



6 July 2009

*OPEN LETTER FROM THE CNA PRESIDENT*

Dear Colleagues:

The economic downturn is being experienced across the country, and history reveals that health care – including nursing services – is not immune to the negative effects of a recession. That’s why the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) developed [RNs: A Sound Investment](#), a web-based resource that provides information and evidence you need to speak out in support of the cost-effectiveness of registered nursing care – and of the essential role *you* play in saving lives, promoting health and reducing costs.

CNA is deeply concerned about economic policies that overlook evidence showing positive long-term effectiveness and efficiency gains achieved by investing in registered nursing care. This is perhaps most dramatically illustrated in Alberta, where 1,400 vacant registered nurse (RN) positions disappeared overnight as a result of a freeze on hiring RNs. This decision compromises the safety of patients and access to care. CNA has expressed its concern in a [letter](#) to the Alberta Minister of Health and the chair of Alberta Health Services.

RNs are a sound investment in health in terms of outcomes for patients as well as dollars and cents. Studies show that in-patient deaths can be avoided by increasing the hours of care provided by RNs, and that expanded access to RNs reduces wait times and improves health outcomes. In fact, the more hours of care provided by RNs, the more money is saved through shorter hospital stays and fewer adverse outcomes. See CNA’s fact sheet [The value of registered nurses](#) for examples.

Everybody knows a nurse. Now is the time to tell the real story about the economic value of RNs for Canadians’ health and for the long-term viability of Canada’s health system. RN’s are caring and compassionate, and are our most cost-effective answer for health and reducing the demand for illness care.

We encourage you to visit [Nursing and the Political Agenda](#) for resources and information on telling the story of registered nursing. And get to know, on a first-name basis, your Member of Parliament and provincial/territorial legislative assembly member. You are someone they need to know. Here are some tips on how to [write a letter and how to arrange a meeting](#). Politicians, the media and the public need to hear that RNs are a sound investment – in any economic climate.

Sincerely,

Kaaren Neufeld, RN, MN  
President