

so you want to make a difference...
YOUR HEALTH CARE CAREER in YUKON



yukon - pristine,

wild, rugged, beautiful...



YG PHOTO BY C ARCHBOULD

If you are considering Yukon as a place to practice your chosen health care profession, chances are you already have an image of the territory. Yet, today's Yukon might surprise you. You'll find everything from a state-of-the-art sports complex to snowshoeing along a forest trail, from cappuccino bars and unique little shops to canoeing on a tranquil lake.



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It's peaceful, the pace is slow, there's no traffic sounds. You don't have to drive for hours to get to nature. And I can see the mountains from where I live.

SHEILA LINDLEY – RN, COPPER RIDGE PLACE (CONTINUING CARE), WHITEHORSE

Yukon's smaller communities are linked to the capital and each other by an excellent all-weather road system. With high-speed Internet access, cable and satellite TV, and an international airport offering at least twice-daily flights year-round, you can be as connected to the rest of the world as you want to be. As for the cold—well, would you believe it can reach 30C in summer?

As a health care professional in Yukon, you'll have access to the latest medical and nursing equipment, including a health video conferencing system throughout the territory. You'll have the opportunity to be a member of the team at Whitehorse's fully equipped general hospital, or to practice in a well-staffed modern clinic. In the smaller communities, you'll play a central role as a health care provider in the community health centre.

There's a special intensity to living here, whether you're hiking along a river under the July midnight sun or watching the shimmer of the northern lights on a January night. Maybe that's why Yukoners refer to the rest of the world as "Outside." So come along and join us "Inside!" Yukon really is a place where you can make a difference.

YG PHOTO BY D CROWE

where is yukon?

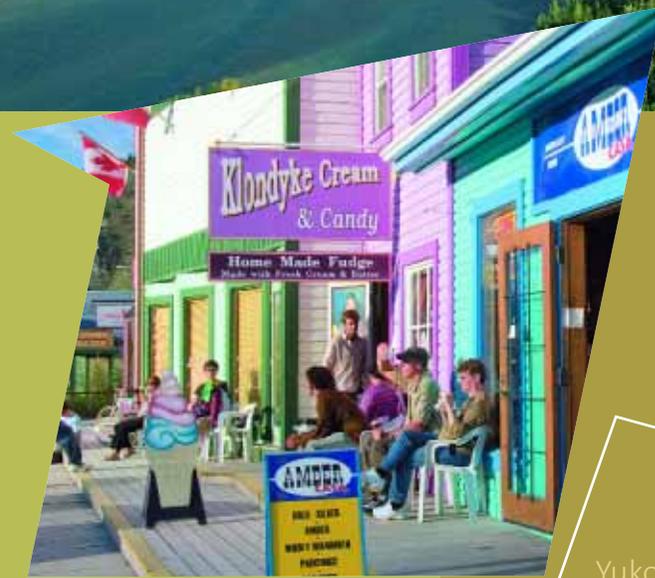
Yukon is a big place. At 483,450 square kilometres, it's about half the size of Ontario and a little larger than California. But it has a small population—just 32,700 people. About three-quarters of those people live in Whitehorse, Yukon's capital, while the 17 smaller communities range in population from 60 to 1,900.

The most southerly community is Watson Lake—the gateway to Yukon if you're driving up the Alaska Highway from the south. The most northerly community is Old Crow, 128 kilometres above the Arctic Circle. Old Crow is the only community not connected by road to the rest of Yukon. It's serviced by regular flights from Whitehorse.

Yukon is bordered on the west by Alaska, on the east by the Northwest Territories, on the north by the Beaufort Sea, and on the south by British Columbia. As northerners, Yukoners often feel they have more in common with their neighbours to the west and east than to southern Canada. The territory's name comes from a Gwich'in word meaning "great river," as the Yukon River was once called.



YG PHOTO BY F. MUELLER



YG PHOTO

Yukon is bigger in area than Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands combined. Yet they have a total population of 115 million, while the Yukon's total is just under 33,000!



YG PHOTO BY D CROWE

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There isn't a day that goes by here that I don't look up at the sky and go 'Wow!'

SEAN SECORD, FLIGHT NURSE, EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, WHITEHORSE

what's the weather really like?

It can be cold in winter, but Yukon's climate is changing. Winters in Whitehorse, for example, are milder and more humid than they used to be. Temperatures can range between +4C and -45C, but on average you can expect January/February temperatures to be between -5C and -25C. In fact, there are days when Whitehorse is warmer than Toronto or Winnipeg. And average annual snowfall is far below most areas of southern Canada.

