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Dear Nursing Union Leaders,

There is never a dull moment in the nursing world! I am writing to you today to bring some clarification and reassurance around an issue impacting LPNs in Alberta. On June 16 the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) submitted a response to an Alberta Labour Relations Board application put forward by a group of LPNs. The question to the Labour Board was simple: are LPNs doing direct-care nursing? UNA's response was "yes, of course, LPNs provide direct care".

Let me tell you that, first and foremost, all nurses' unions in this country are working hard for our member nurses. As the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, we are the united voice of nurses from across the country and bring nursing issues to decision-makers nationally and even internationally. We have never been as strong and as focused as we are today. We know nurses need us to be. If there is a bump on the road with the labour family in the long run, we will fix it. Saying this, our work remains all about our members and fixing the critical nursing shortage. I never would want to be disrespectful of another union's concerns or fears, but I want to make it clear to you: supporting LPNs is not violating the constitution of the Canadian Labour Congress, of which we are proud members, nor is it union raiding in any sense. The CFNU and all of its member organizations are doing their job, simply put, defending nursing work.

The UNA's submission to the Labour Board in Alberta has created fear amongst leaders of other unions, because it might mean that LPNs could be reclassified by the Labour Board and potentially moved from one union to another. Yes, this could happen, it's a labour representation process that has a lot of twists and turns. We have seen different scenarios in other parts of the country, where we see governments, employers or workers request a Labour Board to evaluate if a group of workers needs to be reclassified.

Let me be clear here, UNA didn't initiate the group of LPNs seeking change of classification in Alberta. UNA merely answered the Labour board's call and validated what we have all known for the last 20+ years. The role, scope and education level of LPNs have increased, and we are all doing direct-care nursing. As the UNA's response to the Labour Board states, "*[w]hile UNA did not initiate the application by LPNs for Change or encourage LPNs to pursue it, we believe LPNs deserve recognition for their skill and education and the fact they provide direct nursing care.*"

At the same time of sending their response to the Alberta Labour Relations Board, to be fully transparent, UNA published its statement on their social media accounts and posted it on their website. RNs, RPNs, LPNs, NPs work tightly together all across Alberta, and they work in health care teams every day. It is crucial we are supportive and open with all of them.

Yes, as you perhaps can tell, I am disappointed that we are spending priceless energy on this gross misinterpretation of our union's work instead of working collaboratively with each other as health care unions. I know there is great value to being members of the larger labour movement, and many of you work closely with your federations of labour. As union leaders on the front lines, you are all working together to make our workplaces fairer, safer and more respectful. Thank you for your work!

I encourage you to read UNA's submission to the Alberta Labour Relations Board, CUPE's letter and CFNU's reply to the Canadian Labour Congress (see attached). If you have the time, send our UNA friends a message of solidarity, we are all in this together #NursesStrong #NursesProud.

In solidarity always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Linda Silas', written over a horizontal line.

Linda Silas, CFNU President