



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

MEDIA RELEASE

Report paints troubling picture of worklife issues for Canada's nurses

January 28, 2016 (Sault Ste. Marie, ON) – Today the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions published a report which calls for a new approach to health human resources (HHR) planning in order to safeguard the quality of care for patients and families.

Bridging the Generational Divide: Nurses United in Providing Quality Patient Care provides stark evidence of the effects of 'boom to bust' models of nursing, with health human resource planning changing with every shift in the political landscape. The report paints a picture of a troubled workplace where frontline nurses struggle to meet their professional obligations to provide safe, quality care, in the face of excessive workloads and overtime, high nurse-patient ratios, and management that is too often removed from frontline realities.

“Despite decades of research highlighting the need for sustainable nursing human resources, nurses still report high rates of staff shortages, overtime, and excessive workloads. Extensive research showing the link between overtime, workload and safe staffing on patient care has not resulted in solutions to address these issues, or effective HHR planning. Interviews with frontline nurses illustrate that workplace issues directly impact their ability to provide quality, safe patient care. The patient – specifically patient safety – is at the centre of nurses' concern,” says Dr. Sheri Price, the report author, a professor at Dalhousie University's School of Nursing.

Based on a comprehensive literature review, along with 18 focus groups with early-career and mid- to late-career nurses, as well as nursing students, *Bridging the Generational Divide* calls for key stakeholders in health and nursing human resource planning, including federal, provincial and territorial governments, to address the challenge of nurse retention and recruitment.

The report's recommendations focus on six themes:

1. Work-life balance/health;
2. Evidence-based safe staffing;
3. Workplace relationships/leadership capacity;
4. Teamwork;
5. Student/new nurse graduates' transition programs, and
6. Continuing education/professional development training.

“The report provides a comprehensive snapshot of where we are now, offering recommendations about where we need to go if we are to address the fundamental challenges of the nursing profession and our health care system,” says Linda Silas CFNU president.

“As nurses, we must act to protect our patients and reverse dangerous trends. We must speak up for patients and make our voices heard so that everyone knows what is at stake. We must also work towards health care policies that focus on health care workers as individuals, and nurses as professionals with full lives, and not solely as angels of mercy,” added Silas.

The report is being released at the national Canadian Nurses Students’ Association annual meeting and is available online at nursesunions.ca.

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The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) is Canada’s largest nurses’ organization representing nearly 200,000 nurses and student nurses. The CFNU has been advocating for national discussions on key health priorities, such as a national prescription drug plan, a comprehensive approach to long-term and continuing care, greater attention to health human resources, and federal government engagement on the future of public health care.

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