



Nurses and  
Nurse Practitioners  
of British Columbia

# **NNPBC Registered Nurse Advocacy Toolkit**

*Reference Guide*

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## Introduction

NNPBC is proud to be the professional association representing all four nursing designations in BC. Within this mandate, NNPBC seeks to advance the nursing profession and transform health and social policy by elevating the unique and critical voice of nurses.

Registered Nurses play an important role in BC's health care system and have specific qualifications and expertise with which they can contribute meaningfully to health care solutions in BC.

The NNPBC Registered Nurse Advocacy Toolkit is intended to serve as a reference guide for BC RNs interested in engaging with the public and with community and government representatives to increase awareness and advocate for the Registered Nurse role. This guide includes step-by-step processes as well as tips and tricks for communicating with the media, engaging on social media, and writing advocacy letters to local officials.

For questions related to information in this guide, please contact [info@nnpbc.com](mailto:info@nnpbc.com).

## 1. Media Tips and Tricks for Registered Nurses

### Background

NNPBC recognizes that RNs may read and hear a variety of stories in the media related to nursing practice. These may be traditional media 'stories' or they may be op-eds published in local papers.

The NNPBC Communications Team does its best to not only monitor media, but to build and cultivate relationships with various media outlets. In the last 18 months, NNPBC's media profile and exposure has grown, and media outlets are seeking the NNPBC perspective on key issues. All media is posted on the NNPBC [media page](#) when available. We encourage all to take a look, have a read, or listen at any time. NNPBC will also ensure recent media is highlighted in our monthly newsletters and on social media channels.

When new stories break, NNPBC may respond through traditional media (if applicable) and/or via written statements that we post to our website. NNPBC does not necessarily respond to every issue that arises. Responses are based on a variety of strategic considerations. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to [info@nnpbc.com](mailto:info@nnpbc.com).

### Purpose

This document is meant to provide some high-level key messages to RNs who may wish to respond to media pieces as *individuals* as well as some general tips and tricks. RNs who choose to respond to media are *not* speaking on behalf of the Association, nor does NNPBC endorse those opinions or perspectives. However, we have understood that some guidance around key messages may be helpful. At any time, if as an individual you believe that a reply would be better served coming from NNPBC, please reach out ([info@nnpbc.com](mailto:info@nnpbc.com)) as noted above.

### Key Messages

Key messages are a useful way to share detailed and accurate information in short sound bites. Consider the examples outlined below:

#### What is a Registered Nurse?

- RNs are highly qualified health care providers who provide fulsome, compassionate, and ethical care to patients of all ages, throughout their health care journey.
- RNs create patient care plans based on an individual's complex and specific needs, considering medications, patient and family history, allergies, underlying conditions, comorbidities, and patient preferences.
- RNs promote health literacy by educating and informing patients, clients, and the public about health and wellness best practices and by sharing evidence-informed advice and materials.
- RNs provide health care services to patients of all ages in every community around the province, working across the system in health settings including primary care, acute care, emergency care, community care, home care, specialty clinics, long-term and assisted living facilities, education, and through outreach programs.
- RNs support patient- and family-centred care, knowing that when patient and family preferences are included, and when patient values are included in health care decisions, patients experience better health care outcomes.
- RNs are educators who share and promote best practices in the provision of high quality, ethical care.
- RNs communicate broadly with other nurses and members of an effective health care team to ensure that health needs are being met for patients, families, units, clinics, and communities.
- In many cases, RNs are the only health professionals located in rural and remote communities and provide patients and families in those communities with full range health care services, supports, and education.
- RNs are public health experts and leaders in immunization delivery and literacy.
- RNs value collaboration and the ability to work closely with health care colleagues to provide exceptional and interdisciplinary care to the people of BC.



