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The Canadian Nurses Association applauds Health Minister Margaret MacDiarmid and the B.C. Health Ministry for taking action. By giving nurse practitioners (NPs) authority to admit and discharge their patients, the government is making real progress on improving continuity of care, reducing wait times and easing the congestion in our overburdened hospitals.

Almost five million Canadians do not currently have a primary health-care provider, and those that do have difficulty getting timely care. Nurse practitioners are an existing, proven resource for enhancing Canadians' access to health care. NPs have additional education and experience. They are licensed and accountable in their province of practice. NPs are a real solution to better access.

To meet the needs of the today's population, the health system needs care providers working together. Nurse practitioners work as part of a health-care team made up of registered nurses, physicians and others care providers, such as dietitians, physiotherapists and social workers, as required. Only with a team-based approach, with each member allowed to work to their full scope of practice, will Canada provide better care for the whole patient and make a measurable difference in the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the system.

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