



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

Press-release - for immediate release

Nurses Concerned That Public Health Agency of Canada's Ebola Preparedness Plan Does Not Go Far Enough

October 20, 2014, Ottawa - After a meeting with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) on Ebola preparedness, the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions is concerned that PHAC continues to question the scientific evidence instead of protecting health care workers and the public. Since the insufficient Interim Guidance on Ebola was produced over one month ago, nurses have been raising the alarm on Canada's Ebola preparedness. Their call for stricter guidelines has not been heeded. The CFNU is troubled that PHAC is disregarding the evidence of the potential for aerosol transmission, and failing to protect nurses and mandate proper nurse staffing.

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions President, Linda Silas, said: "All prevention preparedness has to begin with the precautionary principle and a commitment to safety first. Given the high risk of transmission with Ebola, it is critical that frontline nurses have the protective equipment to stop the infection from spreading. These updated guidelines from PHAC do not meet the standard to protect health care workers."

"We will continue to press the federal government for the needed changes and improved guidelines, but our attention will also be on provincial and territorial governments to at least match the recently released Ontario guidelines," said Silas. "Nurses will not allow the safety of frontline workers and the public to be compromised again."

The key points of the CFNU directive are (full document available at <https://nursesunions.ca/>):

- Safety is not negotiable when dealing with infection control.
- Workplace Occupational Health and Safety Committees must be involved to ensure the guideline implementation.
- No nurse or health care worker will be in contact with a potential Ebola patient without the proper training and PPEs (personal protective equipment).
- Workers will be fully-trained, tested, drilled and monitored in both patient assessment and PPE procedures.
- Policy directives will be established for how to advise patients on where to go for assessment; how to equip separate rooms for triage and separate isolation rooms when needed.
- PPEs will include at a minimum for low-risk patients an N95, face shield, impermeable gowns, and gloves.

- For high-risk confirmed cases of Ebola, nurses will be provided with powered air purifying respirators (PAPR), double gloves, leg and feet covers, and biohazard suits that meet a specified standard.
- Staffing will be at a minimum two RNs per patient, due to the acuity and complexities of caring for Ebola patients.
- All health care facilities will implement a communications plan that will provide consistency around national standards and an information number to call.
- PHAC will deploy a rapid response team to each case of Ebola diagnose.
- Monitoring and emotional support will be provided to all health care workers in care for Ebola patients, regardless if in direct care or in quarantine as established by PHAC.

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The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions represents almost 200,000 frontline nurses, continues to be committed to working with public health agencies across Canada and with employers, to ensure health care workers and the public are protected, and that knowledge and understanding of the spread of disease are raised.

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