



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

655 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R4

Tel 604.707.2400

Fax 604.707.2401

www.bccdc.ca

STI Certified Practice Education Program Redevelopment (2023/2024)

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) has been offering the STI Certified Practice Online Course since 2005. BCCDC's STI Certified Practice Education Program is approved by the [British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives \(BCCNM\)](#) as a certifying education program for registered nurses practising STBBI care. Since the education program's inception, BCCDC has been accountable to the Province's six Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) to allocate seats in the program in a fashion that meets the unique needs of the respective RHAs.

The most recent course update in 2022 saw an overall increase in program seats and BCCDC-sponsored clinical preceptorship experience (CPE) opportunities. Additionally, seat allocation changes provided RHAs with an equal amount of learner seats per cohort.

Using feedback gathered from learners, educators, preceptors and RHA representatives, the 2023/24 sessions of the STI Certified Practice Education Program will adjust to closer meet the needs of RHAs and the Province overall.

The BCCDC Education Team has outlined a new set of criteria whereby RHA representatives can more easily select applicants for the BCCDC STI Certified Practice course that meet the needs of their communities. These changes are in alignment with the most recent [Ministry of Health \(MoH\) service plan \(2022/23 – 2024/25\)](#), [BC Syphilis Action Plan Refresh, 2023-2025](#), BCCDC STBBI Strategic Plan, [BCCDC epidemiological STBBI reports](#), and in consultation with RHA representatives regarding current barriers to STBBI care they are facing within their Health Authorities.

The intent of this modified guidance is to focus on an equitable approach to providing STBBI services across the province; focusing on priority populations that are disproportionately affected by STBBIs, while also supporting certified practice RNs (RN(C)s) in sustainable care delivery. The revised selection criteria will act as a guide for RHA representatives to select which applicants best align with their strategic approach to providing low-barrier sexual health care and are meant to act in conjunction with the RHA representatives' experience and clinical judgement. The revised set of selection criteria places emphasis on:

1. Client demographics;
2. Practice setting;
3. Epidemiological factors; and
4. Sustainability

Building relationships, understanding and responding to the unique needs of BC's communities will always be within the skill and purview of RHAs. The following expanded points highlight the aforementioned criteria to consider when putting forward an applicant for BCCDC's STI Certified Practice Course.

Client Demographics

The priority populations, as outlined by the province-wide STBBI strategic plans, as well as the BCCDC epidemiological STBBI reports are as follows (but not limited to): Indigenous populations; people who have been, and are currently, incarcerated; immigrants, refugees, and newcomers to Canada; racialized groups; people who use substances; people who experience unstable housing, especially of childbearing age; youth; gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM); sex workers; and transgender people. Consideration should be given to applicants whose work serves these populations.

Practice Setting

The most recent Ministry of Health service plan states that health services must "...support and promote the application of an equity lens for the design and delivery of healthcare services" (pg. 18). This should be taken into account when prioritizing applicants. For example, consideration should be given to nurses who serve populations in RHAs with disproportionately reduced access, such as, but not limited to rural, remote, and outreach settings; when compared to nurses who serve populations with higher numbers of established healthcare access points. At the same time, the nurse's practice setting must be conducive to the nurse being able to practice to their full scope and be able to supply the necessary equipment to carry out the full scope of STI-certified practice. The necessary equipment will vary site-to-site based on the type of nursing, i.e. clinic-based versus outreach based.

Epidemiological Factors

Consideration should also be given to areas of RHAs that represent disproportionate disease burden relative to population. For example, areas of RHAs that have high levels of priority populations, as outlined above, may benefit from having additional STI-certified nurses. Consideration should also be given to areas where a lack of epidemiological data may be reflective of established healthcare access issues as opposed to low rates in that area.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a key part of building up a robust STBBI program across the province. Sustainability considerations include but are not limited to the applicant's desire to support new STI-certified nurses through preceptorships; the availability of support from other health care providers with clinical skills; including certified practice nurses, nurse practitioners and physicians, the ability to refer; consultation availability; and RHA strategic direction and programming planning.

This outlined criteria is meant to act as a guide and is not intended to replace the clinical and practical judgement of the Health Authority representatives who select BCCDC STI Certified Practice course applicants. In considering the aforementioned criteria, Health Authorities can develop a strategic approach to building out STBBI care and access throughout their regions, with the overall aim to support nurses, as well as increase health access points for their populations.

STI Course Schedule 2023 – 2024

- September 11, 2023 – November 3, 2023
- October 23, 2023 – December 15, 2023
- January 8, 2024 – March 1, 2024
- February 19, 2024 – April 12, 2024
- March 25, 2024 – May 17, 2024

No course sessions will be held over June - August.

Seat Allocation

There are 22 seats available in each STI course session, for a total of 110 seats per year. The breakdown of seat allocation per RHA is based on population size, equity considerations, and historical seat use and course attrition.

The majority of seats will require prearranged, Health Authority preceptorships. However, there will be ten BCCDC STI Clinic preceptorships available in each course session. Each RHA is guaranteed a minimum of one BCCDC practicum seat per course session. Three additional BCCDC practicum seats are available per course session to be allocated among RHAs based on need at the discretion of the STI/HIV education team.

BCCDC preceptorship seats are allocated in an equitable fashion based on the aforementioned criteria. RHAs may put forward applicants who require BCCDC preceptorships; however, course seats and BCCDC preceptorships are not guaranteed. These seats will be chosen by the STBBI Education Team.

There will also be one seat in each course session for non-Health Authority applicants that will require a pre-arranged community preceptorship.

Health Authority	Theory seats per cohort	Total theory seats per year	BCCDC practicum seats per cohort *	BCCDC practicum seats per year *
First Nations	3	15	2	10
Northern	2	10	1	5
Interior	4	20	1	5
Island	4	20	1	5
Fraser	4	20	1	5
Vancouver Coastal	4	20	1	5
Non-health authority	1	5	0	0
Total	22	110	7 *	35 *

*minimum

Requirements

All course applicants must have the following prerequisites:

- Registered Nurse (RN) in British Columbia
- Approval from employer, i.e. Program Manager or Nursing Supervisor with a health authority or affiliate to complete the course
- Upon completion of the course, the RN will be performing STI assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up as part of their ongoing work

Nurses have 1 year to complete the STI clinical practice requirements.