

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

FOR INTERNAL USE – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

Health Connect Registry – Public
March 17, 2021

Key Messages:

- If you are looking for a primary care provider, you can register yourself, your family and anyone in your care, on the Health Connect Registry.
 - A person in your care is someone you are caring for and does not live in your household, or lives in your household and is not a family member.
- The Health Connect Registry is a tool that helps people find a local family doctor or nurse practitioner who can support their day-to-day health-care needs.
- Registration can be done quickly and easily online. Visit HealthLinkBC.ca/health-connect-registry.
 - If you don't have Internet access or need translation services (available in over 130 languages), register by calling HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.
 - If you are deaf or hard of hearing, register by calling 7-1-1.
- To register, you will be asked to provide your B.C. address including postal code and your personal health number.
- Once registered, you will remain on the registry until you are matched with a family doctor or nurse practitioner in your primary care network.
- When a provider becomes available, you will be contacted using the contact information you provided in the registry.

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- Matching you with a primary care provider may take some time depending on the number of care providers in your area and their capacity for new patients.

General:

Q1. What is the Health Connect Registry?

- The Health Connect Registry is a simple, easy-to-use tool that lets people in communities where a primary care network (PCN) has launched register for a regular primary care provider – either a family doctor or nurse practitioner.

Q2. How can I sign up for it? Can I sign my loved ones up?

- You can register yourself, your family or anyone in your care.
- A person in your care is someone you are caring for who does not live in your household, or lives in your household and is not 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. Or, if you 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, or 7-1-1 for the deaf or hard of hearing, any time of day or night.
- Translation services are available in over 130 languages.

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Q3. Who can sign up to be on the registry?

- The registry is launching in a phased approach for people who are looking for a family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Only people in communities that are participating in the Health Connect Registry and where a PCN has launched can sign up.
- If you live outside of these communities, you are not able to register at this time. Instead, if you contact HealthLink BC you will be provided suggestions for accessing health services and supports in your community.

Q4. What is a primary care network (PCN)?

- PCNs are geographically-based networks that plan and deliver all the primary care needs of a community – in some ways, this is similar to how school districts work together to plan and deliver the educational needs for communities.
- PCNs support team-based care and providers can include family doctors, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, social workers, midwives, mental health professionals, Indigenous and community providers and others, depending on the needs of the people who live in the community or region.
- The Health Connect Registry connects you with a primary care provider – that is, a family doctor or nurse practitioner – who will then work together with you and the team of health-care professionals in your PCN to help you achieve your health goals.
- These teams will include existing family doctor offices, nurse practitioners, services offered through health authorities, community health service organizations and more.

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- 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 goal is to establish PCNs provincewide.
- 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.

Q5. Why was the Health Connect Registry created?

- The Health Connect Registry was created to simplify the process of helping British Columbians connect with a primary care provider, such as a family doctor or nurse practitioner.

Q6. 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 primary care provider.
- You can register yourself, your family and people in your care for a family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- The registry will match you with a family doctor or nurse practitioner as capacity in individual practices become available.

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Q7. What information will the registry collect from me?

- The following information is collected:
 - Name
 - Date of birth
 - Gender
 - Contact information, which may include phone number, address and email address
 - Personal health number
- If consents are in place, this information can also be provided by a person who has a close relationship with, or responsibility for, the health and well-being of you or another person being registered.

Q8. How do I find out if the Health Connect Registry is available in my community?

- Check HealthLinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry to find out if the Health Connect Registry is available in your community.

Q9. The Health Connect Registry is not currently available in my community, when will it be?

- To make sure we are able to meet demand, we are taking a phased approach to the registry.
- Communities will be onboarded as their PCN puts the necessary infrastructure in place to support the registry and to attach patients to a primary care provider.

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- We will continue to add communities throughout British Columbia, with the goal of having the registry available provincewide.
- British Columbians can check on HealthLinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry for updates about where the Health Connect Registry is available.

Q10. If the Health Connect Registry isn't available in my community yet, can I register and get matched with a primary care provider in a community close to me and travel there for care?

- No. If you do not live in a community with a participating PCN, you are unable to register at this time.
- You must provide information about yourself when registering, including your address. This is how eligibility for the Health Connect Registry is determined.
- You will be provided with suggestions for accessing available health services and supports in your community in the interim.

