

# HOT ON THE Hill

December 2017



Canada's  
Nurses

## Policy Leadership

### Meeting with Premiers to improve access to mental health services

The CFNU held another successful policy breakfast with provincial and territorial premiers in Edmonton at the annual premiers' summit in July.

This year, the focus of the CFNU event was mental health services and proposals to maximize the effectiveness of \$5 billion in targeted federal mental health funding which will be distributed to provinces and territories over 10 years. The event, entitled *Access through Innovation: Maximizing Targeted Federal Mental Health Funding*, welcomed eight provinces and territories, including seven premiers.

Attendees heard from two keynote speakers: the Honourable Michael Kirby, former Senator and founding Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and Big Daddy Tazz, Canadian comedian and mental health motivational speaker.

Nurses union leaders brought the message to Canadian premiers that better access to mental health services is needed, including integrating counselling services into Canadian medicare coverage.

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**“We need safe-at-home policies and more nurses providing home care to address the risks patients and nurses face every day.”**

Linda Silas  
President, CFNU

## Meeting with provincial and territorial health ministers to enhance home care safety



In October, the CFNU welcomed health ministers and deputy health ministers from all 13 provinces and territories to a policy discussion on home care during the annual Health Ministers' Meeting.

The CFNU presented recommendations for home care policy, emphasizing the need to put safety first for both patients and health care workers through adequate and appropriate staffing.

Guest speaker, Dalhousie University Professor and Canadian home care expert Dr. Marilyn Macdonald, presented the latest academic evidence for safe home care policies.

The CFNU made several recommendations to health ministers to enhance the safety of home care for clients, caregivers, and health care providers alike.

### CFNU RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFE HOME CARE

Nurse-led home care interventions that include:

- 1** A safe-at-home policy
- 2** Seniors/patients' appropriate and timely nursing assessments and interventions supported by the full health care team
- 3** Managerial continuity of care provided by a primary nurse to ensure timely and seamless access to care providers
- 4** Education and support for all members of the team, including unpaid caregivers, and standard competencies for personal support workers/care aides



Provincial and territorial health ministers and deputy ministers with representatives of the CFNU and provincial nurses' unions at the CFNU policy event (CP images Walter Tychnowicz)

# Legislative & Trade Review

## Bill C-4

The CFNU is pleased to report the successful adoption of Bill C-4 in June 2017. This bill repealed two previous anti-worker bills adopted under the former Conservative government. C-4 repeals former bills C-525, which eliminated card-check at the federal level, and C-377, which created onerous and unfair reporting requirements for labour organizations, not required by other organizations in Canada, and which threatened to undermine the privacy of unionized workers. The passage of Bill C-4 will strengthen worker's rights in Canada.

## Bill C-65

On November 7, the federal government introduced Bill C-65, *An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code to address harassment and violence in the workplace*. The bill seeks to improve prevention of harassment and violence in the federal workplaces. Although not applied to CFNU members, the bill will cover nurses working for the federal public service and offers an important benchmark of needed improvements to occupational health and safety standards in health care.

## Trade negotiations

### NAFTA

Over the summer, the United States Government launched the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico. A renewed trade deal could have an impact on health care, including extending patent terms for costly new prescription drugs and opening up health care services to foreign investment.

The CFNU is meeting regularly with Canadian officials to advocate for the protection of Canada's health care system from foreign investment and to prevent further increases in the costs of medicines.

### CETA

In 2017, Canada completed the implementation of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA). While principally commercial in focus, CETA includes provisions that could lengthen patent terms for prescription medications in Canada. Some economists have estimated this could cost Canadians up to an additional \$1 billion per year.

The CFNU is concerned that these potential changes could negatively impact patient access to necessary medicines and could cost businesses and governments more as insurance premiums rise for drug coverage.

# Health Care Policy Updates

## PTSD

Bill C-211 is legislation that seeks to create a federal framework for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The bill targets improvements to data gathering and service provision for people in Canada who serve in the military, work for the RCMP, correctional service or as firefighters and paramedics.

From the outset, the CFNU has stated that it is unacceptable to arbitrarily exclude nurses and other relevant health care workers from a workplace PTSD bill. CFNU representatives have met with the drafter, MP Todd Doherty, and numerous MPs and senators from all three main federal parties.

Bill C-211 was adopted by the House of Commons in June and is now before the Senate. Many senators have expressed support for CFNU's position to amend the bill. We will continue our efforts in 2018.



CFNU President Linda Silas with Conservative Senator and Registered Nurse Carolyn Stewart-Olsen at a meeting to discuss Bill C-211 on PTSD



Canada's Nurses-CFNU

**"Great to hear Sen Stewart-Olsen supports adding nurses to Bill C-211, a federal PTSD framework, at meeting today w/ @CFNUPresident"**

- @CFNU, OCT 31





(L to R) Adrienne Silnicki, Canadian Health Coalition, Kat Lanteigne, BloodWatch, and Paula Doucet, President of the New Brunswick Nurses Union, on Parliament Hill for a media conference on November 21



CFNU President, Linda Silas, with Ginette Petitpas Taylor, the new Federal Minister of Health

## Pharmacare

CFNU's decade-long campaign, alongside many allies, to establish a national pharmacare program for Canadians has made important progress in 2017. The Commons Health Committee has completed hearings for its pharmacare study and plans to release final recommendations in early 2018. The non-partisan Parliamentary Budget Officer crunched the numbers and found that pharmacare, in a worst-case scenario, would save people in Canada \$4.2 billion per year. We know that better-case scenarios are possible.

