

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics
Advancing Family Health Care for All

Number 1

Introduction to Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics

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The **Application Kit** for Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics Wave 3 consists of four documents.

This is Document #1 of the Application Kit: *Introduction to Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics.*

Introduction

This document provides an overview of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics and the fundamental building blocks necessary to establish a Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic.

On November 29, 2007, the government announced the establishment of twenty-five Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics in its Throne Speech. In February 2009, three Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics were announced as part of its Wave 1 commitment. In November 2009 the eight Wave 2 Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics were announced. The government will continue with its commitment in developing Nurse Practitioner Led-Clinics in areas of additional need with the Wave 3 call for fourteen more Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics.

Note:

The Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic Application Kit is available on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's (the ministry's) public website at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/np_clinics/np_mn.html.

Family Health Care for All

The implementation of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics is part of the government's Family Care for All Strategy, which will improve timely access to comprehensive family health care for all Ontarians.

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics are a new primary health care delivery model in which nurse practitioners are the lead providers of primary health care. Through a collaborative practice approach which includes registered nurses, registered practical nurses, collaborating family physicians, and other health care professionals, nurse practitioners provide comprehensive, accessible, and coordinated family health care services to populations who do not have access to a primary care provider (i.e. unattached patients). Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics improve the quality of care through enhanced health promotion, disease prevention and chronic disease management. The clinics will also promote and improve care co-ordination and navigation of the health care system at the local level.

Through Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics, patients are able to establish a continuous relationship with health care providers for comprehensive, family health care close to home. As a collaborative team practice, Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics emphasize health promotion and improved management of chronic disease, through both treatment and monitoring. Nurse practitioners support their patients in improving their self-management skills. Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics help to keep patients healthier and ensure chronic diseases are better managed, which leads to reduced Emergency Room visits.

This vision allows nurse practitioners and other members of the team to practice together in a positive working environment, sharing and benefiting from the complementary knowledge and skills of their colleagues, with a focus on keeping patients healthy.

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will have access to information technology tools and support in implementing patient electronic medical records and decision support tools.

Guiding Principles

The following are the principles that the ministry will use to guide the development and implementation of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics in Ontario:

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic Model of Care Delivery

Nurse practitioners will be the most responsible providers of health care with patients registered to the clinic. They will promote the benefits of inter-professional team-based care to improve access to comprehensive family health care for all Ontarians.

Patient Focus

The 25 Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics are projected to serve 40,000 patients (many of whom will be unattached) in their community and participate in other *Family Health Care for All* initiatives such as chronic disease prevention and management programs, the Ontario Diabetes Strategy and integrated cancer screening programs.

Flexibility and Choice

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will not be a one-size-fits-all approach. There are diverse communities across Ontario and there must be flexibility in the scope and focus of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics to allow them to be tailored to meet the needs of the local patient population.

Community and Provider Partnerships

Community representatives, local health delivery organizations and health care professionals are encouraged to work together to develop a Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic that reflects the unique needs of the population served, and develop collaborative working relationships that will enhance access and continuity of care.

Build on Existing Models and Successes

Ontario has a rich history of leadership in family health care delivery and access. Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will build upon the strengths of these existing models and learn from their challenges and successes.

Team-Based Care

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will be inter-professional teams of health care providers including nurse practitioners, registered nurses, a range of other health care professionals (including collaborating family physicians) each working to their full scope of practice. The make-up of these teams will be tailored to the size of the population served and their health care needs.

Local Integration

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will work with other health care delivery organizations to develop partnerships that will maximize opportunities for local collaboration to improve access and continuity of care. Such relationships may include Community Care Access Centres, local hospitals, public health units, long-term care facilities, and voluntary associations.

Evidence-Based Approach

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will use evidence-based care and engage in continuous quality improvement processes, which will cultivate flexibility for innovation and responsiveness to local community and provider concerns.

Transparency and Consultation

Open communication and transparent decision-making on the design, development and implementation of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will ensure their success. Stakeholders and community consultation will maximize acceptance and commitment to common goals, respective responsibilities and mutual accountability.

