



February 29, 2016

VIA E-MAIL: dwightball@gov.nl.ca (hard copy to follow)

Honourable Dwight Ball
Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
Chair of the Council of the Federation
Office of the Premier
Confederation Building, East Block
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

RE: 2016 Winter Meeting of Canada's Premiers

Dear Premier Ball:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), the national, professional voice of nearly 139,000 registered nurses across Canada, to say how pleased we are that the Council of the Federation (CoF) will discuss climate change at its gathering in Vancouver on March 2.

We believe it is essential for the federal government to work with Canada's premiers on tackling climate change. As you know, this is an issue no single government can resolve in isolation. For this reason, CNA's role in seeking to address climate change includes partnering with all levels of government (federal, provincial, territorial, Indigenous and municipal) and a wide range of stakeholder groups.

Canadians can be proud of Canada's leadership at the 2015 UN Paris Climate Change Conference, where it helped 194 countries reach consensus on limiting the rise in global temperature to well below 5 C and to limit its increase to 1.5 C. In the wake of that agreement, CNA is looking forward to seeing how the prime minister and premiers can find ways to tackle climate change and move to a low-carbon economy in Canada.

CNA's role would be to provide CoF with knowledge and insight about the health impacts of climate change. In considering these impacts, we recommend a Health in All Policies approach to public policy development across all sectors. This approach systematically takes into account the health implications of policy decisions, while seeking to foster cooperation and avoid unintentional harms. CNA strongly believes this philosophy must underpin Canada's efforts to stem climate change.

The direct contact nurses have with patients and families gives them a strong understanding of the many factors that can affect a person's health — including the physical environment, employment, education and housing. Indeed, only when all levels of government consider the health consequences of every public policy, law and program — whether in departments of the environment, transport, employment, immigration or others — can they expect to improve all Canadians' health and well-being while promoting economic growth, productivity and prosperity.

As outlined in CNA's national action plan (attached), implementing Health in All Policies must involve key stakeholders such as provincial and territorial governments, health-care groups and organizations, and the Canadian public. Yet, to benefit Canadians and actually be effective, the federal government must take a leadership role.

As you and your fellow premiers prepare to meet, we would like to remind you of the consequences of inaction on climate change, which is now putting the health of global populations at risk.

Without extensive measures, up to half of the world could face severe food shortages by the end of the century. Many of our oceans, a primary food source for millions, may face ecological collapse as they absorb carbon dioxide and further acidify. By 2050, the impacts of climate change could displace 200 million people, and these are impacts Canadians will not escape.

Health Canada predicts that the effects of climate change will lead to more extreme weather, a greater frequency and severity of heat waves, the spread of infectious disease and lower air quality. Canada's northern and rural communities, and our elderly, Indigenous and vulnerable populations, are at particular risk. In addition, malnutrition, heat stress, diarrhea, population displacement and conflict over depleted resources are all expected to rise.

If there is no meaningful action in Canada, we will severely compromise WHO's Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, which aim to address the effects of climate change while protecting the environment, promoting prosperity and well-being for all, and ending poverty.

In closing, we wish you and the other members of CoF a successful meeting. David Granovsky, our manager of government relations, is available should you have any inquiries at 613-237-2159, ext. 525, or at dgranovsky@cna-aiic.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karima Velji', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karima Velji, RN, PhD, CHE
President

cc: Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia
Hon. Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta
Hon. Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan
Hon. Greg Selinger, Premier of Manitoba
Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Philippe Couillard, Premier of Quebec
Hon. Brian Gallant, Premier of New Brunswick
Hon. Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia
Hon. Wade MacLauchlan, Premier of Prince Edward Island
Hon. Darrell Pasloski, Premier of the Yukon
Hon. Robert McLeod, Premier of the Northwest Territories
Hon. Peter Taptuna, Premier of Nunavut
Loretta O'Connor, Executive Director, Council of the Federation Secretariat