## General Messaging

- Health care is complex, and the needs of the population are multi-faceted and varied.
- Registered Nurses provide nursing services to individuals and communities to help maintain and restore health and wellness and to prevent illness and injury.
- Registered Nurses practice independently and in collaboration with other health professionals.
- Registered Nurses work collaboratively with other nurses, physicians, and allied health providers to deliver holistic team-based care, focusing on providing quality health care to improve patient health outcomes.
- Registered Nurses exercise independent clinical judgement to provide evidence-informed, ethical care for patients and clients.
- Registered Nurses may use their clinical judgement and expertise to make recommendations to other members of a health care team including other nurses, nurse practitioners, and physicians.



## Registered Nurses in Primary Care

- BC's Primary Care Strategy is taking steps to ensure people have faster and better access to the day-to-day healthcare services they need by investing in team-based primary care.
- As part of primary care teams, RNs work collaboratively with a team of health care professionals which may include other nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians, and allied health professionals.
- Registered Nurses work as clinicians, consultants, health coordinators, educators, leaders, and advocates within primary care teams.
- Registered Nurses initiate and coordinate patient health care plans, considering patient preferences and expertise from other members of an interdisciplinary team.
- RNs understand the symptoms, effects, and complex health needs of patients with underlying and inheritable conditions, comorbidities, and immunosuppression.
- Registered Nurses advocate for patient health and support and involve patients in the decision-making and management of their health and welfare.
- Registered Nurses provide information about medications and counsel patients and clients on medication therapies, uses, and possible interactions.
- Our professional association, NNPBC, believes that it is imperative that British Columbians have access to a regular, consistent primary care provider that puts the focus on the patient and their wellness, ensuring the highest quality of care is provided.

## Registered Nurses in Acute and Specialized Care

- Registered Nurses may pursue additional education and foster extensive knowledge in certain clinical areas to become a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS).
- Registered Nurses create enormous positive impact when enabled to provide seamless transitional care across the health care continuum and between care sectors.
- Registered Nurses provide comprehensive, clinical expertise in all areas of health across the health care system.
- RNs in specialty settings contribute to positive health outcomes, improving the responsiveness and function of interdisciplinary teams while also complementing existing nursing and physician roles.
- RNs maintain a focus on patient transition between sectors to ensure effective continuity of care.
- RNs provide comprehensive care to patients in hospital, and incorporate health promotion, prevention, and management strategies as they relate to specific diseases and/or chronic conditions.
- RNs act as point of contact to facilitate communication across system sectors including specialty care, primary care, and community and home care.

## Some Things to Remember

**There's no such thing as "off the record."** When speaking to media assume everything is "on record." When requested to speak to the media, know the source and intent for the coverage. When applicable, consult with NNPBC, BCCNM or your Health Authority prior to speaking to the media. Ask if it is possible for you to see and approve the media piece before it is made public. (*Note:* This isn't always an option, but it never hurts to ask.)

**Be aware of who manages what.** Always ensure your employer is comfortable with you speaking to media. If you belong to a health authority, consult with your health authority's communications team. NNPBC manages and approves NNPBC media; we do not manage nor approve media for individual RNs.

**Follow BCCNM social media guidelines.** Nurses understand their professional, ethical, and legal obligations to protect the public and act in a way that maintains professionalism and the public's trust. RPNs can view social media standards and information on the [BCCNM website](#).

**Keep it simple.** Be clear and factual; avoid too much jargon.

**Don't compare.** When responding to a media piece in either a written op-ed or via social media, it is important to remember that no profession is served well by characterizing themselves in opposition to another profession.

**Focus on the positives.** It is therefore important to focus on the good work that nurses do, the ways in which nurses fill gaps in the health care system and the evidence that clearly demonstrates that nurses are not only a cost-effective system level solution, but highly regarded by patients.

**Monitor tone.** Always be professional in your tone and remember that sometimes people may not understand the distinction between providers.

**Don't be reactive.** Take your time before responding or commenting publicly. Resist the urge to "shoot back" or be overly reactive. In an online world it can be particularly easy to tweet a response without fully considering the ramifications. Even in a short 280-character reply, both words and tone matter. Remember, once your comment is online, consider it there forever.

