



Yukon Registered Nurses Association

#204 - 4133 - 4th Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1H8
Phone: 867-667-4062 Fax: 867-668-5123 e-mail: admin@yrna.ca Web: www.yrna.ca

MEDIA RELEASE

15 December 2009

LEGISLATION OPENS DOOR FOR NURSE PRACTITIONERS

WHITEHORSE --- The Yukon Registered Nurses Association (YRNA) is pleased that legislation which will authorize the practice of nurse practitioners in the Yukon has been passed in the Legislative Assembly.

“This is going to be a positive addition to the health care team and will improve access to care for Yukoners,” said Peggy Heynen, President of YRNA. “We have caught up to the rest of Canada,” she continued, explaining that the Yukon is the last jurisdiction in Canada to be in a position to regulate and license nurse practitioners.

Nurse practitioners are registered nurses who have additional education in health assessment, diagnosis and management of illness and injuries. They provide a full range of health care services to individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, with a focus on promoting health and preventing illness. Nurse practitioners have a patient-centred, holistic approach to care. They are authorized to prescribe drugs, order diagnostic tests and treat common health conditions. They work autonomously, from initiating care to monitoring health outcomes, while working in collaboration with other health professionals

Shawn O’Donovan was born and raised in the Yukon and is currently working as a Primary Health Care Nurse in Haines Junction. She is licensed as a nurse practitioner in Nova Scotia and is looking forward to the day when she can practice as a nurse practitioner in the Yukon. “Nurse practitioners have actually been around for a long time,” says O’Donovan “and within the last 12 years have been regulated and licensed in other provinces and territories in Canada.” She adds, “Research from other Canadian jurisdictions, and in fact from other countries, indicates good health outcomes and a high level of satisfaction for clients who make use of the services of nurse practitioners.”

“There is still a lot of work to do before nurse practitioners are in a position to work in the Yukon,” said Patricia McGarr, Executive Director of YRNA. “We are currently developing regulations and other guidelines that will be necessary to regulate their practice and we are also encouraging employers and government to create nurse practitioner positions so that Yukoners can benefit from the services these health professionals are able to provide.”

There are many areas and locations where nurse practitioners could work in the Yukon. In other parts of the country they can be found in diverse settings from community health centres to hospitals to nursing homes and home care. Increasingly, nurse practitioners are recognized as a solution to improving timely public access to health care. They complement traditional services already in place and can help alleviate current gaps and waiting times in the health care system, especially within the community setting.

Contact:

Patricia McGarr, RN
Executive Director
Yukon Registered Nurses Association
867-667-4062