



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

SUN sees opportunity for collaboration on Saskatchewan Employment Act

OCTOBER 25, 2012, REGINA: On the tail of today's Speech from the Throne the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) sees opportunity for collaboration on the modernization of labour legislation but cautions against neglecting the significance of these laws in determining overall population health.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the *Labour Standards Act* and the *Trade Union Act* are intended to foster healthy, safe and well regulated work environments for all working people, whether unionized or not and SUN hopes that any newly proposed Employment Act would not erode these basic rights.

"We absolutely agree that fair and balanced labour and employment laws are central to the economic growth of our province, but we must not forget what a crucial role they play in addressing the underlying health of our society," says SUN President, Rosalee Longmoore. "Registered nurses have a unique insight into the social determinants of health and their relationship to safe, well regulated workplaces and we strongly believe this needs to be a key focus of any new employment act."

Increased job strain due to a combination of demanding employment and low income, as well as other workplace stresses have been linked to increased workers compensation related injuries and medical ailments such as high blood pressure, heart disease, mental health disorders such as depression and high risk lifestyle choices such as smoking and alcohol consumption. These all negatively impact both the social and economic wellbeing of our province.

SUN, the Ministry of Health and all Regional Health Authorities are currently addressing many of the persistent challenges facing the provincial health care system and its registered nurse workforce through an innovative and historic Tripartite Partnership Agreement. The Tripartite Agreement has created a forum that fosters open dialogue, unity of thought and joint decision making that is based on a foundation of evidence and research all within a healthy and positive labour relations environment.

"We have a template for success in the Tripartite Partnership Agreement which could definitely serve as an innovative model for how employers, government and unions can work together beyond health care," notes Longmoore. "The Tripartite's culture of collaboration is absolutely transferable to an examination of labour legislation."

Visit the labour relations section of SUN's website to read the full July 31, 2012 response to the Government of Saskatchewan's labour consultation: <http://sun-nurses.sk.ca>

SUN represents almost 9,000 Registered Nurses (RNs), Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs), Registered Nurse(Nurse Practitioner)s (RN(NP)s) and graduates in the province.

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