**Share information.** Use your responses as an opportunity to educate and inform, never to shame or blame.



## 2. Advocacy Tips and Tricks for Registered Nurses

### Formulate and Clarify Your Message

#### Key Messages

A key message is a great way to deliver a consistent set of short messages that speak to the issues that matter most to you. A good key message is relatively short and is not open for misinterpretation. A well-defined message has two key components. First as noted, it is *simple, direct, and concise*. Second, it *defines the issues on your own terms and in your own words*. Your message will be much more meaningful if you express it in your own words with all of your opinion, frustration, joy or anger included.

#### Ask Relevant Questions

We have some suggestions that can help you to ask questions that are relevant and important.

- Think about the health policy issues that are affecting your work, your well-being and ask the sort of questions you feel health and political leaders should be answering.
- Keep your questions short and succinct. Stay away from questions that can be yes/no answers, but don't ask complicated, compound questions.
- Focus on asking open questions like "What do you think about...?" or "How do you feel about...?" Or "How would you handle this process?" or "How would you implement the steps you discussed?"



### Gain Traction

#### Getting the Attention of Policy Makers and Health Leaders

The challenge for many of us is learning or figuring out how to be included, and how to be invited to share your opinion with those who can best affect change.

Nevertheless, there are certainly ways to become involved, and become the type of person whose presence and opinion are valued. Political and health leaders hear from a lot of people. Some of them come with concerns about injustices or problems. Others come forward with solutions and suggestions that are well thought out and considered. It's not a surprise who the preferred person is in this situation. No question most of us would rather listen to the individual who comes with a plan and ideas.

#### Connect with Health and Political Leaders

They have offices, office staff, social media accounts etc. Make a point of talking to them. Don't consume their time. Share your well-thought-out ideas and opinions and move on. Plan your questions and key messages, introduce yourself, pass them your (virtual) card and engage in a short conversation with them.

### Use Advocacy Channels and Platforms

#### Use Social Media Platforms

Most organizations, political leaders, health care leaders and people in general are using at least one social media platform, and most of us use multiple platforms. Follow these leaders and organizations. Check out what they say. Respond to a tweet or a Facebook post, share it, retweet it, like it. Or use it as a space to ask that person questions. Respond to them using some of the tips above with respect to key messages. Ask them focused questions and engage them.

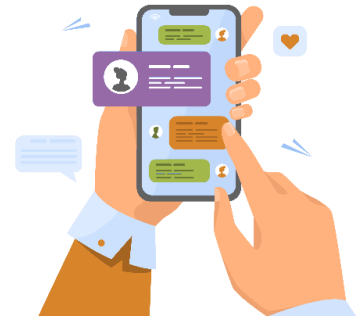
Keep in mind though that for many people social media is a tool used to criticize others in large part because you get to be anonymous and hide behind a computer. Don't fall for this idea that all social media interactions should be contentious or fraught in order to be effective. Social media is a powerful tool that is about engagement, a way to make connections and build bridges and as opposed to tearing them down. Don't shy away but be constructive.

When using social media, always remember you must follow [BCCNM Social Media standards](#).

It's worth noting that we have all seen by now some of the online videos posted by nurses highlighting difficult conditions at work and/or speaking about difficulties in the profession. In some cases, nurses and nurse practitioners are highlighting difficult working conditions, areas for concern, or are sharing their very valid fears etc. We would never tell anyone to not do something they feel strongly about (assuming it fit within the parameters of the BCCNM standards). We do ask though that you consider the audience for these videos. Is it for a political leader? A manager at work? The public in general? With that in mind we always ask that you keep the most critical piece in mind: you are trusted by the public, what you say resonates and matters so take the opportunity to be constructive and solutions oriented. And if you are identifying yourself as a professional Registered Nurse in BC in your social media profile, then you are expected to adhere to your professional standards.

### A Word About Petitions

In the era of online petitions and GoFundMe accounts it's easy to focus on using these avenues to make a point or to ask for change. The reality, however, is that rarely, if ever, things change because people have signed a petition. That is not to say they always fail but that politicians may be inclined to take up a petitioned cause only if it's easy and something they might agree with anyway. For example, online petitioners claimed that their petition led to the banning of plastic bags in Victoria, BC. The truth is though this was well-underway and an 'easy' win, meaning that the petition was not the reason for the change. If you love petitions, please go ahead and use them but there are other more constructive ways to ensure that your important issues become part of the public dialogue. Additionally, there are times that petitions can actually damage your cause, because they create a sense of 'ganging up' against an individual rather than advocating in favour of a position.