In Whitehorse and southern Yukon, the shortest winter days provide around five hours of daylight. By February, you can expect more than ten hours of daylight—on a par with southern Canada. Winter days can be sparkingly beautiful, with brilliant blue skies and bright sunshine. Clear winter nights often bring stunning displays of the northern lights in pulsating bands of green, white, and pink across the sky.

Summers, by comparison, are warm, thanks to Yukon's semi-arid climate and relatively high altitude. Temperatures often reach 25C or more. June 2004 was one of the hottest on record, with two weeks of temperatures above 30C. Summers also bring long days, with 20+ hours of daylight. (If you're as far north as Old Crow, daylight lasts 24 hours a day for almost two months.) You can play golf or read a book outside at midnight!

The Yukon shares the Pacific Time Zone with British Columbia.

what would living here be like?

Yukon has something for everybody. Living "north of 60" brings the best of both worlds—wide open spaces, plus all the amenities of city living. There's a host of recreational opportunities: hiking, kayaking, golfing, biking, and fishing in summer; curling, skiing (cross-country and downhill), snowboarding, hockey, and dogsledding in winter.

Winter is when the communities are at their most active, with everything from touring professional arts performances to hockey tournaments to Spanish language classes. In summer you can take your visitors boating, picnicking or swimming at one of the lakes. And thanks to the long hours of daylight, you can garden, too!

Yukon is also a great place to raise a family. It offers modern housing, one of the lowest income tax rates in Canada, and no territorial sales tax. Children and teenagers alike can play sports or take part in activities from ballet to tae kwon do. There are 29 public schools in the territory, and child care centres in many communities, including French and First Nation child care centres and day homes. All schools follow the British Columbia curriculum.



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In Whitehorse, French immersion is available from elementary through secondary levels, and francophone families can have their children educated in French as a first language from kindergarten to Grade 12. Yukon College, offering university studies as well as technical and trades programs, has campuses in most communities.

Yukon also has one of the most vibrant artistic scenes in the country. Accomplished local musicians, visual artists, dancers, theatre performers, writers and craftspeople help enliven the community year-round. Winter festivals like Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous, the Frostbite Music Festival, and the famous Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race attract both residents and tourists. In summer, among a wealth of other events, the Dawson City Music Festival and the Kluane Mountain Bluegrass Festival feature professional acts from across North America.

*This is the best place on earth.
There are great opportunities.
It's a great place to bring up children.*

MONICA GIBSON, RN, EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, WHITEHORSE GENERAL HOSPITAL

what kind of people will I meet?

Yukon has a young and dynamic population, with a median age of 38. About 20 per cent of Yukoners are of First Nations origin. In fact, there are 14 separate First Nations, each with its own distinct language, stories, and traditional territories. You'll also meet born and raised Yukoners whose families arrived with the Klondike Gold Rush.

Many others come from across the country and around the globe. There's an active francophone community, as well as smaller Latino, Filipino, and Asian communities. From them you'll hear variants of the classic story: "I came for the summer/to visit a friend/just for an adventure—and I stayed!"

C KUNTZ PHOTO



C KUNTZ PHOTO



YUKON YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Yukon's all about gold, right? The great Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 became famous around the world. "There are strange things done in the midnight sun/By the men who toil for gold," wrote Robert Service, the Yukon bank clerk who helped to immortalize the event. Today gold is still mined in the territory, and you can still buy gold nuggets in Yukon stores.

The Second World War brought another "rush"—the building of the Alaska Highway. More than 30,000 U.S. Army personnel built the 1,500-kilometre road through the Yukon to transport essential war supplies to Alaska. Like the gold rush, the highway changed the territory forever. The days of the old sternwheelers that had plied the rivers since the turn of the century were over. And First Nations people—outnumbered by non-natives for the first time—began to settle in communities along the highway.

YUKON ARCHIVES-WINTER&POND, 2307



Cheechako: a greenhorn or newcomer to Yukon.

Sourdough: a Yukon old-timer (officially someone who's lived in Yukon through at least one winter). The name comes from the sourdough bread (made with fermented sourdough starter instead of yeast) that was a staple food of the early gold prospectors.

