



CANADIAN FEDERATION  
OF NURSES UNIONS  
LA FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE  
DES SYNDICATS D'INFIRMIÈRES  
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CANADIAN  
NURSES  
ASSOCIATION



ASSOCIATION DES  
INFIRMIÈRES ET  
INFIRMIERS DU CANADA

**MEDIA RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Canada's nurses say safe staffing critical for safe patients**

**Banff, October 1, 2014** — Today, leaders of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) showed provincial and territorial health leaders the inextricable link between safe staffing, patient safety and quality care. The meeting took place at a roundtable briefing held during federal, provincial and territorial health ministers' meetings. Nurse leaders and provincial and territorial health ministers discussed national and international lessons from examples such as England's public inquiry into the relationship between safe staffing, patient safety and quality care.

"Above all, we need to ensure patients are protected," said CFNU president Linda Silas. "We understand it is increasingly challenging for governments and health administrators to balance the needs of patients with the financial realities. Tragic cases such as England's National Health Service are a reminder of what's at stake and why we all must be committed to patient safety."

Nurses are the largest group of health care providers in Canada and are responsible for providing the majority of health care to Canadians — thus making them a key link in the chain of safety. The CFNU and CNA presented the ministers with a joint plan for collaborative action on a sustainable health human resources strategy and for patient priority care needs to be properly assessed using real time tools, based on factors such as acuity, stability and complexity. The plan is based on four central priorities:

1. Empower patients and the public through education
2. Support nursing students and nurses
3. Promote evidence-based staffing practices
4. Promote strong nursing leadership

"In recognizing the sheer size of our profession, we realize nurses have to lead patient safety strategies," said CNA CEO Anne Sutherland Boal. "One way we can achieve progress is making sure that the staff assignments are based on what is the best match of patient needs with nurse competencies. Putting the patient at the centre of the system will lead to better health outcomes."

The roundtable also featured a presentation from Dr. Maura MacPhee, an Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia's School of Nursing. Dr. MacPhee authored the recent report, *Valuing Patient Safety*, a wake-up call for health care decision-makers about the importance of transparency and accountability in a safe health care system.

"For the long term, it's vital that our health care system become more open, transparent and accountable," said Dr. MacPhee. "Health care providers, patients, their families, and the public need to have information to influence and engage with health care decision makers, this is the foundation of the quality-safety agenda."

*The CFNU represents close to 200,000 nurses and student nurses. Our members work in hospitals, long-term care facilities, community health care, and our homes. The CFNU speaks to all levels of government, other health care stakeholders and the public about evidence-based policy options to improve patient care, working conditions and our public health care system.*

*CNA is the national professional voice of registered nurses in Canada, representing 151,404 registered nurses. CNA advances the practice and profession of nursing to improve health outcomes and strengthen Canada's publicly funded, not-for-profit health system.*

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