### Focus on Objective Messaging

#### Understand Partisan, Non-Partisan, Bipartisan

NNPBC is a non-partisan organization. Non-partisan is defined as "objective" or not being controlled or unduly influenced by a political party or special interest group. In other words, we have no particular bias towards any political party and do not endorse or support one political party. Instead, we are interested in talking to and hearing all perspectives on issues that impact nursing and working towards a solutions-oriented approach.

On the flip side, sometimes organizations (or individuals) are partisan, which is defined as something that is partial to a particular person, party, or outcome. There's nothing wrong with this, and many nurses have very good reason to be partisan -- perhaps they tend to have conservative or liberal views or feel strongly about one party or another. NNPBC welcomes the involvement of nurses who have a partisan viewpoint -- but just note that we won't publish or support anything overly partisan. To represent nursing effectively in the province, we need to be able to work with governments across the political spectrum and to maintain constructive relationships with decision makers.

Ironically, the third term, bipartisan, is probably the most problematic, and maybe the most frequently used term of the three. Technically, bipartisan is defined as "composed of members from both parties."

As a non-partisan organization, NNPBC welcomes all nurses to bring issues to the forefront, particularly during times of public health crisis. In most instances, taking a partisan position is not helpful, and could potentially be harmful to the profession's capacity for influence as a shaper of public and health policy. If you as an individual wish to take a position on anything a political leader or party shares or notes during a crisis such as this, ask yourself if your politics will help or hurt the situation? It's okay to be critical of the decisions or actions of political leaders, but unprofessional to attack them personally. You may want to express your outrage on behalf of populations not being well served by current policies but be sure you come to the table with a solution for the issue with which you are being critical. In a time of crisis such as this, when our political leaders from all parties are working together and putting aside politics for the greater good, party politics will not reflect the urgency of the situation.

And finally...

We hope that these guidelines will encourage, rather than discourage you from the important advocacy role that nursing plays within society. Many of the social justice issues that arise in the health domain have been triggered by strong professional advocacy from a nursing perspective. We have the public trust – let's use it in a manner that is not self-serving but enacted in a professional manner to serve the public, including the sectors of society least able to advocate on behalf of themselves!



### 3. Creating Key Messages

#### Why Key Messages Matter

A key message is a great way to deliver a consistent set of short messages that speak to the issues that matter most to you. A good key message is relatively short and is not open for misinterpretation. A well-defined message has two key components. First as noted, it is simple, direct, and concise. Second, it defines the issues on your own terms and in your own words. Your message will be much more meaningful if you express it in your own words with all of your opinion, frustration, joy or anger included.

#### Primary Considerations

**Keep it high-level.** Consider who you are speaking to. How you might address another health professional is not the same as how you will address media or policy makers. Other health professionals are likely to understand words like 'longitudinal', but others may not really know what it means. Ensure your messages are targeted for your audience.

**Consider tone.** Ask yourself what tone you are taking. One thing to keep in mind is that people often confuse advocacy and complaining. Complaining is about articulating a feeling, advocacy is focused on making a change. People do not respond well to being shamed or by being made to feel stupid, or out of touch. Keep this in mind when writing anything and remember your opportunity is to be seen as a reasonable, thoughtful professional whom you WANT people to come back to for more information.



#### Refining the Message

**Be concise.** Each statement should be 1-3 sentences and about 30 seconds when spoken.

**Be strategic.** Ask yourself what purpose does my message serve? Reminder, if your message only serves you, you are complaining, not advocating.

**Be relevant.** No one needs to hear about what did or didn't happen 10 years ago. Stay on message with the key issues impacting the profession now.

**Be compelling.** Not all key messages stimulate action, some are just informational (and informational is good as long as the information is fact based) and that's ok. Be sure to write them in such a way that people want to use them.

