



CANADIAN NURSES ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION DES INFIRMIÈRES ET INFIRMIERS DU CANADA



VISION FOR CHANGE

The Canadian Nurses Association Offers Practical Solutions, New Thinking and Innovation in the Health System

Marking the celebration of its 100th year, the Canadian Nurses Association is marshalling action plans and projects that will help to build Canada's publicly-funded health system of tomorrow and position Canada's nurses to best support that new system. The association sees significant structural and institutional change as fundamental to sustaining the health system. The Canadian Nurses Association will work to better align the nursing profession in Canada to serve and reflect the current and emerging priorities of Canadians.

We at CNA believe that the health system of 2008 must transform in revolutionary ways to better meet the health needs of Canadians by 2020:

- The health system can and must **revolutionize patient care**, redesigning delivery systems to focus on individuals, families and communities and not just on providers and institutions.
- The system can and must use **innovative and emerging technology to achieve new benchmarks in efficiency and effectiveness**. We must rapidly accelerate the adoption of promising technologies wherever services are, or could be, delivered.
- The health system can and must **integrate nursing knowledge in the development of healthy public policy** across this country. To borrow a phrase from our Finnish health colleagues, we must not just think of "health for all" but of "health in all policies."

The health system imposes costs on society, but it also provides enormous benefits in terms of more productive citizens and improved quality of life. Through new technologies, major advances in genetic research and significant changes to the roles and the diversity of health professionals, the Canadian Nurses Association envisions a day where new thinking and new approaches restore the complete confidence of Canadians in their health system.

I. Revolutionize Patient Care

The predominant model of health care will be grounded in a comprehensive roster of primary health care services delivered closer to Canadians – in their homes, clinics and other community settings. This new model will emphasize the prevention of disease and injury, strongly emphasizing health maintenance and health promotion. Hospitals will be settings for short-stay and outpatient services, critical care and emergency services.

“Be the change” means:

- enhancing knowledge transfer to ensure that Canadian nurses wherever they work and learn, have access to the most recent evidence and information on best practices;
- leading the national effort to identify and develop the infrastructure to support the role of nurse practitioners and advanced practice nurses across the health system;
- implementing telehealth and/or videohealth services to reach all Canadians;
- working with governments and partners to develop models of primary care that accelerate access to care for all Canadians through a range of providers including nurses in clinics, emergency rooms and other community settings. Within this system, patients with complex and rare conditions would be referred to physicians, including family medicine and other specialists. The focus is always on accelerating appropriate access for patients and families;
- positioning nurses to act as system navigators to help patients and their families access and coordinate the services they need across the spectrum of determinants of health, including necessary services in health, social, education, criminal justice and other sectors;
- improving the ability of nurses to work with patients, families and communities to find, disseminate and interpret complex information regarding health and illness;
- developing tools to strengthen nurses’ ability to identify and help patients and families to manage the growing range and number of chronic diseases;
- engaging with other health professionals in processes to facilitate the creation of innovative, effective and efficient health-care teams. The Canadian Nurses Association will work to ensure that liability and legislative barriers are addressed, and work with partners to strengthen the ability of members of the nursing profession to lead and work as members of effective health-care teams;
- expanding the understanding and maximizing the impact of Canadian nurses in implementing principles of environmental health – specifically in areas such as ‘greening’ the health system, supporting environmental policy and reducing the health impacts of environmental hazards. To intensify nursing efforts in protecting Canadians from environmental risks, the Canadian Nurses Association established an Office of Environmental Health to increase nurses’ awareness of environmental health and provide information they need to be active across all areas of practice; and
- integrating new undergraduate and graduate curricula to meet shifts from an acute-care, illness-treatment model of health care to one that focuses on keeping people well, with both care and support for maintaining health delivered in the community. The dramatic changes we envision in the future will mean that the role of the nurse and other partners in the health system need to become more collaborative, team-based and streamlined, and education systems must prepare for that future in the short term. Nursing education must prepare nurses who are able to function in primary care roles.

II. Leverage Innovative and Emerging Technology to Achieve New Benchmarks in Efficiency and Effectiveness

A health system supported by information and communications technology will seamlessly link patients, health services and health professionals, regardless of geographic borders. Technology will enable health providers and the system to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency in providing patients access to the right care at the right time. And the emerging science of robotics will help bolster our human resources to allow care providers to focus on the professional tasks.

***“Be the change”* means:**

- working with health facilities and other partners across Canada to increase the capacity of the members of the nursing profession to be effective users of electronic technology;
- working with health-sector employers and governments to accelerate the implementation of electronic technology such as electronic health records;
- giving nurses providing patient care ready access to the results of new research;
- working with partners in nursing education and with employers to develop education models that maximize the ability of tomorrow’s nurses to work in a world of robotics, gene therapy, and complex information technologies linked to clinical decision-making tools; and
- engaging with the technology sector to ensure that the perspectives of nurses are strongly represented during the development of technologies for use in the delivery of health-care services wherever they are delivered.

III. Integrate Nursing Knowledge in the Development of Healthy Public Policy

One of the most important trends we forecast is a much more seamless integration of Canada’s individual provincial and territorial health systems. This integration will support improved efficiency and effectiveness of the system. Integration will mean Canadians can readily access health services both where they live and where they travel, anywhere in the country.

***“Be the change”* means:**

- building on the experience of working with governments over the last 100 years, engendering the uptake of the elements of this new health system framework;
- engaging policy decision-maker to put structures in place to improve the determinants of health including housing, literacy, and removing the impact of poverty and cultural isolation; and
- working with policy decision-makers and other care providers to articulate the frameworks for strategies to meet the housing, pharmaceutical, home care, dental care, vision care, mental health, palliative care and chronic disease needs of Canadians.

Vision

The world in 2020 will be fundamentally different from the one we live in today. The aging of the baby boomers alone will have a huge impact on all facets of society. In health care, that will range from a significant increase in the number of people suffering chronic diseases to the wholesale retirements of health-care providers.

And in the coming years, the world will be confronted with more active, virulent illnesses that will travel farther and faster than ever before. The world is just beginning to see the leading edge of near-pandemic levels of chronic diseases such as arthritis and diabetes. Unless the health system starts working differently and more smartly, wait times will continue grow and access will only become tougher.

Advances in technology and diagnostic tools, and the emerging shift towards health promotion and disease prevention will address the present shortage of health professionals, including registered nurses and physicians. These developments will help offset the shortfall in the health workforce and improve the current system of costly and fragmented health-care delivery.

The transformation of the health system requires that bold steps be taken now. It also involves an all-hands-on-deck approach: health professions, health administrators, policy-makers, researchers, as well as governments. Most importantly, it requires that all those partners become deeply involved in understanding and meeting the genuine needs of Canadians wherever they live.

The Canadian Nurses Association, as the national voice of the nursing profession in Canada, is prepared to step up to the plate. In fact, inspired by the words of 20th century political and spiritual leader Mahatma K. Gandhi, the Canadian Nurses Association believes it “must *be the change* we wish to see in the world.”

Setting down directions toward a vibrant new health-care system, this document is one expression of the leadership that the Canadian Nurses Association will take in the interest of Canadians. CNA looks forward with excitement to working with the nurses of Canada and our partners in every sector to build a 21st century health system that is sensitive, responsive, proud and effective for all Canadians.