

Emergency Health Provider Registry Now Available

To all Northern Health medical staff members who provide direct care to patients/residents/clients:

When emergencies strike in B.C., our health care system is ready to respond.

In 2017, a lot of lessons were learned during the unprecedented wildfire season, when thousands of British Columbians were evacuated from their homes. Health providers in affected communities needed a rest after a few weeks of intense work. Fortunately, 139 doctors, nurses and allied health professionals from across the province pitched in to help these weary colleagues.

The new Emergency Health Provider Registry is an efficient way for B.C. doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to voluntarily register to help out their colleagues in a time of emergency. Whether it's a wildfire, flood, earthquake or another localized emergency, health authorities (HAs) will be able to access it when they need additional help.

BC doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who are interested in helping out during an emergency can join the Emergency Health Provider Registry by calling HealthLink BC at 8-1-1. HealthLink BC will ask for some basic information about you, including your training, qualifications and availability. When you're needed, you will get a call from your Staffing Office or Medical Affairs Department to see if you are still available. If you are, your supervisor will need to approve your assignment. Your health authority will work with you to arrange your assignment, including travel, accommodation and compensation.

Be assured that your registration information will be securely managed and protected by HealthLink BC in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act s.26(c)*. During an emergency, the registry will also email you periodically to see if your information or availability has changed.

Signing up for the Emergency Health Provider Registry is a great way to help your colleagues across B.C. and is completely voluntary.



Emergency Health Provider Registry Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Emergency Health Provider Registry?

The registry has been created by HealthLink BC, HAs and the Ministry of Health under the authority of B.C.'s *Emergency Program Act*. It provides an efficient way for HAs to access help from doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who have voluntarily joined the registry prior to or during an emergency (e.g. wildfire, flood, tsunami, earthquake, etc.).

2. How is this registry different from the one created last year?

Based on a comprehensive review of the response to the 2017 wildfires, the following improvements were made to what is now being called the Emergency Health Provider Registry (EHPR):

- You do not require your supervisor's approval to register. Only in the event that your help is requested, will you work with your supervisor, Staffing Office or Medical Affairs department to ensure coverage during your absence (approval may not be granted if there is insufficient relief available for your shifts).
- Physicians are now part of the EHPR.
- HealthLink BC will work with doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who sign up for the registry to keep their information and status up-to-date.
- To protect your privacy, you will be asked to give your consent to HealthLink BC to add your information to the registry and keep it for a period of five years to be used only in the event of an emergency. As emergencies can happen at any time, this lifespan allows for a faster and more effective health system response.
- High-level reporting of non-identifiable data will be put in place to support continual quality improvement and measure the effectiveness of the registry.

3. When will the registry be used?

The registry can be activated in the event of a local, regional or provincial emergency where:

- A local emergency is creating the potential for HA staffing challenges (e.g. flooding or fire situation worsening and expected to impact HA operations), or
- The regional or provincial emergency is impacting staffing levels in one or more HA, or
- An HA has requested activation of the registry, or
- There has been a catastrophic event (e.g. major earthquake), triggering a assumed need for staff movement across HAs, or
- There has been an out-of-province request for support.

The registry will be deactivated based on agreement by the Receiving-HA(s) that staffing levels can return to normal. At this time deployed health providers will return to their base position.

4. How do I sign up?

Interested doctors, nurses and allied health professionals can register by calling HealthLink BC at 8-1-1. A HealthLink BC representative will record your contact information, current job title/specialty, a availability and regional preferences. This level of data enables HAs who require a specific type of health care expertise (e.g. a Health Care Assistant to work in Prince George) to identify the eligible individuals on the registry to fill that position.

5. Do I have to sign up?

No. Registration is completely voluntary.

6. Who is eligible to sign up?

This registry is open to all B.C. regulated or registered health providers, whether full-time, part-time or casual. This includes nurses and allied health professionals employed by HAs, in addition to facility-based and community-based physicians. In the future, the registry may be opened to health administrators and support staff.

7. Do I need my supervisor's approval to sign up?

No. While you are encouraged to talk to your supervisor about your plan to register, you do not require permission to register. If your help is needed, your Staffing Office or Medical Affairs Department will contact you to see if you're still available. If you are, your supervisor will need to approve your assignment to ensure there is no disruption to patient care. The HAs will coordinate with you and your supervisor to ensure that sufficient staffing resources are available as a result of your deployment.

8. How do I know if I will be deployed?

You will be contacted by your Staffing Office or Medical Affairs Department who will coordinate with you and your supervisor to ensure that there will be no disruption to patient care.

9. Do I have to commit to a specific time period?

No, when you register with HealthLink BC you will be asked when you are available. You do not have to commit to a minimum time period. In the event your availability changes, please call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 to update your registration details.

10. Is my information on the registry public? Who has access to the information and is it protected?

Your personal information is kept private and will be securely managed and protected by HealthLink BC in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act s.26(c)*. Apart from the HealthLink BC representative who will answer your call and record your information into the registry, only designated HealthLink BC and HA staff will have access to the database and only for the purpose of searching and identifying available health providers during an emergency. If you have any further questions pertaining to this issue, please direct them to HealthLink BC who will forward it appropriately for an answer.

Once the emergency is over, HealthLink BC will filter the registry to delete the personal information for volunteers who did not consent to their personal information being retained for five years. For those who provided consent, their personal information will be retained.

11. What kind of role can I sign up for? What is needed?

Staffing needs may vary depending on the location and extent of the emergency. Every effort will be made to ensure you are assigned at the same or a similar position/classification to your current position, consistent with your skills and experience.

12. What happens to my job/work when I'm deployed?

Your job will be maintained while you are deployed. Your supervisor and HA will ensure that there is adequate coverage while you are deployed.

13. How much advance notice will I get before deploying?

This will depend on your availability, your supervisor's approval and operational needs. Based on lessons learned from the 2017 wildfires, volunteers may need to be ready for immediate assignment to an affected community.

14. Where could I be deployed?

Locations will vary depending on conditions and locations where evacuees are being housed. You can state a preference and that will be considered as much as possible. If you are not comfortable with a proposed assignment, you can decline and that will have no impact on your eligibility for assignments elsewhere.

15. Where will I stay while I'm deployed?

The HA that is hosting you will discuss this with you. They may offer you a variety of accommodation options including bed and breakfasts, motels, hotels, billeting or other private accommodations. If you have friends or

family in a nearby community, you could choose to stay there and be reimbursed via the usual per diem rates set by the HA.

16. Will I get paid to be deployed? Will I get overtime?

For Nurses and Allied Health Professionals, you will be compensated by your home-HA. Your current salary and hours worked will be paid per the provincial collective agreement and there will be no interruption of benefits.

Physicians will bill Fee-For-Service for the emergency services provided during the assignment, and will not receive compensation under any existing contractual arrangements (e.g. APP) while deployed for an emergency. HAs are highly encouraged to consider the possible impact each arrangement may have upon the compensation model for the community's existing/returning physicians and it is further recommended that MoH be consulted for guidance.

17. What is in scope for this Registry?

The EHPR is solely focused on managing the deployment of health care providers across HAs for the purpose of providing temporary relief during an emergency.

18. Will my travel and accommodation be covered?

Yes, your travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the hosting-HA. The specific reimbursement process will be at the usual HA rates and clarified as you move forward with organizing your deployment.

19. Will these hours be counted towards my seniority?

Yes, HAs agree to respect all the collective agreement provisions in place, including seniority, benefits, and vacation accrual.

20. How will the registry be managed year over year?

In general, the EHPR will be actively managed as follows, allowing for continual quality improvement:

