

Key Messages

Health Connect Registry – Public

Date: July 4, 2023

- The Health Connect Registry is available across British Columbia to help you find a local family doctor or nurse practitioner who can support your everyday health care needs.
- You can register yourself, your family and anyone in your care on the Health Connect Registry to get matched with a primary care provider.
- When you register yourself and your family together, your family will be matched with the same family doctor or nurse practitioner, when possible.
- You can easily register online by visiting: HealthLinkBC.ca/health-connect-registry.
- You can also register by calling HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 if you are unable to register online. The following services are available through 8-1-1:
 - Translations services in over 130 languages
 - Those who are deaf or hard of hearing can call 7-1-1 or contact HealthLink BC using Video Relay Services (VRS) or Teletypewriter (TTY). Visit [Video Relay Services](#) to sign up and give them the number 604-215-5101 to call HealthLink BC on your behalf.
 - VRS provides sign language interpretation. It is free for registered deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired Canadians who use sign language. VRS is available when making telephone calls using Internet and cell-phone technology.
- To register, you need to provide the B.C. address and Personal Health Number (PHN) found on your BC Services Card, BC driver's licence or Care Card.
- Once registered, your name will stay on the Registry until you are matched with a family doctor or nurse practitioner in your community.
- The time it takes to match you with a primary care provider depends on the number of family doctors or nurse practitioners in your area and their capacity for new patients.
- When a provider becomes available, you will be contacted using the

information you provided to the Registry. You may also be contacted for more information.

Health Connect Registry: What it means to you

I am already registered on the Health Connect Registry:

If you're already registered on the Health Connect Registry, you do not need to register again now that it's available province-wide. Your name will stay on the Registry until you are matched with a family doctor or nurse practitioner in your community. You will be contacted when a primary care provider in your community is available.

I am on a waitlist at a clinic in my community:

If you're already on a waitlist at your local clinic or with your community, such as a list with the Divisions of Family Practice or a Primary Care Network, you do not need to register on the Health Connect Registry. Primary care provider waitlists at clinics in communities across B.C. are transitioning to the Registry. You will be contacted directly about your registration over the coming months as it transitions to the Registry. You will maintain your original waitlist registration date.

I am not currently registered on the Health Connect Registry and I do not have a primary care provider:

If you live in B.C. and need a family doctor or nurse practitioner, register for the Health Connect Registry. You can register yourself and your family members. You can also register on behalf of a person in your care, for example if you are a health care provider or social worker.

I already have a family doctor or nurse practitioner:

If you already have a family doctor or nurse practitioner you do not need to register for the Health Connect Registry. Continue to engage with your regular provider for your health care needs.

Questions and Answers

Health Connect Registry – Public

What is the Health Connect Registry?

- The Health Connect Registry is an easy-to-use online form available to people in British Columbia to register for a primary care provider – either a family doctor or a nurse practitioner.
- When you register you are added to a centralized registry of primary care providers across your community. An attachment coordinator uses the centralized Registry to match you with a provider.
- Once you are signed up, the Registry will match you with a family doctor or nurse practitioner in your community as capacity become available.

How can I sign up for the Health Connect Registry? Can I sign up my family or someone I care for?

- People can register themselves, their family members or a person in their care.
- A person in your care is someone you are caring for who doesn't live in your household, or lives in your household and isn't a family member. For example:
 - If you are the caregiver for your aging parents who do not live with you, they are people in your care.
 - If you are a healthcare professional and have a patient who does not have a primary care provider, your patient is a person in your care.
- The Health Connect Registry is available online at HealthLinkBC.ca/health-connect-registry.
- If you're unable to register online, you can sign up by phone at 8-1-1.
- Those who are deaf or hard of hearing can call 7-1-1 or contact HealthLink BC **8-1-1** using Video Relay Services (VRS), or Teletypewriter (TTY). Visit [Video Relay Services](#) to sign up and give them the number 604-215-5101 to call HealthLink BC on your behalf.
- VRS provides sign language interpretation. It is free for registered deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired Canadians who use sign language. VRS is available when making telephone calls using Internet and cell-phone technology.

- o Translation services are available in over 130 languages.

Who can sign up to be on the Registry?

- Starting July 1, 2023, anyone living in British Columbia with a Personal Health Number can register for a family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Registrants will be asked to provide their B.C. address and Personal Health Number. Personal information will need to match the information as it is presented on their B.C. Services Card, BC driver's license or CareCard.

If I already registered before July 2023, do I need to re-register?

- Prior to July 2023, the Health Connect Registry was available in a select number of participating communities.
- If you live in one of these communities and have already registered, you do not need to re-register for the Health Connect Registry. Your place in the queue will be maintained and you will be contacted when a primary care provider is available.

