

May 2012

TO ALL CUPE MEMBERS

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

May 6 – 12, 2012

Sisters and Brothers:

It's National Nursing Week. Across the country, CUPE locals and divisions are planning events to celebrate nursing team members' contributions to high quality patient care. At the national level, we are educating and lobbying on the vital role that nursing team members play in health care innovation.

Nursing week is a time for us to recognize nurses and other patient care staff, including our practical nurses, registered nurses, personal support workers, continuing care attendants, care aides and other members who make up the nursing team. On behalf of CUPE, we thank you for your tremendous work, and we recommit to fighting for a health care system that lets every team member engage fully in providing high quality care.

In every province, CUPE is working to foster teamwork, ensure safe working and caring conditions, and improve the quality of health care for Canadians. CUPE nursing team members are skilled and dedicated professionals working day in and out to provide excellent care for people in need. We need governments and employers to back us up, support us to contribute to our full potential so that together we can protect and improve Medicare.

As our health system struggles to deal with rising cost pressures, worker shortages, and chronic care needs, teamwork has never been so important. There is growing recognition that no single health care practitioner has all the skills, expertise or time to deal with a patient's total care needs. Everyone – from nurses to dieticians to care aides – has a critical role to play in improving health care delivery.

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Unfortunately, in many places across Canada, there is still resistance to teamwork and evolving roles. Health care is typically organized in a hierarchical system, one that has been slow to adopt multidisciplinary teamwork and full utilization of all team members. We need leadership from decision-makers, starting with our federal and provincial governments, to transform pockets of teamwork innovation into large scale, lasting change.

This week, we wrote to the Premiers' Health Care Innovation Working Group, which is now looking at teamwork and scope of practice. We provided examples of CUPE nursing team members strengthening health care on the front lines, and opportunities to expand those projects province- and country-wide. The nursing team is evolving, and CUPE members are stepping up to the challenge. We need governments and employers to show leadership in scaling up these innovations system-wide.

During National Nursing Week we celebrate the team, and the teamwork, that can bring positive changes to health care delivery in our communities. To all of our nursing team members, CUPE applauds your passion and commitment to caring. We recommit to advocating for teamwork, full scope of practice, and high quality working and caring environments.

In solidarity,



PAUL MOIST
National President



CHARLES FLEURY
National Secretary-Treasurer