

ACTION ALERT



Action Urged on Cost-Effectiveness of RN Services

August 26, 2009

Canada's lingering economic uncertainty is causing heightened concern about the effects on nursing resources and patient safety. In Alberta, for example, budget challenges have led the provincial government to impose a hiring freeze affecting 1,400 registered nursing positions.

What we are doing:

Nurses for Medicare joined the [My Better Medicare](#) campaign to support positive change in health care within the publicly funded system. Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) president, Kaaren Neufeld, sent letters to the [Premier of Alberta](#) and to the [Alberta Minister of Health](#), voicing her concern about the Alberta government's approach to health human resource planning and the risk to patient safety. A subsequent [open letter from the CNA president](#) provides links to CNA's web-based resource, [RNs: A Sound Investment](#), and encourages all nurses to speak out for our health system.

What you can do:

- Use the resources on the [RNs: A Sound Investment](#) web page and become informed about the evidence in support of the cost-effectiveness and value of registered nursing care.
- Provide copies of fact sheets, research summaries or other evidence from the [RNs: A Sound Investment](#) web page to your supervisor, chief executive officer and board of directors at your workplace, and to your minister of health, premier, MLA and MP, and show them the solutions nurses can offer within a publicly funded system.
- Share your success stories on improving the health-care system on the [My Better Medicare](#) website.
- Write, call or visit your federal member of Parliament (MP) and your provincial/territorial member of the legislative assembly (MLA).
- Speak out about the essential roles registered nurses play in saving lives, promoting health and reducing costs.

Background:

At a time when health-care facilities are understaffed, when nurses are overworked and our country is facing a registered nursing shortage projected to grow by almost five times over 15 years, the implementation of any cost-cutting measure affecting the nursing workforce will impact the nurses' ability to provide safe and quality care. Effective solutions to the economic challenges confronting the health sector cannot be found in health human resource strategies that reduce the number of nursing positions, replace nurses with less qualified health-care workers, or cause increased overtime hours, stress, injuries and sick time. Real solutions lie in innovation, technology, new models of care and in maximizing the use of registered nursing skills – all within the publicly funded health system.

Action is required immediately to ensure that continued provision of safe levels of registered nursing care, quality practice environments and positive client outcomes are sustained.