



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

For immediate release

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## Canadian nurses meet with provincial health ministers to promote Culture of Safety

TORONTO - Nurse leaders from the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) met with Provincial Health Ministers this morning to highlight the importance of establishing a culture of safety for frontline workers.

The prevention and control of infectious disease (including influenza), dealing with the realities of health human resources in the workplace, and the need to enhance public health and safety through an effective harm reduction approach were all discussed during the briefing which was followed by an open, productive discussion with the ministers.

During recent discussions with experts in public health, nurses stressed the need for collaboration between federal, provincial and territorial governments, employers, employees and all organizations representing health care providers.

A need for an integrated system of planning and control to support the health and safety of health care workers, including nurses, and the different communities of patients who rely on their care was identified as a priority.

"Addressing this priority will be crucial to improving outcomes in Canadian health care facilities. Nurses already have one of the highest absenteeism rates in Canada, and this indicates that health care workplaces have reached a point that is not safe or acceptable," said Linda Silas, RN, President of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions.

"Ten years after the outbreak of SARS in Ontario, it is important that the lessons learned not be forgotten," said Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN, President of the Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA). "Ensuring that when an outbreak occurs we have enough nurses and frontline medical staff who are equipped with the tools they need to do the job could be the difference between containment and mass infection."

The CFNU and its provincial nurses' union member organizations presented the provincial health ministers with some important elements to consider for a comprehensive strategy to ensure that a culture of safety governs our health services, and that patients and health care workers are protected every day, not just in the event of an outbreak.

Nurses are committed to following up with the provincial health ministers to continue the dialogue to ensure a culture of safety in health care workplaces and communities across Canada.

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