

Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioners in Canada

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Abstract

Canada, like many countries, is in the midst of primary health care reform. A key priority is to improve access to primary health care, especially in remote communities and areas with physician shortages. As a result, there is an increased emphasis on the integration of primary health care nurse practitioners. As of March 2006, legislation exists in all provinces and two territories in Canada that allows nurse practitioners (NPs) to implement their expanded nursing role.

In this paper, we will briefly review the historical development of the NP role in Canada and situate it in the international context; describe the NP role, supply of NPs in the country, and the settings in which they work; propose an NP practice model framework; summarize facilitators and barriers to NP role implementation in primary health care delivery; and outline strategies to address the barriers.

Keywords

primary health care, nurse practitioners, Canada, history, role, advanced practice nursing