

FEDERAL BUDGET 2004

Clear Funding for Nursing Education Needed

Ottawa, ON — March 23, 2004 — Despite committing \$2 billion for the provinces and territories for healthcare and \$665 million to improve Canada’s readiness to deal with public health emergencies in today’s budget, the federal government still needs to earmark funds specifically for nursing education if the current crisis in nursing is to be resolved.

Last year, the federal budget committed money to increase the number of students in health disciplines, but the number of nurses continues to be a tremendous challenge when it comes to delivering adequate healthcare to Canadians.

By 2008 Ontario alone anticipates a loss of 30,000 nurses due to retirements. This year only about 3,400 nurses will graduate from Ontario registered nursing programs. Nursing programs continue to have large applicant pools of well-qualified men and women — many of which have to be turned away because of a shortage of professors and facilities to support their learning. This means that specific financial support for nursing schools and increasing the number of professors for the many areas of nursing is crucial if we are to end this crisis in the supply of nurses and nurse practitioners.

“Without an adequate, well-educated and well-prepared supply of nurses, and enough teachers to teach the growing numbers of nurses needed to fill the gaps, further investments in the healthcare system will fail to meet the needs of Canadians,” says Dr. Carole Orchard, President of CASN.

“Increased financial support for nursing education and research will result in higher levels of university prepared nurses required to care for our citizens in hospitals, in homecare and in communities. But will the schools of nursing actually receive any of the necessary funding?” asks Wendy McBride, Executive Director of CASN.

The Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) is the national voice of nursing education, research and scholarship, representing 90 schools across Canada. CASN is also the official accrediting agency for university nursing programs in Canada.

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