

March 16, 2020

Hon. Patricia Hajdu, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health  
Address Locator 0900C2  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

Dr. Theresa Tam  
Chief Public Health Officer  
Public Health Agency of Canada  
130 Colonnade Road  
A.L. 6501H  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

Dear Minister Hajdu and Dr. Tam,

**Subject: Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic**

In the light of the World Health Organization declaration on March 11, 2020, of a global pandemic, we know that the health and safety of the people of Canada and the nation's health care workers are uppermost in your minds. The situation clearly is escalating rapidly – and so must our collective support for Canada's nurses.

Throughout history, nurses have made clear that they will not abandon people or communities needing care, regardless of the danger to themselves. But they are not reckless, and they want to make informed choices about their own risk exposure based on consistent, clear information, grounded in the best available evidence, and knowing that every possible safeguard will be put in place to protect them.

We applaud the commitment of the Prime Minister on March 11, 2020, to stand behind every worker and business, in every province and territory, as we face this crisis. In the same announcement, a \$50-million allocation was directed to the Public Health Agency of Canada to ensure adequate supplies of personal protective equipment. With dedicated funds now in place we ask you to act immediately to deploy those resources. Where clinical equipment decisions must be made in uncertain circumstances, we urge you to operate from the assumption that all parties will err on the side of over-protection rather than under-protection of health care providers in every case.

As the professional and union representatives of Canada's nurses, the Canadian Nurses Association and Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions are with you, shoulder to shoulder, in this very tough public health emergency of international concern. Canada's nurses will be with you too, ready as always to carry out very tough work in risky clinical settings. But they will only be there if they trust that we are all doing everything we can to support and protect their personal health and safety. If they fall ill during the course of delivering care while under-protected, then they will not be there – and we all know well that the consequences for patients and communities will be dire.

We appreciate the tremendous work both of your teams have been doing under rapidly evolving conditions. Our organizations look forward to our ongoing work with you at this tough time and will be pleased to see the resources needed to properly protect nurses and all team members immediately deployed across the country. If we can do anything to help your teams, you need only ask us.

Yours sincerely,



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