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February 22, 2016

The Honourable Jane Philpott  
Minister of Health  
Health Canada  
Brooke Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

**Subject: Request that Health Canada Deny Licenses to All Paid Blood and Plasma Donation Corporations**

Dear Minister Philpott,

As President of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) and on behalf of our almost 200,000 members, I write to you today to express our concern over the commercialization of the Canadian blood supply system. As you are aware, a private company, Canadian Plasma Resources, have established operations in Saskatchewan and are paying donors for blood donations.

Canada's nurses are alarmed that the Province of Saskatchewan has allowed this practice, and that Health Canada has not denied license for this practice. After Canada's tainted blood tragedy, the subsequent commission recommendations presented to parliament explicitly called for a ban on paid blood and plasma donations. The Provinces of Ontario and Quebec have stood by these recommendations and banned paid blood donations; we strongly support this policy.

Canada's nurses are concerned that the introduction of pay for blood will threaten the safety of the Canadian blood supply system. During the 1970s and 1980s, more than 1,000 Canadians received tainted blood transfusions and were infected with the human immunodeficiency virus, tens of thousands more contracted the hepatitis C virus.

As a result of this tragedy, the federal government appointed Justice Krever to lead the Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada. In his report, Justice Krever recommended the establishment of the Canadian Blood Services (CBS) as a national, not-for-profit organization responsible and accountable for the blood supply. It was to be governed by five basic principles:

1. *Blood is a public resource.*
2. *Donors of blood and plasma should not be paid for their donations, except in rare circumstances.*

3. *Whole blood, plasma and platelets must be collected in sufficient quantities to meet domestic needs for blood components and blood products.*
4. *Canadians should have free and universal access to blood components and blood products.*
5. *Safety of the blood supply system is paramount.*

It is because of these principles that there is public confidence in the Canadian blood system. Canadians trust the CBS to ensure there is proper screening and to guarantee the safety of the blood system. Health Canada risks undermining that trust by allowing paid donations.

The CFNU is urging you to direct the CBS to expand non-paid collection of blood with the goal of having Canada self-sufficient in blood products through a publicly-regulated, not-for-profit voluntary blood and plasma system.

I further urge you to maintain the integrity of the Canadian public blood system by using your authority to deny Health Canada license to this and future paid blood donation corporations. Allowing these corporations liberty to operate paid donation services threatens voluntary donations as well as risking the safety of our blood system.

Minister Philpott, taking this position is within your prerogative and would ensure Justice Krever's recommendations are respected, as well as following the guidelines of global organizations such as the World Health Organization, Red Cross, Red Crescent, European Blood Alliance and more.

Sincerely,



Linda Silas  
President

Cc: CFNU National Executive Board  
Dr. Graham D. Sher, CEO, Canadian Blood Services  
The Honourable Dustin Duncan, Minister of Health of Saskatchewan