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CANADIAN NURSES ASSOCIATION SAYS ‘IT’S ABOUT TIME’

CNA’s new campaign says it’s about time Canadians consider nurse practitioners as the answer to more access to better health care.

Ottawa, October 17, 2011 – The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) today launched a campaign to educate Canadians about how nurse practitioners can improve access to quality health care. Almost five million Canadians do not have a primary health-care provider and those that do often have a hard time accessing care. These two factors result in a heavily-burdened and overcrowded health-care system. More nurse practitioners will reduce wait times, improve access to more options and enhance the care of the whole patient.

“As Canadians, we’re proud of and grateful for this country’s health-care system, but it’s time to recognize we deserve even better,” says Judith Shamian, CNA’s president. “Nurse practitioners have played a valuable and essential role in the system for many decades. Given the stress the health-care system is currently under, now is the time to realize just how much more value nurse practitioners can bring to Canadians’ health care.”

Nurse practitioners are registered nurses who have additional education and nursing experience. Working collaboratively with other health-care providers, they provide quality care for patients, order tests, prescribe medications, and diagnose and manage chronic illnesses. They work in a wide variety of settings including community clinics, doctors’ offices, nursing homes, hospitals and in patients’ homes.

“In order for Canadians to feel confident in our country’s health-care system, they need to be certain they can easily access quality care whenever they need to,” says Rachel Bard, CNA’s chief executive officer. “As nurses, we know our services can help make health care more accessible, and our commitment to educating patients and involving them in decisions related to their care helps them achieve the best possible health.”

CNA’s campaign aims to educate Canadians about how their access to health care can be improved, how they can have more options and what role nurse practitioners can play. The campaign will also encourage governments to invest in more nurse practitioners as an investment in better health. The Nurses Association of New Brunswick will help CNA launch its national efforts with a four-week campaign in Fredericton. The campaign — with the slogan, Nurse Practitioners: It’s About Time! — will then roll out in regions across the country.

There are more than 3,000 nurse practitioners in Canada and every provincial and territorial government has nurse practitioner legislation in place. In 2010, there were 75 nurse practitioners in New Brunswick. That number is expected to rise in the near future with a commitment from the provincial government for 15 new nurse practitioner positions.

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For more information about CNA's nurse practitioner campaign, please visit www.npnow.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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