

**PERSONAL MESSAGE AND GREETINGS FROM
Graham Whitmarsh, Deputy Minister**

National Nursing Week, May 9-15, 2011

On behalf of the Ministry of Health, I would like to extend my best wishes to all nurses in British Columbia as you celebrate National Nursing Week.

As you begin celebrations, I would like to take time to reflect on, and honour the contributions of the dedicated, knowledgeable, capable and caring nurses who strive each day, to provide safe, quality care in BC.

With this year's theme, *Nursing – the Health of Our Nation*, it is especially noteworthy to acknowledge the important and crucial roles that nurses, from every corner of this province, play in helping British Columbians stay healthy, and receive the care they need when recovering from illness or surgery, managing with chronic illness, or when care is needed at the beginning or end of life. I commend the amazing contributions each and every nurse has made to the citizens and progressive health care system in BC. Nurses are a vital member of the health care team and will always have a pivotal role in influencing our changing health care landscape.

To ensure the health system continues to run efficiently and deliver quality services that meet people's needs, we are creating a more coordinated, patient-centred quality care system for patients. Nurses play a key role in leading and supporting this change - including providing quality, evidence-informed care and improving care practices that will result in BC being seen as a leader in clinical care management and integrated care.

In today's health care environment, excellence in patient care requires creative, collaborative leadership. Nurses have a long history of promoting multi-disciplinary partnerships and collaborative approaches. As a respected part of the largest group of health care practitioners, I applaud the many and very significant contributions nurses make to individuals, families and community health in BC today. National Nursing Week provides an excellent opportunity to celebrate nurses, and to recognize professional dedication and excellence.

We are deeply appreciative of nurses' contributions to health care. I wish you all the best as you celebrate National Nursing Week.