**Be clear.** Health care jargon is only meaningful to a small group and do not rely on acronyms.

**Be active.** Use the active voice.

**Be adaptable.** Key messages will need to be tailored to different audiences.

**Be authentic.** When you are passionate about your work it shows. Being authentic is always meaningful.

## 4. Using Social Media

### Professional Obligations

As noted above, the BC College of Nurses and Midwives has some excellent and clear guidelines on their website for how nurses should conduct themselves on social media platforms. Please check those out any time if you need a reminder. At a high level the BCCNM information focuses on the following areas (all taken from the [BCCNM website](#)):

#### Professional Image

Use the same level of professionalism in your online interactions as you do face-to-face. Keep your personal and professional lives separate. Use different accounts for personal and professional activities.

#### Confidentiality

Do not share any client information on social media sites. Leaving out details when you post information or images does not protect client confidentiality. Report confidentiality breaches to the right person, immediately.

#### Privacy

Set and maintain your privacy settings to limit access to your personal information. Be aware of your privacy settings and know that even if you use the highest privacy settings, others can copy and share your information without your knowledge or permission.

#### Boundaries

Set and maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Just as with face-to-face relationships, this applies online too. Communicate these boundaries to clients and end your professional relationships appropriately. Don't accept "friend" requests from clients or former clients on your personal social media accounts. If you use social media with clients for work purposes, such as client teaching and resource-sharing, use a professional account separate from your personal one. Be clear about how your use of social media supports professional practice and make sure organizational policies addressing privacy and confidentiality are in place.

#### Expectations

Use caution if you identify yourself as a Registered Nurse online, outside of your employment. If you do so, others may ask for advice, which could lead to a nurse-client relationship. Using a name that hides your real identity does not release you from this expectation. Know this and practice accordingly.

#### Integrity

Protect yours and the profession's integrity. Use proper communication channels to discuss, report and resolve workplace issues — not social media. Refer to colleagues or clients online with the same level of respect as you would in the workplace. Before you blog, tweet or share information about your practice, reflect on your intentions and the possible consequences. Even if you don't post yourself, consider the impact of "liking" someone else's disrespectful comments.

#### Employer Policies

Know and follow employer policies on using social media, photography, computers and mobile devices, including personal, at work. If you work with a Health Authority, be sure to check their website or communication team for this information. (View the policies from [Vancouver Coastal Health](#) and [Fraser Health](#) for reference.) If you need to communicate with clients via social media, use a professional account and work with your employer to develop policies.

#### Accountability

Make sure you can answer for your actions. Reflect on why, how and when you use social media and help others do the same. Know that personal use of social media while working can create client risks through distraction and interruptions; and in some situations, could be viewed as client abandonment. If you are uncomfortable discussing your



online behaviour with others, consider this a red flag. Use professional judgment to keep your obligations to clients, colleagues and employers front and center.

## Recommendations

**Be an advocate not an arguer.** An advocate publicly recommends and highlights areas that require change and/or stand up for something. Arguing is about stating a strong opinion on a topic without necessarily working to affect change. Ask yourself, does my post inform and pose a new way forward or am I arguing?

**Be informative.** It is perfectly fine to use social media to promote your profession, but the tone should be focused on providing useful information to people. "Did you know that you can... We hope you find it helpful to..." etc.

**Be collegial.** This goes without saying. While it may be tempting to scold an injustice and while that scolding may attract attention, it may not be the right kind of attention. Also remember that online the narrative can shift quickly, an internet 'rabble-rouser' can fast become a target of attack.

**Be respectful.** This too goes without saying. Attacks are never condoned, and it is very possible to disagree and not resort to name calling or generalizations.

**Be thorough.** If followers ask a question, answer it. If the answer requires research or thoughtful detail, provide it. Provide real life examples when appropriate, and always maintain and respect patient confidentiality and privacy at all times (and don't forget BCCNM standards and your employer policies!).