YG PHOTO



YG PHOTO BY W TOWRISS



YG PHOTO



FIRST NATIONS OF YUKON: A RICH HERITAGE

Long before the gold seekers, Yukon was home to the ancestors of today's First Nations. Many Yukon First Nations are working to revive traditional knowledge that reflects the old ways and values of life on the land.

Today, most Yukon First Nations have achieved self-governing status after many years of negotiations with the federal and territorial governments. These self-government agreements give First Nations law-making powers over their own internal affairs, settlement lands, and resources. An elected chief and council govern each First Nation, with departments responsible for such areas as finance, housing, health, lands and resources, economic development, and other initiatives. Yukon First Nation governments work as equals with other levels of government.

YUKON'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Yukon health care system is administered by the Department of Health and Social Services, a division of the territorial government. The Whitehorse General Hospital is the territory's main hospital and is run by a Board of Trustees of the Yukon Hospital Corporation. As well, a number of health care professionals work in private practices, and some of Yukon's 14 First Nation governments also provide health care services for their citizens, working with the Yukon government system.

The main employer of health care professionals is the Government of Yukon, through the Department of Health and Social Services. Its branches include:

- Health**
 - Community Nursing
 - Community Health Programs
 - Insured Health and Hearing Services
- Continuing Care**
 - Care and Community Services
 - Extended Care Services

Another major employer of health professionals is the Whitehorse General Hospital, the territory's main hospital. A 49-bed, fully accredited, acute care hospital, it serves as a tertiary care facility for the entire Yukon as well as northern areas of British Columbia and parts of Alaska. The hospital provides surgical, maternity, medical, pediatric, psychiatric and ICU acute care services.

As well, the Department of Community Services is responsible for Emergency Medical Services, the unit in charge of transporting sick and injured people to the nearest suitable health care facility. They provide ambulance service as well as in-territory and out-of-territory air medevac services. The Whitehorse station is a 24-hour service staffed by primary care paramedics. All other Yukon communities are served by volunteer ambulance attendants, who are trained by the Yukon government and work closely with the nurses working in the communities.

Yukon First Nation governments also employ health care workers through their own health programs. Other health professionals work in private clinics and medical offices.



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Yukon in the twenty-first century

Yukon is one of three northern territories within Canada. It has a legislative assembly, with a premier, cabinet, and 18 elected members. As in the provinces, the Yukon legislature has the power to pass laws in the areas of education, justice, health care, social services, public works, and other infrastructure.

Since 2003, the Yukon has taken on more responsibility for its own management from the Canadian government through a process called devolution. It now has more of the powers of a province, including the control of its natural resources—a power the other territories do not have. The Yukon is also the only

territory in Canada with a political party system in territorial elections.

Mining and exploration—gold, silver, lead, uranium, zinc, and copper—are still important to the Yukon economy. But government services now account for the largest proportion of jobs, along with tourism, the business

sector, and construction. Thanks to its blend of urban attractions in a wilderness setting, the capital city of Whitehorse attracts a well-educated and travelled population. Newer niche industries like wilderness adventure tourism and film production are gaining ground.

*I love the autonomy of practice.
If you see a problem, you can deal with it.
You really feel like you make a difference.*

PAT LINCOLN – RN, CARCROSS COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



C KUNTZ PHOTO

can I practice my health care profession in yukon?

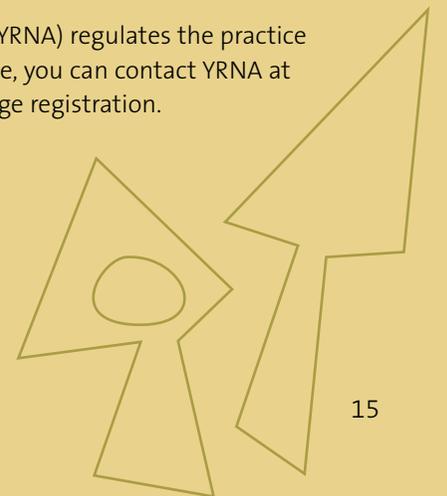
The territorial health care system employs a wide range of health professionals. Chances are that, whatever your health care profession, you're needed in Yukon.

A number of health care professions are regulated by the Government of Yukon. Contact Consumer Services at (867) 667-5111 or consumer@govyk.ca to determine the regulatory requirements for your profession.

The Yukon Registered Nurses Association (YRNA) regulates the practice of nursing in the territory. If you are a nurse, you can contact YRNA at (867) 667-4062 or yrna@yknet.ca to arrange registration.