Q11. How am I matched with a primary care provider? Is placement based solely on a first-come, first-serve basis or is urgency considered?

- Attachment to a doctor or nurse practitioner is primarily provided on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- However, PCNs can establish priority attachment processes for patients with certain health conditions.
- A goal of the Health Connect Registry is equitable access. This means making sure every patient has the same opportunity as any other patient. It is at the discretion of each PCN to determine how they will

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connect patients to primary care providers in a way that best supports patients' needs.

Q12. Will I have a choice in the primary caregiver I am attached to?

- You can indicate your gender preference for a primary care provider.
- Once you are contacted for attachment by the PCN, you can indicate your preference to be paired with a family doctor or nurse practitioner in addition to your preferred language. At this time, you can also flag any accessibility issues.
- The distance you may have to travel to see your provider is considered when PCNs match you to a primary care provider. PCNs will also consider whether to match you with a primary care provider who offers service in other languages.
- Once you are matched with a provider, you have an opportunity to meet with them to discuss your care plans and make sure that it is a good match for you both.

Q13. If I do not feel like it is a good fit between me and the primary care provider I am matched with, can I be matched with another or do I need to sign up for the registry again?

- Once you are matched with a primary care provider, you have an opportunity to meet with them 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.

Q14. I already have a primary care provider but would like a new one. Am I able to sign up for the registry?

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- Yes, anyone located within a participating PCN can sign up to be on the registry.
- 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.
- Patients who don’t have a primary care provider may be matched with a provider first, before patients who already have one.

Q15. 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 attached together with the same provider or simultaneously with a different provider. This could mean different providers in the same clinic, or in separate clinics. Either way, your family will all be attached within the same PCN.

Q16. How long will it take for me or my loved ones to be matched with a primary care provider?

- We 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 teams of health-care providers throughout the province is key for the transformation of B.C.’s primary care system.
- More team members in the health-care 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.

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- 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.
- Additionally, as more family doctors and nurse practitioners are hired into PCNs to take on new patients, people will continue to be matched. That timeline will be unique to each PCN and its practitioners.

Q17. How will I find out if I have been matched with a doctor or nurse practitioner?

- You will be contacted by the PCN. They will use the contact information you provided when you signed up for the registry.

Q18. Can a doctor or nurse practitioner decline being attached to me?

- 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 decline attachment based on the professional practice standards of the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons or the BC College of Nursing Professionals.

Q19. 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?

- No, you will not be automatically transferred. You will need to update your registration information by calling 8-1-1.
- 8-1-1 will also advise if your new community has activated the Health Connect Registry.

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- If you live in a community that is not yet participating in the Health Connect Registry, you will be unable to re-register at this time.
- However, 8-1-1 will provide advice on how you can access health services or find a primary care provider in the interim.

Q20. Does the registry only match patients with doctors and nurse practitioners?

- Yes – at this time you will either be connected to a family doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Once you are attached, your family doctor or nurse practitioner will work together with you and the team of health-care professionals in your PCN to help you achieve your health goals.

Q21. I have registered on the Health Connect Registry. How do I find out my position on the list?

- We cannot provide you with your position on the registry. Once you have registered there is no need to follow up. You will remain on the registry until you can be matched with a family doctor or nurse practitioner. You will be contacted as soon a provider becomes available using the information you provided upon registration.
- Visit HealthLinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry to find out about services available in your community while you are waiting for a primary care provider.

Q22. Can I be on another waitlist and still sign up for the Health Connect Registry?

- Yes, you can be on a doctor's or nurse practitioner's waitlist and still sign up to be on the registry when it is available in your community.

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- When a PCN begins to use the Health Connect Registry in your community, current waitlists will be transitioned into the registry by primary care coordinators who work for the PCN. This will ensure that those who were already on community lists maintain their place in the waitlist for a primary care provider, and that there is a single list for the PCN to work from.

Q23. 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, direct inquiries:
 - By mail to Manager, Design & Delivery, PO Box 9636 STN PROV GOVT, Victoria BC V8W 9P1
 - By phone at (604) 215-8107