## What NOT to do...

While frustrations are real, arguing or taking a combative approach does not always serve the larger purpose and can brand you a 'problem' (and government does not like to listen to 'problems'). Resist speaking in absolutes 'Nurses never get what we deserve, and no one respects us.' While you may feel this way, consider framing those frustrations constructively such as 'Nurses are key players in the health care system and are ready to be utilized to our full scope.'

## Sample Social Media Posts

The following posts are focused on advocating for the RN role and do so without harming or finger-pointing against other professionals.

- RNs are essential leaders in health care and contribute to health care reform and policy development. RNs hold a variety of clinical, professional and leadership roles in health care, education, management, research, and administration. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- Nursing innovation is paramount to the development and further modernization of our health care system. At point of care and through all stages of our lives, in policy, research and education, RNs bring clinical expertise and critical perspective to the health system. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- RNs practice and promote team-based, patient-centred care. RNs develop strong working relationships with other health providers, communicate regularly with patients and clients, and ensure that supports are in place for timely, safe, high-quality care. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- Nurses are experts in public health with an acute awareness of how our environments impact our health. Nurses lead when it comes to informing patients about healthy lifestyle best practices and advocating for patient-focused solutions amid environmental change. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- RNs provide care to patients and clients across the lifespan and work with all populations including Indigenous peoples, adults, older adults, and children. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- Nursing is vital to the functioning of our health system. Nursing is decision-making. Nursing is health education. Nursing is patient safety. Nursing is clinical evidence. Nursing is diverse and there for all patients, when and where they need it. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- RNs are highly skilled members of health care teams. Nurses provide safe, ethical care, advocate for patients and their health goals, lead multi-professional and interdisciplinary teams, engage in research and innovation, and focus on scientific evidence. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- Nurses are vital in ensuring that the people of this province have access to high-quality, primary care. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- RNs provide care across the lifespan and work with all populations including Indigenous peoples, adults, older adults and children. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- RNs are committed to working with all patients and their families to improve health and keep people at the centre of the care they receive. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- RNs provide care in settings across the health system, including in primary care, community clinics, hospitals, public health centres, long-term and assisted living facilities, residential care, emergency relief response, treatment centres, mental health, schools, rural and remote locations, and more. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)
- Without robust and sustainable primary health care delivery the health care system will not function. RNs and nurses of all designations offer a solution to these challenges. [@MinisterofHealth](#) [@MLAforyourarea](#) [@nnpbc](#) [#NursingLeads](#) [#NursingIs](#)



## 5. Advocacy Letter Writing Guide

### Overview

Learning to communicate your own perspective, thoughts, or experience in an advocacy letter is a skill that goes beyond signing your name on a template or a petition. Learning how to write a strong letter is an important way to advocate for your profession and it empowers professionals to speak up on issues that matter. Elected officials may have a strong understanding of what advocacy groups are saying about an issue, but they may not understand how a particular decision affects you as an individual member of a profession.

A good letter should:

- Explain how a particular issue affects you or your group,
- Show support for a proposed law, policy, or course of action, and/or
- Oppose a proposed law, policy, or course of action.

### When should you write to an elected official?

- You want an official to consider a certain action or policy (e.g., increasing funding for educational programs for example).
- There is an upcoming vote on a policy that concerns your group. Letters are most effective when the vote is about to be taken. This is a good time to use e-mail.
- You want to respond (positively or negatively) to a completed action or a change in policy (e.g., enacting a new policy, opposing a perspective that an elected official has articulated).
- You want to point out a deficiency or need in a particular area.
- You need information (e.g., about what happened the last time a certain issue came up for a vote).
- You need advice (how to approach another official, what kind of event will attract large numbers of officials to take notice, etc.). In this instance, you would probably be writing to an official that you have already had positive contact with.

*Adapted from [University of Kansas Community Tool Box](#).*

## Advocacy Letter Template

Date

Recipient Name and Address (be sure to get titles right!)

If delivered by email include the email address

**Dear [local official]**

### **Introduction/Section 1: Official opening – state your name and why you are writing.**

- Establish the relationship. How are you related to the recipient? If you are writing to a local, provincial, or federal politician, include your riding. If you are writing to the Minister of Health include your profession.
- State your purpose, use plain language, and keep focused on the specific action or issue you are writing about.
- Do not assume the recipient has zero context on your profession or the issues but by the same token do not assume they have all the context you might.

