioner. At the same time, many provincial and territorial governments are shifting primary care delivery models away from independent primary care provider practice to interdisciplinary team-based primary care teams. These teams often comprise many healthcare professionals (physicians, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, registered nurses, physiotherapists, and others) working collaboratively to support and optimize primary care delivery to patients.

NPAC appreciates the devoted work of the Canadian news media to bring health care stories to Canadians, including those reporting on what has been deemed, “the primary care crisis”. NPAC recognizes the value of exploring health-related topics from different perspectives; however, we believe these perspectives ought to be named appropriately and inclusively. Healthcare stories that continue to refer to the archetypal “doctor and nurse,” instead of the diverse healthcare professions working in the system, exclude the contributions of many dedicated professionals and misrepresent the current landscape of Canadian primary care. This exclusion has become particularly salient with recent media attention on Canadian primary care systems and the repeated use of outdated language that reflects a time of independent primary care provider practice and not the new reality of team-based care.

Recommendations

In recognition of all healthcare professionals who contribute to primary healthcare



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in Canada, the NPAC encourages all Canadian news media outlets to adopt a policy of inclusive language -when appropriate- when referencing healthcare professionals in news coverage. While we acknowledge that interdisciplinary team-based primary care is still emerging in some jurisdictions, using the term “primary care provider” or “healthcare provider” rather than “family physician/doctor” better reflects the variety of professionals involved in primary care delivery. This intentional approach will ensure that the roles and contributions of all healthcare professions are acknowledged and better reflect the evolving reality of how primary care is delivered across the country.

References:

1. Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2024). Unmet needs: Access to primary health care in Canada. Canadian Institute for Health Information. <https://www.cihi.ca>
2. Health Canada. (2023). A healthy future: Canada’s primary health care system. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada>
3. Canadian Nurses Association. (2022). Primary health care: A vision for Canada. <https://www.cna-aiic.ca>
4. College of Family Physicians of Canada. (2022). The patient’s medical home2022. <https://patientsmedicalhome.ca>

About NPAC

The Nurse Practitioners Association of Canada (NPAC) is the national voice of Nurse Practitioners, representing NPs in every province and territory. NPAC advocates for evidence-based policy, education, and practice environments that enable NPs to deliver accessible, high-quality care to all Canadians.

Approved by the Nurse Practitioners Association of Canada Board of Directors: May 2025