



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canada's Doctors and Nurses Come Together to Urge Politicians to Act Now for Future of Health Care

Ottawa, July 19, 2011 – In advance of the 2011 meeting of the Council of the Federation, and the looming expiry of the health accord in 2014, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) together have defined a set of principles to guide health care transformation in Canada.

“A health care system that is universal, sustainable and truly centred on the needs of patients demands pan-Canadian standards for which all levels of government share responsibility,” said CMA president Dr. Jeff Turnbull. “No matter where they live, Canadians deserve a system that provides a seamless continuum of care. To achieve this, governments must be guided by a common set of principles.”

The CMA and CNA are united in urging the provincial and territorial premiers to put the 2014 health accord at the forefront of their agenda, and call on them to commit to developing a pan-Canadian action plan beginning with a First Ministers meeting on health care no later than spring 2012.

“As national leaders in Canada’s health care system, we have a responsibility to urge governments to act now on the future of health care,” said CNA president Judith Shamian. “The system needs to be transformed into one that puts patients first. It is critical to the health of all Canadians that we establish a common guide to which all jurisdictions commit.”

In addition to the principles developed by the CMA and the CNA, the action plan should build on the five principles of the *Canada Health Act* to guide the transformation of Canada’s health care system toward one that is publicly funded, sustainable and adequately resourced, and provides universal access to quality care. The principles are summarized as follows:

- **Patient-centred:** Patients must be at the centre of health care, with seamless access to the continuum of care based on their needs.
- **Quality:** Canadians deserve quality services that are appropriate for patient needs, respect individual choice and are delivered in a manner that is timely, safe, effective and according to the most currently available scientific knowledge.
- **Health promotion and illness prevention:** The health system must support Canadians in the prevention of illness and the enhancement of their well-being, with attention paid to broader social determinants of health.
- **Equitable:** The health care system has a duty to Canadians to provide and advocate for equitable access to quality care and commonly adopted policies to address the social determinants of health.
- **Sustainable:** Sustainable health care requires universal access to quality health services that are adequately resourced and delivered across the board in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- **Accountable:** The public, patients, families, providers and funders all have a responsibility for ensuring the system is effective and accountable.

The goal of the CMA and CNA is to have these principles guide discussions at the provincial/territorial and federal levels leading to the signing of a new health care accord between the governments. The complete *Principles to Guide Health Care Transformation in Canada* is available at <http://www.cma.ca/advocacy/hctprinciples>.

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is the national voice of Canadian physicians. Founded in 1867, CMA's mission is to serve and unite the physicians of Canada and be the national advocate, in partnership with the people of Canada, for the highest standards of health and health care. The CMA is a voluntary professional organization representing over 74,000 of Canada's physicians and comprising 12 provincial and territorial medical associations and 51 national medical organizations.

The Canadian Nurses Association 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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