The CFNU is also proud to support the 2017 launch of the [Canadian Labour Congress'](#) campaign to achieve pharmacare. [Visit their website at aplanforeveryone.ca](#)

## Private plasma

2017 saw the opening of a second for-profit blood plasma collection clinic in Canada – this time in Moncton. The blood authority, Canadian Blood Services, reported a decline in donors at their Saskatoon collection clinic, likely due to competition from a neighbouring for-profit, paid plasma clinic. The CFNU and our Canadian health care advocate allies are deeply concerned that the commercial blood brokers are threatening the security of supply to Canada's public and life-saving blood system. On behalf of CFNU, New Brunswick Nurses Union President Paula Doucet participated in a press conference on November 21, 2017, to mark 20 years since the inquiry into tainted blood and call for the federal government to protect our blood system and ban blood money from Canada.

## Federal health care funding

In 2017, the federal government signed bilateral health care funding deals with the provinces and territories. Regrettably, these deals amount to a cutback of billions per year, compared to previous funding commitments. Consequently they will not meet the growing financial pressures on health care as our population ages. Over the coming 10 years, provinces will be forced to go it alone on health care funding as Ottawa's contribution shrinks.

The CFNU opposes this cutback. We believe the federal government must contribute its fair share to Canada's health care system to sustain quality services for everyone across our country.

## Privatization & Cambie case

Privatization and profit-making in our health care system continues to threaten the quality of services delivered. A report issued this year by the Ontario Health Coalition found that 88 private health clinics were charging patients extra user fees and selling medically necessary services. This contravenes the *Canada Health Act*.

In BC, one such private clinic owner, Dr. Brian Day, is taking Medicare to court in an attempt to create a two-tier health care system. His court cases have been recessed but will recommence in early 2018. The CFNU will continue to support Canada's public Medicare system and promote inventive solutions to improve quality of care.

**"In New Brunswick, we've witnessed first-hand how private blood brokers threaten our fragile blood system. Without any public consultation, Health Canada licensed a for-profit clinic in Moncton, competing directly with our public system."**

**- PAULA DOUCET, NBNU PRESIDENT**

# CFNU on the Hill

## Parliamentary appearance

CFNU President, Linda Silas, was invited to present the perspective of nurses at the parliamentary Human Resources Committee during their study "Advancing Inclusion and Quality of Life for Canadian Seniors."

At this meeting in October, Linda conveyed CFNU's recommendations for a safe home care policy and a national pharmacare program. Pharmacare and better home care are vital solutions to improve seniors' quality of life as Canada's population ages.



Canada's Nurses-CFNU

**"Seniors need safe #homecare + #pharmacare for better quality of life, nurses told MPs today at HUMA ctte"**

- @CFNU, OCT 31



CFNU President Linda Silas prepares to speak at the parliamentary human resources committee.



New Conservative health critic, Marilyn Gladu, and Linda Silas, CFNU President

## Meeting with new Conservative Health Critic

In September, Linda Silas met with newly appointed Conservative Health Critic, Marilyn Gladu, to discuss issues facing Canadian nurses and health care. MP Gladu is the proud mother of an Ontarian nurse.

Linda received assurances of her support for the inclusion of nurses in Bill C-211, legislation creating a federal framework for PTSD.

## Meeting with Parliamentary Secretary for Health

In June, Linda Silas met with Joël Lightbound, former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health. He has since changed roles. Linda conveyed CFNU concerns to the Parliamentary Secretary about the arbitrary exclusion of nurses from C-211, legislation to create a federal framework for PTSD.

CFNU requested ministerial intervention to amend the bill or to publicly reassure Canadian nurses that we won't be left out of workplace PTSD legislation.



Joël Lightbound, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, with Linda Silas, CFNU President



# What lies ahead for 2018

A busy year lies ahead for CFNU on the Hill. Here's what to expect:

- ▶ The Commons Health Committee is set to release the findings of its long-awaited report recommending a national pharmacare plan for Canada. This report will shape the discourse around pharmacare for years to come. The CFNU will be at the forefront on this issue.
- ▶ Bill C-211, creating a federal PTSD framework, will go for debate in the Senate, and the CFNU will continue our work to change the bill to include nurses.
- ▶ Targeted federal home care and mental health care funding will begin to flow to the provinces and territories and CFNU will continue to advocate for evidence-based reforms to improve access, quality and safety.
- ▶ The CFNU will continue to bring the voices of nurses to Ottawa by lobbying for Canada-wide standards to improve occupational health and safety standards for nurses and to end violence in the workplace.



CANADA'S NURSES  
**Speak Up**

Current actions on [speakup.cfnu.ca](http://speakup.cfnu.ca)



## Keep profits out of Canada's life-saving blood system!

Canada's blood system should serve people, not profits.



## Take Action for National Pharmacare: A Plan for Everyone

When patients can't afford their medicines, nurses are often the first to see the negative impacts on health.



## Take action to support a safe model for home care

We need a safe-at-home policy and more nurses providing home care to address the risks patients and nurses face every day.



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FEDERATION  
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WHERE KNOWLEDGE  
MEETS KNOW-HOW

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