



## **Primary Care Nurses in Alberta**

### **The Definition**

Primary Care Nurses are LPN's, RN's or RPN's who work to their full scope of practice as part of a multidisciplinary team to enhance the primary care services provided in Alberta. As regulated professionals, Primary Care Nurses are accountable and liable for clinical decision-making. The Primary Care Nurse typically works alongside a Primary Care Provider (Physician or Nurse Practitioner), clinic staff and other allied health professionals creating a healthcare team and making up the Patient's Medical Home. Primary Care Nurses act as a specialty generalist in primary care, providing care to patients across the lifespan. Primary Care Nurses adjust their practice to meet the medical home and medical neighborhood needs, often bridging gaps in accessibility to healthcare, and enabling positive patient experiences and outcomes. They are integral to patient management and navigation of the healthcare system. Primary care nurses also play a key role in quality improvement on a clinical, community and provincial level, supporting system linkages between primary and secondary health care.

### **The Role**

The ACPNA aims to describe the role of the Primary Care Nurse in Alberta beyond that of the [National CFPNA competencies](#), enhancing the understanding of the specific Clinical Practice Domains that are documented on a national level. While the general definition of Primary Care Nursing is:

*"...routine care, care for urgent but minor or common health problems, mental health care, maternity and child care, psychosocial services, liaison with home care, health promotion and disease prevention, nutrition counseling and end-of-life care. It is also an important source of chronic disease prevention and management(1.)"*

APCNA endeavors to create a stronger comprehension of the support that a Primary Care Nurse can provide for patients of all ages. This will enhance Primary Care Nursing education as well as stakeholder understanding.



Primary Care Nurses are a valuable member of the Patient Medical Home. They can provide a broad range of health services dependent on professional designation/scope of practice, that are tailored to the needs of the patient population. These services can include but are not limited to:

**Health Assessment and Promotion**

Well child assessment  
Geriatric functional and cognitive assessment  
Preventative health care and cancer screening  
Reproductive health assessment and counseling  
Prenatal care  
Urgent appointment triage

**Chronic Disease Management**

Arthritis  
Congestive heart failure  
COPD/Asthma  
Dementia/Alzheimer's  
Diabetes  
Dyslipidemia  
Hypertension  
Mental Health  
Weight Management

**Care Coordination**

Community referral  
Community resource navigation  
Patient Advocacy & Support

**Primary Care Interventions**

Cervical Cancer Screening  
Injections/Immunizations  
INR management  
Lab/Diagnostic review  
Medication review  
Procedure assistance  
Spirometry  
Wound care  
Cryotherapy  
Cerumen impaction removal  
ECG

**Quality Improvement Initiatives**

Enhance Access  
Improve Clinic Efficiency  
Process and Policy Development  
Teamwork  
Measurement and Data

**What is our vision for Primary Care Nurses of Alberta?**

The APCNA wishes to advance the role of the Primary Care Nurse in Alberta. We want medical professionals to understand the role of the Primary Care Nurse, from the educational system all the way to implementation. This will allow consistent messaging to patients and improve understanding and expectations of the Primary Care Nurse and their medical home. Continuous



quality improvement initiatives within the community should occur to ensure that Primary Care Nurses are meeting patient needs. Primary Care Nurses should be revenue neutral within the primary care clinics, with the main goal to be supporting access for complex and large patient panels. Primary Care Nurses are integral in leading team based care and collaboration within the medical neighborhood.

APCNA leadership is woven through Primary Care Networks in Alberta. The Executive Leadership comprehends the role of the Primary Care Nurse in diverse community settings. We are aware of the constriction of this practice due to the current Alberta Health funding model. APCNA aims to influence organizations to examine the model in which Primary Care Nurses are allocated to increase continuity and decrease disruption to interprofessional collaboration for patients. We would like to collaborate with the government to examine the current model and to address patient equity to Primary Care Nursing services. Consultation with the APCNA on primary care improvement initiatives within the province would provide insight and direction of integration of Primary Care Nursing during the evolution of primary care.