

## **Emergency resolution 1: Addressing the health human resources crisis**

**WHEREAS** nurse shortages are reaching frightening levels across the country, which have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic;

**WHEREAS** in a nation-wide survey conducted just before the pandemic, more than 66% of nurses rated their work environment as fair or poor, and 60% of nurses said they intended to leave their jobs within the next year – with over 1 in 4 of these nurses saying they intended to leave nursing altogether;

**WHEREAS** many nurses have chosen to leave their jobs during the pandemic, with 4,000 nurses reportedly quitting their jobs in Quebec alone – a 43% increase over previous years;

**WHEREAS** a great many nurses have signaled their intention to leave their jobs or the profession altogether directly following the pandemic, from early-career nurses (13% of whom in Ontario were considering leaving the profession permanently after the pandemic), to mid- and late-career nurses (who plan on retiring early);

**WHEREAS** before the COVID-19 pandemic, we already knew nurses were suffering mentally with high rates of mental disorder symptoms – with 1 in 2 identifying having a lack of staff to adequately cover their unit as the number one source of extreme stress in their job;

**WHEREAS** burnout has worsened dramatically over the course of the pandemic, with nurses being unable to take leaves and working ceaseless overtime hours on virtually no rest;

**WHEREAS** at the end of 2020, there were over 100,000 vacancies in the health and social assistance sector, which was up 56% from the previous year, and which has the highest vacancies of all sectors of the economy;

**WHEREAS** a recent Statistics Canada survey of 18,000 health care workers found that 70% reported worsening mental health during the pandemic;

**WHEREAS** emergency measures to address critical shortages of nurses and other health care workers – such as through sending in nurses from other jurisdictions and having the military intervene in long-term care facilities – cannot be the new norm,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the CFNU work with other health care organizations, such as the Canadian Health Workforce Network, to pressure governments to address the health human resources crisis facing nurses and other health care workers through national initiatives that support health human resources planning at the provincial and territorial levels, such as the creation of a federal health workforce agency;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the CFNU continue to reiterate our demands to the federal government to provide urgent funding to the provinces and territories to hire additional nurses and health care workers, and to fund retention and recruitment initiatives to stem the disturbingly high flow of workers out of the sector.

Submitted by: National Executive Board

Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions