



## CNA'S SUPPORT OF REGULATORY EXCELLENCE IN CANADA A SUMMARY OF SUCCESS

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Promote uniform and high-quality regulatory practices  
in the public interest and in collaboration with nursing  
regulatory bodies.

*Object 2, CNA Letters Patent*

Public interest is at the heart of nursing – and not just in terms of how nurses practise their profession, but also in the way they regulate it. As members of a self-regulating profession, nurses determine the profession's values and standards for education and practice, and enforce those standards. In turn, the public is reassured that it is receiving safe and ethical care from competent, qualified registered nurses.<sup>1</sup> There is evidence to suggest that the public appreciates this focus; in a 2006 survey by Leger Marketing on public trust, nurses (95 per cent) were second only to firefighters (96 per cent) in a list of most-trusted occupations.

The regulation of nurses – licensing, establishing and enforcing standards, discipline and education program approval – is the mandate of the 12 provincial and territorial registered nursing regulatory bodies in Canada.<sup>2</sup> CNA, as a national federated organization, has a long history of providing leadership around national and international regulatory issues and of supporting its members in their regulatory work. This work, the focus of which is regulatory excellence, is even more vital in the face of rapidly changing health systems, economic volatility, the heightened focus on mobility, and increased government oversight and intervention into professional regulation.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nursing Now*, Number 21, February 2007.

<sup>2</sup> These 12 are the provincial and territorial nursing associations/colleges.

CNA works with regulatory bodies to craft national regulatory policy and to ensure that the public has meaningful and effective ways of participating in decision-making processes, including those related to regulatory work. All of this ensures a coordinated regulatory approach that enhances accountability to the public and promotes the mobility of nurses within Canada.

- CNA developed the *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*, the “values” base for the nursing profession. Considered the ethical standard, it is used in whole or in part by every CNA member regulatory organization. CNA also provides ethics position statements and other resources to its members.
- CNA developed the Canadian Registered Nurse Examination (CRNE), the entry-level exam for registered nurses. All jurisdictions except Quebec use this exam as the final measure of a candidate’s competence to enter the profession. CNA also developed a readiness test and preparation guide to assist Canadian and internationally educated nurses to prepare for the CRNE. Recently, CNA made available three additional licensure examinations.
- CNA develops and delivers the Canadian Nurse Practitioner Exam: Family/All Ages (CNPE: F/AA), and makes available for regulatory purposes in Canada the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) adult and pediatric nurse practitioner exams.
- To strengthen the link between exam content and regulations governing those who pass it, CNA created the Executive Exam Council (EEC). The EEC provides a forum in which the executive directors of the jurisdictions can offer their input into the larger decisions that are taken around all of the regulatory exams. CNA also seeks input on exam policies and processes from jurisdictional councils whose mandate is to provide regulatory expertise on specific exams.
- CNA offers certification in 18 speciality areas, as well as multiple tools and resources such as preparation guides, online tests, study groups and mentors. In 2009, more than 15,000 nurses are certified in 18 areas. A new medical-surgical certification is being launched in 2010, and there is strong interest in expanding the certification program to other specialties.
- Working with the jurisdictions, CNA has moved to synchronize its certification renewal criteria with the jurisdictions’ continuing competence requirements. Obtaining certification is one way for nurses to demonstrate to patients, employers, the public and regulatory bodies that they are qualified, competent and current in a nursing specialty.
- CNA is also working with the jurisdictions to provide an increasing number of continuing competence tools on NurseONE<sup>3</sup> to assist nurses in meeting the continuing competence requirements of their particular regulatory body. The tools include online practice standards, self-assessments forms, and continuing learning plans developed by colleges and associations.

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<sup>3</sup> NurseONE.ca is CNA’s online information resource for nurses, by nurses.

- Other tools and services that CNA develops to support members in their regulatory work include:
  - online electronic mailing lists, which encourage dialogue among regulatory and practice consultant colleagues who might not otherwise have an opportunity to discuss issues given their geographic distance and busy schedules;
  - statistical reports that flow from its work on the CRNE, which support education and health human resource planning. CNA has also written a number of position statements and reports covering a variety of regulatory issues, such as describing the regulatory framework in Canada and helping nurses to better understand self-regulation;
  - tools and resources to support internationally educated nurses as they integrate into the Canadian health care system;
  - facilitating work with the jurisdictions to update the core entry-level nurse practitioner competencies; and
  - extensive support to numerous national and international meetings on regulatory issues. Examples include forums addressing mobility agreements, meetings to standardize and enhance registration data across all provinces and territories, federal government task forces on food and drug regulations, and international credentialing standards and issues. CNA is also participating in work to create national standards and to explore the development of a national assessment service.
- Nationally, and internationally, CNA addresses regulatory issues being tackled by the Canadian Network of National Associations of Regulators; the International Council of Nurses; the Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards; and the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation.
- CNA influences the federal agenda on matters affecting nursing regulation and practice, and works hard to ensure that the federal government understands and supports the crucial role nurses play in the Canadian health system. Examples include improving Canadians' access to care by advocating for changes in federal legislation to allow nurse practitioners (NPs) to prescribe controlled drugs; sourcing federal funding for and publishing a study on challenges faced by internationally educated nurses, and co-chairing a task force to address the study's recommendations; securing funding for and co-chairing the jurisdictional working groups that addressed the mobility of RNs; continuing to work on facilitating mobility of NPs; and attaining funding for the development and maintenance of NurseONE, a key online tool.



The quality of health systems and practice environments is inextricably linked with nurses' ability to meet professional practice standards and to provide safe, competent and ethical care to the public. The value of a strong, unified national voice speaking in the public interest cannot be underestimated. Indeed, now, more than ever, we need the knowledge, expertise and capacity of nurses to bring solutions to our health-care challenges. Nurses are, and will continue to be, at the heart of the system's transformation, driving and managing change related to the delivery of health services.

CNA will continue to provide leadership around national regulatory issues and support the regulatory organizations in their mandate of protecting the public.

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