



September 21, 2022

On Tuesday, September 20, 2022, CBC British Columbia hosted a town hall entitled 'Situation Critical', during which the current crisis in BC health care was discussed. The invited panelists were BC Health Minister, Adrian Dix, Dr. Ramneek Dosanjh, President of the Doctors of BC and Dr. Rita McCracken, family physician and UBC Assistant Professor and Primary Care Researcher. The focus of the Town Hall included recent emergency room closures, physician shortages, increasing wait times, staffing issues, unhealthy work environments, and the unique impact of the crisis on rural communities. NNPBC has immense respect for the invited panelists who brought forward important and necessary perspectives and appreciates their knowledge on these urgent issues.

However, in spite of the efforts of many BC nursing leaders and NNPBC leadership, to the best of our knowledge, nursing was not invited to sit on this expert panel in order to engage in this critical discussion. The absence of nursing from this public leadership discussion is extremely disappointing.

To exclude a nursing voice in leadership conversations on the current health care crisis is to deny the knowledge, experience, and expertise of the approximately 60,000 nurses who deliver care in every corner of British Columbia. It also denies voice to the unique experience of BC nursing professionals who are working consistently understaffed, in challenging practice environments, and who are leaving health care in staggering numbers. Perhaps most importantly, the exclusion of nursing sidelines solutions that nurses brings to the table as the largest group of care providers in the province, right when every possible solution is needed most.

Nursing is the backbone of health care and the system cannot be sustained without nurses. Nurse-led solutions are integral to resolving the 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, the lives of British Columbians will continue to be put at risk by shortages, closures, and barriers to care.

NNPBC strongly encourages media, our elected officials, and others to consider the impact of omitting nursing from leadership dialogues on the escalating health care crisis. Nurses are educated experts with essential skills and abilities and are well-positioned to engage in the kind of collaborative leadership practices that are recognized as essential for health care transformation.

On behalf of the NNPBC Board of Directors