C KUNTZ PHOTO



what's the work environment like?

Yukon offers a wide range of practice opportunities, including hospitals, community health centres, home and community care, medevac flights, and residential care facilities. It's also a place where you can balance work and family life. Many workplaces offer flexible work hours or the opportunity to self-schedule.

As a health care professional in the territory, you'll be part of a high quality health care system, comparable to health care systems elsewhere in Canada. In fact, Yukoners report high levels of satisfaction with their health care system. You'll work in a modern hospital, health centre, or residential care facility, with up-to-date nursing and medical equipment and best health practices. You'll likely find that you get to know your patients better than in a larger centre. And you'll find a greater informality among colleagues—part of Yukon's tradition of friendliness and hospitality.

You'll also have access to such innovations as the Yukon Telehealth Network. This state-of-the-art videoconferencing technology links all Yukon communities through telehealth workstations in community health centres and territorial hospitals. It delivers a wide range of health services and programs, including tele-mental health, diabetes education, discharge planning, and X-ray emergency support. It also provides a greater level of support to rural health care workers, and means that patients can be treated right in their home communities. As well, telehealth allows contact with "Outside" specialists and facilitates training opportunities.

Yukon HealthLine (Ask a Nurse) gives Yukoners 24-hour-a-day telephone access to registered nurses and other health care professionals, such as pharmacists. This new service provides additional support to the services offered by health professionals in the territory.



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I've been overwhelmed by the support here. There's a strong team spirit. I feel really valued in my work, and there are great opportunities for advancement, too.

JOHN MAHONEY – RN, MANAGER, MACAULAY LODGE (CONTINUING CARE), WHITEHORSE

There are so many opportunities in health-related fields here. Down south you have to have this specialization or that. Here you look at people's potential.

BEA FELKER – FORMER DIRECTOR, EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, WHITEHORSE

can I upgrade my qualifications in Yukon?

More and more health care professionals are finding that they can study for master's degrees or other certification through distance education. Many universities use software programs that allow a student to participate in a "live" classroom, using a headset and computer, just as he or she would on-campus. And since all Yukon communities receive high-speed Internet—the highest access rate in Canada—distance education courses are available to health care professionals throughout the territory. The Yukon Telehealth Network also offers continuing education opportunities—some delivered from within Yukon and some from outside the territory—to health care professionals. Funding for professional development is available for nurses, physicians and other health professionals.



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contact information

Continuing Care:

Government of Yukon
Health and Social Services
Continuing Care Branch
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada Y1A 2C6
Phone: (867) 667-5945
Fax: (867) 456-6545
www.hss.govyk.ca/programs/continuing/

Community Nursing:

Government of Yukon
Health and Social Services
Community Nursing
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada Y1A 2C6
Phone: (867) 667-8389
Fax: (867) 667-8338
www.hss.govyk.ca/programs/nursing/

Community Health:

Government of Yukon
Health and Social Services
Community Health Programs
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada Y1A 2C6
For Yukon Communicable
Disease Control:
Phone: (867) 667-8389
Fax: (867) 393-6900
For Mental Health Services,
Environmental Health Services,
Health Promotion, and the Yukon
Children's Dental Program:
Phone: (867) 667-3418
Fax: (867) 393-6900
www.hss.govyk.ca/programs/health/

Whitehorse General Hospital

Human Resources Department
#5 Hospital Road
Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada Y1A 3H7
Phone: (867) 393-8701
Fax: (867) 393-8880
Email: wghjobs@wghyk.ca
www.whitehorsehospital.ca

websites of interest

Association franco-yukonnaise: www.afyyk.ca
City of Whitehorse: www.city.whitehorse.yk.ca
Government of Yukon: www.govyk.ca
Government of Yukon Employment Opportunities: www.employment.govyk.ca
Tourism Yukon: www.travel yukon.com
Whitehorse General Hospital: www.whitehorsehospital.ca
Whitehorse General Hospital Employment Opportunities:
<http://www.whitehorsehospital.ca/careerWithUs/ENindex.html>
Yukon Bureau of Statistics: www.eco.govyk.ca/stats
Yukon communities: www.yukoncommunities.yk.ca/communities
Yukon Department of Education: www.education.govyk.ca
Yukon Health and Social Services: www.hss.govyk.ca
Yukon Registered Nurses Association: www.yrna.ca/



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