



CANADIAN
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September 21, 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
By email: Justin.Trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Subject: Congratulations and Request for Meeting on Health Care Priorities

Dear Prime Minister:

On behalf of Canada's nurses, I offer my heartfelt congratulations on your re-election as Member of Parliament for Papineau and your renewed mandate as Prime Minister of Canada.

With a closely run election behind us and in the midst of an ongoing global pandemic, the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) recognizes the vital importance of working together to unite our country and realize a vision for Canada that ensures no one is left behind.

In this spirit, the CFNU urgently requests that you call a meeting of health care leaders across the country to discuss critical priorities, including the devastating toll of the fourth wave of COVID-19 on Alberta's frontline workers and the critical shortage of nurses across the country that threatens the future sustainability of our health care system.

Canada's nurses stand with health care workers in Alberta, who are demanding that Premier Kenney provide immediate support to hospitals buckling under the strain of a fourth wave brought on by his government's failure to deal with the pandemic. We call on you to urgently support this request.

As you are aware, both in Alberta and nationwide, nurses have frequently been lauded as heroes by our political leaders – yet they continue to be subjected to crushing workloads, routine workplace violence and concerns about inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE). In terms of their mental and physical well-being, nurses have reached a breaking point.

A nation-wide study undertaken pre-COVID-19 revealed that 83% of nurses reported regular core health staff was insufficient to meet patient needs. In the same study, over 90% of nurses reported symptoms of burnout. During the pandemic, Canadian nurses' average weekly overtime hours increased by 78%. In another pan-Canadian study, a staggering 60% of nurses said they intended to leave their jobs within the next year.

Working conditions have only deteriorated since the onset of the pandemic, undoubtedly driving more nurses out of the profession and exacerbating a staffing shortage that had already reached crisis proportions.

Your government can help by committing to meet with us as a first priority.

As the pandemic has proven, the fundamental role and importance of nurses in care can never be underestimated. Canada's nurses stand ready to work with your government to bring about the transformative change our health care system so desperately needs.

Prime Minister, please accept my best wishes in the weeks and months ahead as your government's priorities take shape and a new cabinet is assembled. Canada's health care system today is at a critical juncture, and it is our sincere hope that your government's policy and action agenda will recognize this and directly address the dangerous crisis in nursing.

A member of CFNU's Government and External Relations team will be in touch with your office to make arrangements for a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Linda Silas', written over a horizontal line.

Linda Silas, CFNU President

Cc.: 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