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Evaluation of the role of the nurse practitioner in New Brunswick: 15 years in

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Nurse practitioners (NPs) were incorporated into the Canadian healthcare system to respond to a population need for increased accessibility to primary care providers. The integration of NPs in New Brunswick began in 2003. Evaluation of the NP role is essential to determine whether the expected outcomes (i.e. increased accessibility) occurred and for future practice guidance. We asked, “Did the implementation of the NP role in New Brunswick meet the identified community health care needs?” The objectives were (1) To understand the practice patterns of NPs in New Brunswick; (2) to evaluate NP outcomes and overall success of implementation of the role; and (3) to provide much needed foundational documentation in furthering the ongoing and future evaluation. Because there has been no evaluation of the NP role within the province, we have no understanding of a healthcare landscape that includes NPs to determine the strengths and limitations that arise through the holistic practice of NPs in primary healthcare in New Brunswick. A multi-method approach using an NP Practice Pattern and Patient-Experience survey consisting of questions and standardized self-report measures of demographics, geographic setting, and practice models was used. Results highlighted: (1) patients’ extreme satisfaction with the healthcare received through NP providers, correlating with findings globally; (2) accessibility to care increased since the initiation of NPs as primary care providers; and (3) NPs working to full scope of practice provide an economically sound solution to an overburdened provincial economy.

Biography

Tracey Rickards completed her PhD in 2013 from Dalhousie University. She has 30 years of experience working as a Nurse. She holds a 4-year Canadian Institute of Health Research salary award as the Embedded Clinician Researcher with a focus on improving the health outcomes of vulnerable populations. She is an Assistant Professor and teaches Community Nursing both in the classroom and in clinical setting. Her area of research interest is Primary Health Care, LGBTQ health, and homelessness.

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