### **Section 2: Impact your understanding of the issue using facts.**

- Concisely convey your understanding of the issue—highlight why it is crucial to act.
- Remember to offer your expertise while continuing to use simple language to communicate the problem.

### **Section 3: Get personal.**

- Reflect and describe how this issue affects your life. Why is it important to you? Include a story that has shaped your position on this issue. Of course, remember that there are guidelines and standards that safeguard how you use personal information, so be sure your stories do not breach confidentiality.

### **Section 4: One more time for the people in the back!**

- Use this short paragraph to restate your desired action.
- If you are opposing an action in your letter, use this paragraph to offer an alternative action.

### **Closing/Section 5: The end.**

- Offer the recipient a thank you for their time and attention.
- Inform them that you expect a reply. Remember to include your contact information so they know how to reach you.

*Adapted from [University of Kansas Community Tool Box](#).*

## Sample Letter

Date

MLA Name

Contact Details

Dear MLA INSERT NAME HERE,

I am writing to you today as a Registered Nurse (RN) licensed to practice in British Columbia (BC). I have been practicing as a Registered Nurse since [insert date] and currently provide care to patients for [insert role or practice] in [insert city or community]. I am writing you today to bring awareness of the RN role in the broader health systems.

RNs are highly skilled health care professionals who work in all settings across the health care spectrum. However, while RNs fill a wide variety of roles throughout our health system, members of the public, patients, and other health professionals often remain unclear about the RN role and the multitude of ways in which we can provide solutions to some of BC's most challenging health care needs.

Current and previous governments have learned quite a bit about the role of nursing in health system developments because of strong advocacy by Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC (NNPBC), yet we are still often secondary to broader conversations that focus on the ways in which family physicians provide primary care to patients and clients. While this is certainly true and we have immense respect for our physician colleagues, the role of Registered Nurses, along with other nursing designations including Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, and Nurse Practitioners, are equally important in providing primary and community-based care.

Registered Nurses are vital members of a functioning health care system and currently comprise the largest number of health care providers in BC and across Canada. RNs are highly skilled health professionals who provide safe, ethical, and competent nursing services for the promotion of and maintenance of health and wellness. In BC, RNs adhere to very high regulatory standards of practice to ensure highest quality care for patients and clients. RNs work closely with their patients, provide health and education counselling, coordinate health care plans, coordinate care with other health providers, and seek to guide patients to make informed health and lifestyle choices, which ultimately may lead to reduced health care costs.

Changing the way in which we define and are inclusive of other providers serves as a model for a new way of thinking about health care delivery, one that focuses on inclusivity and the necessity for all providers to work collaboratively for the benefit of the patients we serve.

To that end, we would deeply appreciate the following:

- Reach out to NNPBC when you are seeking information about nurses. A member of the NNPBC team will always be happy to provide context and discuss further.
- Include nurses of all designations (RNs, RPNs, LPNs, NPs) in conversations when you are speaking about health care providers.
- Use language that is inclusive of nursing on web materials, written and social media communications.
- The current government would benefit from additional education with respect to why and how nurses can be more fully utilized and regarded as a key solution to the current health care human resource crisis.
- Similarly, the current government can better seek nursing led solutions in general to the challenges we face as a province.
- When speaking to the media, please speak about nurses and other ways in which nursing can be better utilized across this province.

Nursing led solutions are integral to resolving the health care crisis we collectively face today and to ensuring the viability of publicly funded health care well into the future. Without actively being inclusive of nursing and without

greater awareness of the nursing role, the lives of British Columbians will continue to be put at risk by shortages, closures, and barriers to care.

Again, thank you for your time and please note an [Appendix](#) follows which will provide some additional information as well links and resources.