The Role of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics

1. Provide comprehensive family health care services through an inter-professional team of nurse practitioners, registered nurses, a range of other health care professionals, and collaborating family physicians, each working to their full scope of practice;
2. Provide system navigation and care coordination across the health care system such as acute care, long-term care, public health, mental health, addictions, and community programs and services;
3. Emphasize health promotion, illness prevention, early detection/diagnosis;
4. Promote the development of new, comprehensive, chronic disease management and self-care programs, as well as strengthen linkages with existing programs (e.g. the Ontario Diabetes Strategy) as well as the integrated cancer screening programs;
5. Provide patient-centered care where the patient is a key member of the team and uses information and support to make informed decisions on how to manage his/her self-care needs;
6. Create linkages with other health care organizations at the community level in order to meet the needs of the specific community;
7. Use information technology as the backbone of system integration, linking patient records across different health care settings giving providers timely access to test results and other important data; and
8. Evolve through continuous quality improvement processes, evidence-based practice and flexibility for innovation and responsiveness to local community and provider concerns.

The Vision

The ministry is committed to working with our province's dedicated health care professionals to improve the health care system because Ontarians deserve the best health care.

The implementation of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics is part of the government's goal to increase access to family health care services for all Ontarians. The implementation of these clinics will reduce the number of unattached patients in Ontario. Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics increase access to those in disadvantaged populations or with special needs, by improving the comprehensiveness and integration of services.

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will build on the successes of other family health care service delivery models such as Family Health Teams, Community Health Centres, Primary Care and Underserved Area Program Nurse Practitioner Programs. This strategy will facilitate the implementation of other key ministry initiatives (e.g. the Ontario Diabetes Strategy, Health Care Connect and integrated cancer screening) by providing an organized system of health care through which these and other initiatives can be delivered.

Wave 3

The Call for Applications for Wave 3 has been issued with the deadline for submissions by **5:00 p.m. Friday, June 25, 2010**. It is expected that successful applicants will be announced in Summer 2010.

Application Review

The application review will focus on the following areas:

1. Existing family health care services profile of your community – This section focuses on the overall health needs of the community in which your proposed Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic will be located, providing the ministry with information on your region, and the availability of existing family health care services and how your Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic would be integrated with these other services.
2. Overview and commitment of the proposed providers in your Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic – This section provides the ministry with information about your proposed Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, including the planned number of registered nurses in the extended class [RN (EC)], collaborating family physicians and other family health care providers in your community (e.g. registered nurse, registered practical nurse, social worker, registered dietician). This section also includes the planned functions of each provider, as well as the commitment made by each provider. Letters of commitment confirming the acceptance of a position at the Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic will strengthen your application.
3. The primary health care needs of the population you intend to serve in your clinic and the services you intend to provide – This section provides the ministry with information about the population your proposed Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic intends to serve, and the services your clinic will provide to meet the family health care needs of your patients. This section will provide the ministry with information about the statistics on the priority populations in your community and the number of patients your Nurse

Practitioner-Led Clinic plans to target. Please note that Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics are not intended to provide services to uninsured patients.

The 25 Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics are projected to serve 40,000 unattached patients in their community, and participate in other Family Health Care for All initiatives such as chronic disease prevention and management programs (e.g. the Ontario Diabetes Strategy) and integrated cancer screening programs.

4. Community Partnerships – This section will help the ministry identify the level of collaboration with other community partners, the roles of any community partners (such as Family Health Teams, Community Health Centres), a community organization and any commitment from these organizations to provide support for your clinic. Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics look to developing linkages within the health sector and integrated health care services between providers.

5. Readiness to Operate – This section will help the ministry determine the length of time that would be required for your proposed Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic to become operational. Space planning and human or other resources for your Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic should be identified in this section. Experience on your team in developing or running a small primary care clinic will be an asset.

Support for Successful Applicants for a new Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic

Once awarded, the new Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics will be provided resources to help guide them through development and implementation. The materials being offered are based on the lessons learned and the experience garnered during the Wave 1 implementation of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics. These support tools are designed to help new Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics navigate the start-up phase more easily and more efficiently to reach operational status in a shorter period of time. Resources will include:

- A series of guide sheets that will assist you in the development of your plans (e.g. an *Implementing a Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic* guide sheet, a *Business Plan and Operational Plan* guide sheet, a *Capital Grant and Transitional Funding* guide sheet, and an *Information Technology* guide sheet, among others); and
- A team of trained implementation specialists at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

All guide sheets can be found at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/np_clinics/np_mn.html