
Media Release

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For immediate release

Dedicated health care provider secured for Thorsby and Warburg

The answer to providing health care needs in the under-serviced communities of Thorsby and Warburg has been found. A Nurse Practitioner (NP) has been hired by the Leduc Beaumont Devon Primary Care Network (LBD PCN) to deliver primary care support to those living in Thorsby, Warburg and surrounding areas.

Michelle Williams is trained as a family/all ages Nurse Practitioner and has been practicing as a Registered Nurse for 20 years prior to obtaining her Nurse Practitioner graduate degree. She has spent most of her career in rural healthcare in the community of Whitecourt and surrounding areas working in the emergency department, acute care, labour and delivery, and public health settings. Michelle previously worked at the McLeod River Primary Care Network where she developed a palliative care program. Some of you may have already met Michelle through her most recent experience as a Palliative Nurse Consultant seeing patients in the communities of Thorsby, Warburg, Calmar, Devon, Leduc and Beaumont, as well as in the local rural hospitals.

A Nurse Practitioner is a registered nurse with additional graduate education and training in advanced clinical practice. They conduct comprehensive health assessment, diagnose health conditions and treat and manage acute and chronic illness within a holistic model of care. NPs order and interpret screening and diagnostic tests, perform procedures, and prescribe medications (no restrictions) and therapeutic interventions and can refer to specialists.

Nurse practitioners act as primary care providers within their stream of practice. They work independently across the spectrum of health services, such as acute care, primary care, community health, long-term care, specialty areas of health and emergency care. They work collaboratively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide high-quality, patient-centred care. Nurse practitioners use a holistic approach to health care, focusing not only on medical issues or problems, but also on patient/family-centred care including the psychosocial and functional aspects of life.

In short, a nurse practitioner can provide the same level of care that a family physician can.

"The Thorsby/Warburg Doctor Attraction/Retention committee is very grateful to have partnered with the Leduc Beaumont Devon Primary Care Network and many other community partners to bring a Nurse Practitioner to our communities," said Shawna Ofstie, committee chair and Black Gold School Division Trustee – County West. "Thorsby has been without a family physician since

January 1971 and Warburg's last doctor closed his practice in the 1960's, leaving our communities to travel to nearby towns or cities to receive care. This has left many unattached patients in the area for several reasons including transportation issues.”

The LBD PCN is working to secure suitable space for the NP to open clinics in both Thorsby and Warburg and anticipates that Michelle will be able to start seeing patients by late February.

Miscellaneous support for the two clinics will be funded by the communities while funding for the nurse practitioner position was secured through a grant provided by the Government of Alberta through the Nurse Practitioner Support Program.

“A Nurse Practitioner in Thorsby & Warburg is a long-awaited solution to provide continuity of care to our families who need it most by eliminating barriers,” says Ofstie. “After learning more about the role of Nurse Practitioners, it is apparent that this is the best solution to serving the healthcare needs and providing the care the residents of our rural communities deserve.”

For more information, please see the attached [FAQ](#) or see the contacts available, below.

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