

Thank you for your interest in the River Stone Nurse Practitioner (NP) Clinic. Here are some additional details regarding what you can expect when visiting our NP Clinic and about your membership.

Question: What Can a Nurse Practitioner Do*

Answer: A NP is an independent healthcare provider who can assess your concerns, order diagnostic tests, diagnose ailments, recommend treatments, order prescriptions, and refer you to a specialist when needed. In short, a NP can be a provider of all your primary care needs!

Details: In Alberta, NPs are Master's or PhD prepared health professionals who provide essential healthcare services such as primary care, outpatient clinic-based care, or hospital care. NPs are completely independent healthcare professionals and require no outside supervision of their practice.

NPs practice uniquely by viewing health of the whole person, with emphasis on education, communication, and disease prevention. They work with clients to help manage symptoms, understand their medications, and consider alternative therapy options and rehabilitation strategies.

NPs are responsible for their own practice. They are required to communicate with clients about health findings and diagnoses, further required testing and referral to other healthcare professionals, and are responsible for client follow-up.

Our River Stone NPs, as well as our Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Medical Office Assistant (MOA) will work with you, and in collaboration with other healthcare professionals provide patient-centred care to help you and your family be as healthy as you can be.

**Nurse Practitioner Association of Alberta*

Question: Why Am I Being Asked to Pay a Membership Fee?

Answer: Currently there is no direct funding for Nurse Practitioners from Alberta Health.

Details: At present there are legislative and funding barriers that impede greater integration of NPs into the Alberta healthcare system.

The Government of Alberta (GOA) recognizes the potential of NPs in meeting the healthcare needs of Albertans and saving the healthcare system money. The Government also understands Albertans much like individuals in other provinces are experiencing challenges accessing essential healthcare services and therefore need access to alternative options to a traditional physician-oriented service delivery model.

Much has already been done to remove legislative barriers with changes being made to the *Health Professionals Act* that apply directly to a NP's scope of practice. This is a positive step forward.

From a funding perspective, NPs are currently identified as members of a multi-disciplinary team, as opposed to a primary care provider like a doctor. Therefore, while doctors are paid directly by the Alberta Health Care Insurance Program for services they provide, NPs are paid out of the budget for a hospital, clinic, or primary care network. River Stone Wellness Centre listened to

their clients when they told them they were concerned that they could not access a family doctor in a timely manner or that they did not have a family doctor.

Therefore, River Stone Wellness Centre Leadership Team believes it can do its part in supporting the province's ailing healthcare system by employing NPs to care for their clients and Albertans in need or

Our River Stone NPs, LPN and MOA will be paid out of the River Stone NP Clinic budget until such time the Government of Alberta allocates funding to models of remuneration that support the integration of NPs within the Alberta healthcare system. Your membership fee will go directly toward offsetting expenditures associated with operating the NP Clinic.

The progressive discussions that took place between the former Minister of Health and key stakeholders prior to the election about a sustainable compensation model to enable NPs to work to their full scope of practice are expected to continue once a new Minister of Health is appointed.

Be assured River Stone Wellness Centre Leadership Team will continue to communicate and collaborate with the appropriate ministry and department representatives to ensure the River Stone NP Clinic is highlighted as a "proof of concept" for the Government of Alberta to consider - one that both meets the healthcare needs of Albertans and saves the healthcare system money.

Question: Can I use my Health Spending Account or Flexible Spending Account to Pay my Membership Fee?

Answer: Possibly.

Details: River Stone NP Clinic Leadership Team recognizes that many Albertans may already have some type of Health Spending Account.

Should you wish to use your Health Spending Account to offset your River Stone NP Clinic membership fee or a portion thereof it will be your responsibility to determine whether the membership fee would be considered an allowable expense or reimbursement eligibility. You will also be responsible for submitting a claim for your membership fee to be reimbursed.

River Stone Wellness Centre Leadership Team is aware that the previous provincial government had considered establishing health spending accounts for all Albertans and will be monitoring the progress of this idea - if any - as the new government returns to the legislature in the Fall and the new Minister of Health receives their mandate letter.

Who Can I Speak with for more Information?

Should you have any questions or require additional information about River Stone NPs and their scope of practice, NP funding, or your membership fee please ask to speak with Chantal Unruh, River Stone NP MOA. Chantal may be reached at info@riverstonenpclinic.ca or 780-701-3884