

**MEDIA RELEASE
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Canada's nursing leaders share views on the future of health care with parliamentarians

Ottawa, Monday, November 21, 2011 – The leadership of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) is gathering on Parliament Hill tomorrow for an intensive round of meetings with MPs and senators. CNA is calling on the federal government to transform our country's health-care system by developing a new 10-year health agreement with the provinces and territories that will provide for the real needs of Canadians.

“CNA's priority is making Canadians healthier and we need federal leadership to secure success,” said CNA president Judith Shamian. “A refocused follow-up agreement to the health accord is needed to improve health outcomes and the performance of the system. Moreover, we want our leaders to recognize and appreciate that because registered nurses and nurse practitioners are so connected to the delivery of care across Canada, they are integral to the future of health care and have solutions to offer.”

To build the best health-care system for Canada and stand out as one of the best globally, CNA is recommending that the government develop a pan-Canadian agreement that contains national health indicators linked to expected outcomes, realistic accountability measures for the transfer of funds, and more emphasis on primary care, chronic disease management and health promotion, along with integration of electronic health records. Furthermore, redistributing investments into community-based services and interprofessional care models will bring together the expertise of registered nurses, nurse practitioners, doctors and other health professionals to deliver the real care Canadians need.

“Given current health-care system expenditures, Canadians should be seeing more value and improved health outcomes,” said Shamian. “This country is home to outstanding health-care professionals, world class research and the necessary investments. But we need strong goals set, political will and collaboration between the health sector, governments and the public to achieve a healthy, productive Canada.”

Through its Parliament Hill day activities, CNA is urging the federal government to recognize the advanced role registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) can play in improving access at every point of the health-care system. RNs and NPs could help decrease or streamline costs by decreasing dependence on costly emergency departments, reducing unnecessary referrals and improving access to patient-centred care. To make that happen, the federal government needs to:

- support the introduction of a new regulation under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* that allows NPs to prescribe narcotics and other controlled drugs;
- broaden the *Food and Drugs Act* to enable NPs to distribute samples of medication to their patients; and
- recognize NPs as health professionals authorized to sign claims forms for federally administered programs such as the Disability Tax Credit Certificate and for Employment Insurance disability benefits.

To inform and develop its future policy recommendation, CNA launched an independent National Expert Commission in May 2011. Made up of prominent Canadians, the Commission has a mandate to generate policy solutions to help transform the Canadian health-care system beyond its current focus on acute and hospital care to a more patient-centred, community-based primary care system where nurses play a key role. The Commission's co-chairs, Maureen McTeer and Marlene Smadu, and its members have been working since May 2011 and will release their final report at CNA's annual meeting in Vancouver in June 2012. Further information on the Commission and an invitation to participate in its consultation process is available at <http://expertcommission.cna-aiic.ca>.

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) is the national professional voice of registered nurses in Canada. A federation of 11 provincial and territorial nursing associations and colleges representing 143,843 registered nurses, CNA advances the practice and profession of nursing to improve health outcomes and strengthen Canada's publicly funded, not-for-profit health system.

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