

POSITION STATEMENT

Nurse Practitioners of New Brunswick maintain that New Brunswickers should NOT have to pay for medically necessary healthcare.

- Outdated Acts, federally (Canadian Health Act) as well as provincially (Medicare Services Payment Act), do not name Nurse Practitioners (NPs) as “medical practitioners”. This prevents NPs from billing Medicare for the services they provide. This means that NPs working outside the regional health authorities (RHAs) are forced to charge the patient to be paid for their services. Because NP services are not included in the Canada Health Act, their independent practices are permitted by law.
- New Brunswickers with a valid Medicare card are **entitled** to medically necessary tests without charge under the Canada Health Act and Hospital Services Act; however, the New Brunswick Government has decided to charge fees for necessary tests ordered by NPs working outside the Regional Health Authorities.
- There are other funding models for Nurse Practitioners who do not practice within RHAs in other provinces. Nurse Practitioners in these provinces can provide medically necessary primary care outside of RHA employment and are not required to charge the patient for their appointment because their provincial government funds the visit. The citizens in these provinces can access free care and the provider is not charged for medically necessary investigations.
- New Brunswick’s government could extend Medicare coverage to NPs employed outside of the RHAs. By implementing a new funding model so that NPs who are not employed by the RHAs can serve patients without charging or being charged. If the government opts to not extend coverage for these independent NP services, fees for insured tests should be removed .

The New Brunswick healthcare system is struggling. We are faced with provider shortages and critical delays to basic primary care. Today’s providers want to work in teams to allow for better work/life balance. To recruit and retain healthcare providers, the province of New Brunswick must find new ways to fund providers in the public system and increase access to primary care. We must use the primary care providers we have to their full potential. We must be innovative and we must work together to attract new providers to New Brunswick rather than set up barriers that will continue to drive them away.