



Who Makes Up the Allied Health Workforce in B.C.?

The way health care in B.C. is organized and delivered is shifting to help make sure you and your family experience seamless care closer to home. This is being done through [primary care networks \(PCNs\)](#), which are being created in communities throughout the province and will coordinate the care needs of the community. As part of PCNs, communities are recruiting more health-care providers and making it easier for them to work together in teams.

Through this team-based care approach, you may see many different health-care providers who support you to stay well throughout the course of your life. At some point, you may see a [dietitian](#) to talk about meal planning for help managing a health condition, like diabetes or heart disease. While at another time, you may seek care from a [clinical counsellor](#) for a mental health challenge. Or, you may need to go to a [medical radiation technologist](#) for an X-ray to see if you have a bone injury or to diagnose a health condition like cancer or lung disease. These health-care providers, and many more, are part of the allied health workforce. They often work as important members of collaborative teams, alongside other health-care providers, to improve your health and well-being.

[Team-based care](#) is when health-care providers from different professional backgrounds work together in teams. Your care team may include those working in allied health as well as doctors, nurse practitioners, Indigenous health and wellness providers and others, all working together and with you to achieve your health goals.

What is Allied Health?

The allied health workforce provides a range of preventative, diagnostic, technical and therapeutic health-care and clinical support services across the lifespan and care continuum. They contribute specialized expertise, education, research and leadership, often working as integral members of a collaborative health-care team to improve the health and well-being of British Columbians.

There are over 70 allied health disciplines comprised of regulated professions, technical, social/community, clinical assisting occupations* and therapy. Members of the allied health workforce deliver, support or inform direct patient care and have completed occupation-specific education or training. Allied health does not include medical and nursing-related occupations, such as physicians, dentists, health-care assistants, midwives, nurse practitioners and nurses.

*Adapted from the 2021 [National Occupational Classification System](#).

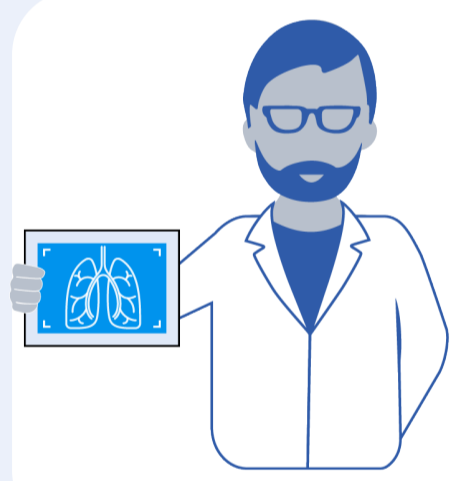
Examples of Allied Health Occupations



Regulated Professions

Regulated professions under the Health Professions Act*, the Emergency Health Services Act† and the Social Workers Act‡

- » Acupuncturist*
- » Audiologist*
- » Chiropractor*
- » Dental hygienist*
- » Dental technician*
- » Denturist*
- » Dietitian*
- » Emergency medical responder†
- » Fire first responder†
- » Hearing instrument practitioner*
- » Massage therapist*
- » Naturopathic physician*
- » Occupational therapist*
- » Optician*
- » Optometrist*
- » Paramedic†
- » Pharmacist*
- » Physiotherapist*
- » Psychologist*
- » Registered social worker‡
- » Speech language pathologist*
- » Traditional Chinese medicine practitioner*



Technical

Technical occupations in health

- » Anesthesia assistant
- » Dental therapist
- » Diagnostic medical sonographer
- » Perfusionist**
- » Pharmacy technician
- » Respiratory therapist**
- » Medical laboratory technologist**
- » Medical radiation technologist
 - Magnetic resonance technologist
 - Nuclear medicine technologist
 - Radiation therapist**
 - Radiological technologist

**To be regulated under the health profession regulatory framework modernization



Social/Community

Counselling and mental health roles and related specialized therapists

- » Art therapist
- » Behavioral consultant
- » Child life specialist
- » Clinical counsellor
- » Clinical ethicist
- » Genetic counsellor
- » Music therapist
- » Spiritual health professional



Clinical Assistants

Assisting occupations in support of health services

- » Activity assistant/worker
- » Certified dental assistant
- » Medical laboratory assistant
- » Pharmacy assistant
- » Recreation therapy assistant
- » Rehabilitation assistant



Therapy

Therapy and assessment occupations

- » Clinical exercise physiologist
- » Kinesiologist
- » Recreation therapist

Defining Allied Health

The way allied health is described in this article is a definition recently developed by the Allied Health Policy Secretariat (AHPS) at the B.C. Ministry of Health. The definition gives the health system common language and understanding for the allied health workforce. It helps improve awareness and recognition of the allied health workforce as the province works towards establishing PCNs and team-based care throughout B.C.

The AHPS provides strategic direction and provincial oversight for the allied health workforce in B.C. Working with multiple partners across the health and education sectors, they support the education, recruitment, retention, and practice of the allied health workforce, to help make sure there are enough health professionals with the skills required to provide the best care for British Columbians. Contact Allied.Health@gov.bc.ca to learn more.