Sincerely,

INSERT YOUR NAME AND TITLE HERE

INSERT YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION HERE



## 6. Appendices

### Appendix B: The Role of a Registered Nurse

**Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of British Columbia**

LPN	NP
RN	RPN

### What is the role of a Registered Nurse

Registered Nurses (RNs) support a high-functioning health care system by reducing the number of emergency room visits and hospitalizations as well as helping clients, residents, and patients remain healthy and well in the community. RN practice is guided by a nationally adopted [Code of Ethics](#).

- Treatment & Care**  
Secure a high functioning health care system by providing quality care across all health care sectors including primary, acute, long term, emergency, urgent, mental, specialty care and more. Support patients' and clients' physical, mental and emotional needs.
- Research**  
Partake in life-long learning to improve practice, nursing education, and transfer of knowledge. Specialize in certified practice areas to provide in-depth, comprehensive care. Contribute a well-rounded nursing perspective to health care research by participating in reviews, councils, working groups and more.
- Collaboration**  
Coordinate referrals and participate in a patient-centred, team-based approach to care alongside other health care professionals including practical nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians, specialists and more to ensure a targeted yet fulsome health care experience.
- Health Promotion & Education**  
Educate and inform patients and the public about health care management and options, disease prevention, sexual health, vaccination, exercise and nutrition, advance care planning and more.
- Advocacy**  
Advocate for patient-centred, team-based approaches to care. Promote the inclusion of social justice, cultural safety and humility, safe supply, harm reduction, and other evidence-based forms of care to bring about change to health and social policy.
- Leadership**  
Influence other health care professionals through education and partnership. Lead by example in areas including vaccination, mental health, exercise and nutrition, and more.
- Care Planning**  
Coordinate health care, treatment and recovery plans for patients and clients. Consider a wide variety of treatment options based on extensive knowledge and expertise in general and specialized practice.
- Assessment**  
Evaluate, triage and diagnose patients and clients across all sectors of care. Conduct initial head-to-toe, emergency, regular and ongoing assessments.

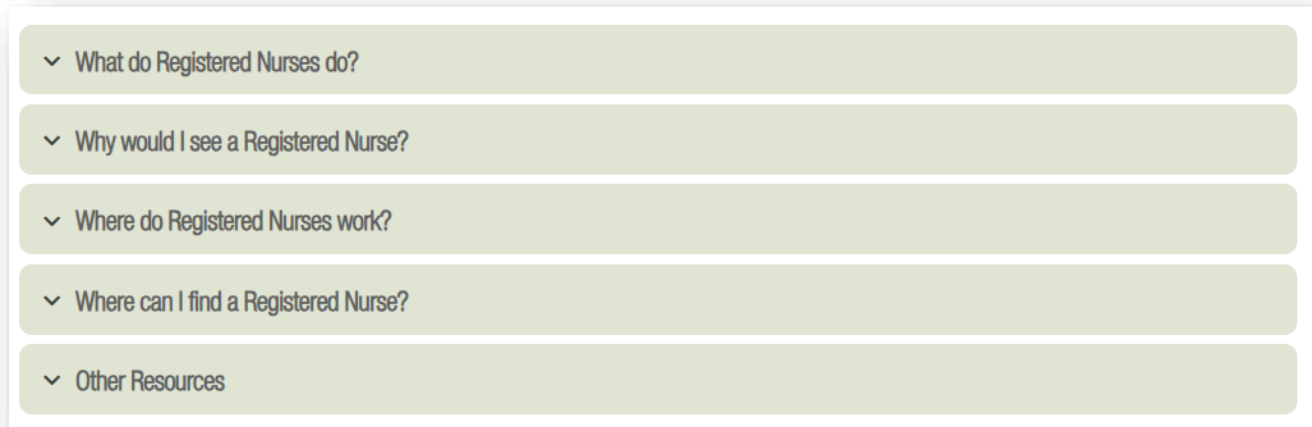
nnpbc.com #NursingMatters

Click image to access the PDF version.

## Appendix B: Information for the Public

NNPBC has created a public-facing page with information about Registered Nurses and other nursing designations in BC.

Find the page at: [nnpbc.com/aboutRNs](http://nnpbc.com/aboutRNs)



*Click the image to view this page.*