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October 21, 2021

The Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister:

As the national voice of nurses across the country, the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) appeals to the federal government to support our call for the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) to recommend that provinces and territories offer the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 booster shot to all frontline direct care health care workers who received their second vaccine dose more than six months ago.

With health care worker shortages reported in every province and a health system on the brink of collapse in many jurisdictions, Canada cannot afford to lose a single health care worker to illness.

As they care for their patients, residents and clients every day, nurses and other health care workers are at high risk for exposure to COVID-19. In light of their direct contact with the sickest patients, health care workers should be afforded the highest level of protection – both to avoid contracting an illness with the potential for severe illness and life-changing long-term effects, and to avoid transmitting it to their patients, colleagues and families.

It has now been up to ten months since the first vaccine doses were administered to health care workers.

New evidence published in *The Lancet* indicates that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine's effectiveness against all SARS-CoV-2 infections fell **from 88% during the first month after receiving two vaccine doses to 47% after six months**. Its effectiveness against hospitalizations remained high at 90% overall against all variants. The study also recognized that the Delta variant poses a significant and ongoing threat. An analysis released recently in *CMAJ* shows the Delta variant increases the risk of hospitalization by 108%, ICU admissions by 235% and death by 133% when compared to the original strain.

Following [evidence of the efficacy and safety of third doses](#), the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) has recommended a third dose of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine be offered to health care workers. The [UK's National Health Service](#) is also making the booster shot available to workers in its health care system. Finally, earlier this month, the [European](#)

[Medicines Agency](#) concluded that booster doses “may be considered at least 6 months after the second dose for people aged 18 years and older”.

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions continues to advocate for a universal vaccination strategy and a global vaccination effort centered on equity and science. The science clearly shows that vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19, including the Delta variant.

Of course, [vaccines are not a panacea](#), and public health measures must remain in place for the foreseeable future. Health care employers must apply a [multifaceted approach to protecting workers](#), including vaccines, infection control measures (including appropriate ventilation and dedicated COVID units), and the use of optimal personal protective equipment with respiratory protection (N95 masks or higher) against aerosol transmission.

Canada’s nurses call on you to support our appeal to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and to partner with us in our efforts to bring about safer workplaces for health care workers.

Yours sincerely,



Linda Silas, CFNU President

Cc.: Dr. Shelley Deeks, Chair of National Advisory Committee on Immunization  
Yvette Coffey, President, Registered Nurses’ Union Newfoundland & Labrador  
Janet Hazelton, President, Nova Scotia Nurses’ Union  
Paula Doucet, President, New Brunswick Nurses Union  
Barbara Brookins, President, Prince Edward Island Nurses’ Union  
Vicki McKenna, President, Ontario Nurses’ Association  
Darlene Jackson, President, Manitoba Nurses Union  
Tracy Zambory, President, Saskatchewan Union of Nurses  
Heather Smith, President, United Nurses of Alberta