



November 2, 2009

An open letter from CNA President Kaaren Neufeld

Dear Colleagues:

Patient Safety Week takes place November 2-6, 2009. CNA is proud to work with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) on this important week. The event is an opportunity to raise the consciousness of nurses, patients, families and the public on the issues surrounding patient safety. On the [CPSI website](#) you will find a variety of tools and resources for activities and events for raising awareness and promoting patient safety at your place of work. And on CNA's website, the [Practice Environments and Patient Safety](#) page provides links to publications concerning patient safety, including CNA's *Patient Safety Resource Guide*.

Registered nurses across Canada are working with CPSI to improve safety for patients by providing expert advice on strategic directions through representation on five CPSI advisory committees: education and professional development; legal and regulatory affairs; research and evaluation; health system innovation; and information and communication. CPSI's new Pan-Canadian Patient Safety in Primary Care Advisory Group also includes an RN representative. In addition, CNA holds representation on the CPSI board, on committees for disclosure of adverse events and for safe surgery, and on a planning committee forum.

Through this informed, collaborative process, registered nurses add their voice to these bodies and bring forward real-life patient safety issues from the nursing perspective. Issues such as staffing inefficiencies, workloads, the casualization of the nursing workforce in the interests of cost reductions, and a scarcity of nurse mentors, affect nurses' ability to make comprehensive assessments, develop therapeutic relationships with patients and provide effectual continuity of care, and are a threat to patient safety.

Patient Safety Week is an opportunity for individual nurses to act on behalf of patients and nursing to promote safer environments. What actions can individual nurses take to improve patient safety? Nurse managers can provide strong leadership to nurses in their practice environments. Nurses can participate in research and quality improvement projects, which add to the growing body of evidence that supports leading practices and human resources planning in the health-care system. And we can follow the guidance of CNA's [Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses](#) that informs nurses' obligations and responsibilities for individual practice regarding informed consent, disclosure of adverse events, and advocating for quality professional practice environments and the resources needed for safe, competent and ethical care.

Being informed is important, and so is taking action. CNA encourages you to get involved in Patient Safety Week. The more we know, the safer we care.

Sincerely,

Kaaren Neufeld, RN, MN

President

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