Why was the Health Connect Registry created?

- The Health Connect Registry was created to help people in British Columbia connect with a primary care provider, such as a family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- This is one more way we are building a primary care system that makes care more accessible to everyone in British Columbia.
- Over the past several years, the Ministry of Health has deployed a "soft launch" approach to the HCR in communities, meaning that it was implemented one Primary Care Network or community at a time, with no public advertisement.
- This allowed us to get important insight into the community provider experience and informed the approach of a broader provincial rollout.
- Launching the HCR province-wide is one of many initiatives we are taking to make it easier for people to find health care providers across communities in British Columbia

How does the Health Connect Registry benefit patients?

- The Health Connect Registry is a simple, easy to use tool that lets you indicate your need for a regular family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- You can register yourself, your family and/or people in your care.
- The Registry will match you with a family doctor or nurse practitioner as provider capacity is available in your community.

What information will the Registry collect from people?

- The following information is collected:
 - Your consent to share personal information with your community Divisions of Family Practice, Primary Care Network and Health Authority for the purposes of attachment
 - Personal Health Number
 - First name and last name
 - Sex (male, female, other)
 - Date of birth
 - Residential address (street address, city/town, postal code)
 - If you do not have a fixed address, this can be an address where you spend most of your time
 - Preferred method of contact (phone, email or SMS/text)
 - If you currently have a family doctor or nurse practitioner
 - Name and city/town of your most recent family doctor or nurse practitioner
 - When you last saw your family doctor or nurse practitioner
 - If you prefer a family doctor or nurse practitioner of a specific gender
 - If you may require translation services and your preferred language
 - How far you are able to travel to see a family doctor or nurse practitioner
- With your consent, this information can also be provided by a person on

your behalf, such as someone who has a close relationship with, or responsibility for, the health and well-being of you or another person being registered.

How am I matched with a primary care provider? Is placement on a first-come, first-serve basis, or is urgency considered?

- You will be matched with a primary care provider in the community associated with the address you enter during registration.
- The information you enter on the Registry will be used to inform your match to a family doctor or nurse practitioner. Information about health status may also be used to determine which registrants more urgently require a provider, in alignment with provincial policy.

Will I have a choice in the primary care provider I am attached to?

- Once you are matched with a provider, based on the information you have entered in the Registry and additional health information, you have an opportunity to meet with a primary care provider to discuss your care plans and make sure that it is a good match for you both.
- If the match doesn't work for you, you can decline and remain on the Health Connect Registry.
- You will not lose your place on the list if you decline a match with a primary care provider.

I already have a primary care provider but need a new one. Am I able to sign up for the Registry?

- Yes, anyone living in British Columbia can sign up for the Registry. If your existing primary care provider is retiring or relocating, you are encouraged to register.
- The Registry form will prompt people to answer 'yes' or 'no' to questions about whether they currently have a primary care provider. The form will ask people for the name of their most recent primary care provider and when the last time they saw their primary care provider was.

I signed up for the Registry along with my family. Will we be matched with the same primary care provider?

- When possible, family members will be matched with the same primary care provider.

How long will it take for me or my family to be matched with a primary care provider?

- Your community team will work to attach you to a primary care provider as quickly as possible, but the length of time will depend on the community and the capacity of providers.
- Adding healthcare providers throughout the province is key for the transformation of B.C.'s primary care system.
- More healthcare providers in the system creates an opportunity to shift how services have traditionally been provided and will create more space for people to access a regular family doctor or nurse practitioner.
 - For example, a patient with diabetes may be treated by a registered nurse to manage blood sugar levels or a registered nutritionist for a personalized food plan. This frees up the time of family doctors and nurse practitioners to see more patients.
- As more family doctors and nurse practitioners are hired to take on new patients, registered people will continue to be matched.

How will I find out if I have been matched with a doctor or nurse practitioner?

- You will be contacted using the contact information you provided when you signed up for the Registry.
- You can indicate your preferred method of contact, either phone or email of SMS/text when you register.

Can a doctor or nurse practitioner decline attachment?

- Yes, if the primary care provider feels the match is not a good fit, they can decline the match.

- However, the family doctor or nurse practitioner must only decline attachment based on the professional practice standards of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC or the BC College of Nursing Professionals.
- You will not lose your place on the Registry if the match does not work for both parties.

If I move, do I need to register again, or will I automatically be transferred to the list for a primary care provider in my new community?

- If you move to a new community, you do not need to re-register.
- You can call 8-1-1 and update your address, and you will be transferred to the Registry for your new community.
- You will keep your original registration date and place in the queue, even in your new community.

How do I update my registration details?

- To update your registration details, call 8-1-1.
- If your address, contact information or provider preferences change, call 8-1-1 to update your registration.

