

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

CNA POSITION

- ▶ Interprofessional relationships support a coordinated emergency response and, therefore, must be developed and nurtured in advance of emergency situations. Nurses¹ must function optimally in an interprofessional context.
- ▶ Health professionals should adopt a precautionary approach when their health and safety may be at risk. CNA's *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses* provides guidance on how nurses can balance their responsibilities to the public with their own safety during times of emergency (Canadian Nurses Association [CNA], 2017).

CNA BELIEFS

CNA believes the nursing profession plays an integral role in all aspects of emergencies, including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Nursing leadership and its role in planning are essential to a comprehensive and coordinated approach to emergency preparedness and response (International Council of Nurses, 2009). CNA's position statement on interprofessional collaboration identifies principles that facilitate the development and maintenance of relationships among health professionals (CNA, 2011).

CNA believes that, much like interprofessional collaboration, effective emergency preparedness and response requires collaboration between all levels of government, as well as non-governmental organizations (Public Safety Canada, 2018).

CNA believes continued investment in areas such as monitoring and information and communications technology infrastructure is required. The extension of this communication technology infrastructure to community-based health-care providers

¹ Unless otherwise stated, nurse or nursing refers to any member of a regulated nursing category (i.e., a registered nurse, nurse practitioner, licensed/registered practical nurse or registered psychiatric nurse). This definition reflects the current situation in Canada, whereby nurses are deployed in a variety of collaborative arrangements to provide care.

would expand access to information during an emergency and support quality of care (CNA, 2007).

CNA values increased development of and access to education (e.g., mock drills, simulations) related to emergency preparedness and management skills (Labrague et al. 2017; Veenema et al. 2016; Nilsson et al., 2015). This increase would ensure optimal performance by health professionals and enhance anticipatory planning (Kulig, Penz, Karunanayake, MacLeod, Jahner, and Andrews, 2017). This would help ensure coordination of timely relief delivery and a smooth transition to sustainable development in the aftermath of a disaster.

CNA supports strategies that ensure respect for human rights and cultural competency, while understanding that times of disaster may require an abrupt shift from patient-focused to population-focused outcomes. Such strategies can carry serious ethical implications and need to be considered carefully (ICN 2009; ICN 2011; ICN 2018).

CNA recognizes the responsibilities of regulatory bodies to exercise due diligence and ensure that the public is adequately protected during an emergency response.

BACKGROUND

Natural and man-made disasters are increasing around the world in both frequency and severity. These disasters both test and strain emergency management systems and governmental budgets (Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, 2017).

At the national level, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) leads the federal response to public health emergencies by co-ordinating its efforts with federal agencies, the provinces and territories, and other international authorities (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2005).

Information and communication technologies provide access to the most up-to-date information and educational resources during an emergency. Technology can improve nurses' access to decision-support tools and allow them to track and evaluate data on nursing interventions and patient outcomes.

One of the most important measures of a health-care system's effectiveness during a time of emergency or disaster is its ability to continue working effectively while minimizing patient morbidity and mortality (Health Canada, 2009).

Recent emergencies and disasters (e.g., the SARS crisis, tsunami in Indonesia, Ebola outbreak in West Africa) have shown the vital roles of nurses in the health system's response:

- ▶ Providing care

- ▶ Contributing to the capacity to conduct health surveillance
- ▶ Educating health professionals, volunteers and the public
- ▶ Assessing needs and allocating resources
- ▶ Evaluating response measures
- ▶ Making decisions about limited resource allocation (such as vaccines)

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Replaces: Emergency Preparedness and Response (2012)

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