
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia

Patient safety enhanced through improved international nursing assessments

VICTORIA – Internationally educated practitioners within the nursing community will have access to a more streamlined assessment process to support their entry into the B.C. workforce, Health Minister Terry Lake announced today.

A collaboration between government and representatives of the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of BC, the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of British Columbia, the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia, the Health Employers Association of BC, B.C.'s health authorities and B.C.'s Chief Nursing Officer Council, has been established to develop a new approach to competency assessments for the nursing community.

“As with any highly-skilled occupation, competency and knowledge assessments are an important part of ensuring that the most qualified and well-trained nurses are providing care to British Columbians,” said Lake. “This new, streamlined assessment program will help get more international nurses into the health system, and supports the ministry’s focus on working collaboratively with stakeholders to find new ways to support health-care workers while enhancing patient care.”

Once in place, the new process will evaluate applicants for registration in any of four professions – registered nursing, registered psychiatric nursing, licensed practical nursing or health care assistant. Assessments will be based on the applicant’s ability to apply the required skills, knowledge and attitudes and values that are needed to be ready-to-practice.

The collaborative will work over the next year-and-a-half to develop the new integrated competency assessment process, which is expected to be in place by March 2016.

“We look forward to collaborating with the provincial government and partners to develop an integrated assessment process for internationally educated practitioners in the nursing community to become registered in the province,” said College of Registered Nurses of BC registrar/CEO, Cynthia Johansen.

The Ministry of Health is providing \$2.1 million to the project. The funding was secured by the ministry through an agreement with Health Canada.

“Streamlining the assessment process for internationally educated nurses and other providers simplifies the entry of qualified candidates into the health-care system,” said federal Minister of Health Rona Ambrose. “This innovative project works in collaboration with stakeholders to help ensure Canadians have increased access to health professionals and to quality health-care services.”

The nursing regulatory colleges and HEABC assess an average of over 1,400 internationally

educated applicants each year in B.C.

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