I already registered myself, how do I add my family member to my registration?

- To add a family member to your registration, call 8-1-1. You'll need to provide their Personal Health Number.
- When you are registering for someone else, they must verbally consent to you registering on their behalf.

Does the Registry only match patients with doctors and nurse practitioners?

- Yes, you will either be matched with a family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Once you are attached, your family doctor or nurse practitioner will work with you and the team of healthcare professionals in your community to help you achieve your health goals.

I have registered on the Health Connect Registry. Can I find out my position on the list?

- We do not provide you with your position on the Registry. You will remain on the Registry until you can be matched with a family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Once you have registered there is no need to follow up. You will be contacted as soon a provider becomes available using the information you provided upon registration.
- The length of time it takes to get matched will depend on the community and the capacity of providers.
- Visit HealthLinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry/registered to find out about health services available in your community while you are waiting to be matched with a primary care provider.

I have been matched with a nurse practitioner. What is a nurse practitioner?

- Nurse practitioners are primary care providers with a broad scope of practice and can provide many of the same services as a family doctor.
- Including nurse practitioners is one of the ways to help more people access care and find a regular primary care provider.
- Nurse practitioners have master's-level clinical education which enables them to blend nursing and medical knowledge to:
 - Diagnose and treat medical conditions;
 - Order and interpret tests;
 - Prescribe medications;
 - Refer to specialists; and
 - Lead and coordinate your care.
- Nurse practitioners are healthcare professionals who treat the whole person, an approach which includes:
 - Addressing needs relating to your physical and mental health;
 - Gathering your medical history and providing options for your health care;
 - Focusing on how an illness affects your life and family;

- Focusing on you as a patient to support your health; and
- Teaching you how to manage chronic illness.
- For more information on nurse practitioners, and the support that they can provide for you, visit www.healthlinkbc.ca/nurse-practitioners.

If I'm on another waitlist should I sign up for the Health Connect Registry?

- If you're already on a waitlist at your local clinic or with your community, such as with a Divisions of Family Practice or Primary Care Network, you do not need to register.
- Primary care provider waitlists at clinics and community health services in B.C. are transitioning to the Health Connect Registry.
- You will be contacted directly about your registration and will maintain your original waitlist registration date.

How is my personal information used and protected?

- The personal information you provide will be used to find you a family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- To protect your personal information, the Ministry of Health and HealthLink BC comply with B.C. privacy legislation under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- If you have questions about the collection or use of personal information, you can send direct inquiries:
 - By mail: Manager, Design & Delivery, PO Box 9636 STN PROV GOVT, Victoria BC V8W 9P1
 - By phone: (604) 215-8107

What is a Primary Care Network (PCN)?

- PCNs are geographically-based networks that link primary and community care services in with each other and with other services to provide seamless, high-quality care.
- PCNs support team-based care and involve a team of healthcare providers that can support patients, including family doctors, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, social workers, midwives,

mental health professionals, Indigenous and community providers and others.

- The Health Connect Registry connects you with a family doctor or nurse practitioner who will then work together with you and the team of healthcare professionals in your community to help you achieve your health goals.
- Each PCN designs programs and services to best meet local needs, which vary by community and region.
 - For example, one community might increase access to additional women's and children's health services through a team of practitioners including doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, midwives or others.
 - Meanwhile, a community in a different part of the province may have additional mental health or substance use professionals to support individuals and families.
- Communities are actively engaged in the planning and implementation of PCNs.
- The development of PCNs is being led by the Ministry of Health in partnership with the Doctors of BC, Divisions of Family Practice, B.C. health authorities and the First Nations Health Authority.

Additional Resources:

Emergency or Immediate Care

- Medical emergency: Call [9-1-1](tel:911) or go to your closest [emergency department](#)
- Suicide crisis: Call [1-800-SUICIDE](tel:18007842433) (1 800 784--2433)
- [BC Poison Control](#): Call [1-800-567-8911](tel:18005678911)

Non-Emergency Care

- Visit a pharmacist: B.C. residents can [see a pharmacist for minor ailments, prescription renewals and contraception](#) prescriptions
- HealthLink BC: Call [8-1-1](tel:811) for non-emergency health information and advice

(available seven days a week, 24 hours a day)

- [HealthLink BC health services directory](#): Find health services in your area
- [Urgent and Primary Care Centres \(UPCCs\)](#): UPCCs are opening throughout the province, check to see if there is a UPCC in your community
- [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day](#): Available to First Nations people in B.C. who have limited or no access to their own doctors

Mental Health Supports

- Mental Health Support Line: Call [310--6789](#) (no area code)
- [Kids Help Phone](#): Call [1-800-668-6868](#) or text CONNECT to [686868](#)
- [Wellbeing](#): Find mental health and substance use supports in your area