



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Canadians want government to address nursing shortage, health care, in these tough economic times, new poll finds**

**Vancouver (June 8, 2009)** Government spending on health care continues to be a priority for Canadians, a new poll shows. The poll found that three out of four Canadians would choose increasing the number of nurses over a tax cut. Conducted for the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions by Nanos Research, the poll gauged public opinion on government actions needed to address Canada's nursing shortage.

"Governments must not repeat the mistake of the 1990's and use the economic downturn as an excuse to cut health care", warns Linda Silas, RN, President of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. "The nursing workforce has never recovered from those cuts. Canadians support investments in nurses".

The poll found that:

- Three out of four Canadians are of the opinion that increasing the number of nurses is more important than providing a tax cut.
- Nearly six in ten Canadians believed that the nursing shortage is a serious problem, while another three in ten believed that it was somewhat serious.
- Even in the current economic environment, health care ranks as the top priority for government spending among all Canadians. In Ontario and the West, health care was tied with the economy as the top spending priority for government.
- Nearly half of Canadians said they would likely vote against a government that did not properly fund health care, while another one in five said they would be somewhat likely.
- Nine out of ten Canadians support or somewhat support the government doing more to retain nurses who are currently working and to increasing the number of nursing graduates.
- The majority oppose the government increasing the number of patients nurses must care for.

"Governments in many provinces are just adding more patients to a nurses' workload. Research shows this is dangerous and this poll shows that the majority of Canadians want governments to take a new approach to addressing the serious shortage", says Silas.

The poll was released on the eve of the 14<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions.

The national random telephone survey of 1,001 Canadians 18 years of age and older was completed between May 26<sup>th</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. The statistics of a random sample of 1,001 respondents are accurate to within 3.1%, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20. The detailed tables with the regional sub-tabs and methodology are posted at: <http://www.nanosresearch.com>.

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