

For Immediate Release

Interprofessional care as a means of improving access to health care

November 24, 2015 – A new briefing note published by Northern Policy Institute looks at how interprofessional care can be implemented as a strategy to improve access to health care in remote, rural, and northern communities. Prepared by Emily Donato, an assistant professor at the Laurentian University School of Nursing, the briefing note, **The Importance of Interprofessional Collaboration in Health Care in Rural and Northern Settings**, defines interprofessional care as: “the provision of comprehensive health services to patients by multiple health care providers who work collaboratively to deliver quality care within and across settings.”

According to Donato, northern communities face a variety of challenges when it comes to accessing health care and she cites several research studies that point to collaboration as a way of addressing these challenges.

“Many health care professionals in rural and northern settings work part-time and often have more than one place of employment because of a decrease in the number and variety of health care professionals in these settings,” Donato writes. “Also, despite attempts to initiate and develop interprofessional care teams, there still exists a lack of knowledge among health professions of each other’s roles, leading to a non-valuing of the very team members with which they work.”

Drawing on a number of sources, Donato outlines how an interprofessional care strategy can alleviate those challenges.

“Interprofessional collaboration among health professionals is one piece of the puzzle to meeting health care needs in rural and northern settings,” Donato writes. “Attempts to ensure that interprofessional care occurs in these settings have resulted in varied health care delivery across communities, [. . .] A strategy to address the successful implementation of interprofessional care is to include interprofessional education as part of undergraduate professional education, as well as providing ongoing resources and supports for models of interprofessional care in rural and northern settings.”

You can read the full briefing note, **The Importance of Interprofessional Collaboration in Health Care in Rural and Northern Settings**, on our website at www.northernpolicy.ca.

Media Interviews: Author, Emily Donato, is available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern Communities. Our Operations are located in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

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