



# Allied Health Policy Secretariat

Health Sector Workforce and Beneficiary Services Division  
Ministry of Health

## What is our role?

To provide strategic policy direction and provincial oversight for the allied health workforce in 3 key areas of focus:

1. **Education and training**
2. **Recruitment and retention**
3. **Professional practice (role/scope optimization)**

## Who do we work with?

- Health authorities, post-secondary institutions, unions, professional associations, regulatory colleges, Health Employers Association of BC
- Other government ministries (e.g. Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)

## Why is this work important?

The allied health workforce plays a critical role in meeting the Ministry's strategic priorities. Supporting the education, recruitment, retention, and practice of allied health professionals ensures we have the right number and type of health professionals with the skills and competencies required to provide optimal care for British Columbians.

### Provincial Allied Health Definition

The allied health workforce provides a range of preventative, diagnostic, technical, and therapeutic health care and clinical support services across the lifespan and across the continuum of care. 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 **technical, therapy, social/community, and clinical assisting occupations\*** and **regulated professions** (\*adapted from the 2021 [NOC System](#)). 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.

### AHPS Core Team Functions

Collaborate with AEST to ensure allied health related **education and training** programs are consistent with current health system direction.

Provide strategic oversight and direction for allied health **clinical capacity and student practice education**.

Lead provincial policy and program development for allied health recruitment and retention.

Ensure optimization of allied health workforce and support **scope of practice and models of care** to meet population health needs.

## Examples of Allied Health Occupations (not exhaustive)

### Regulated Professions

*Regulated professions under the Health Professions Act\*, the Emergency Health Services Act<sup>§</sup>, and the Social Workers Act<sup>†</sup>*

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

### 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

### Technical

*Technical occupations in health*

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

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

### Social/Community

*Counselling and mental health occupations and related specialized therapists*

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

### Therapy

*Therapy and assessment occupations*

- Clinical exercise physiologist
- Kinesiologist
- Recreation therapist

For more information, contact [Allied.Health@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Allied.Health@gov.bc.ca)