



Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario  
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers  
autorisés de l'Ontario

Mr. Kevin Flynn  
Ontario Minister of Labour

Dr. Eric Hoskins  
Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

September, 12, 2017

Re: Preventing Workplace Violence in the Health Care Sector Report

Dear Kevin and Eric,

I am writing to you in response to your report entitled “*Preventing workplace violence in the health care sector*”. RNAO appreciates the government’s commitment to prevent workplace violence in health care and recognition of the hazards experienced by nurses and other health-care providers.

RNAO believes that all nurses have the right to practice in a supportive environment where workplace violence is not tolerated. It is important to take a broad approach, examining societal, workplace, and individual factors, and recognize the dynamic relationship between them.<sup>1</sup> While this report marks an important step in the prevention of violence in the hospital sector, it needs to be expanded and adapted, as nurses working in all sectors of health care are at risk for experiencing violence, not only those who are located in hospitals.<sup>2 3 4 5</sup>

We recognize that the majority of the nursing profession is employed within hospital settings. We also know that a large number of nurses work outside of the hospital and also encounter violence within their workplaces. According to the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), there are approximately 70, 000 RNs and NPs working in the hospital setting, with another 24, 000 who work in the community and over 10, 000 working in long-term care settings across Ontario. Thus, efforts to address workplace violence must expand to all health-care settings in which RNs, NPs and RPNs work.

Each sector within our health system experiences its own unique challenges and presents an opportunity to address the prevention of workplace violence. For example, nurses working in long-term care settings often have a large case load and high proportion of patients with cognitive and/or behavioural impairments; mental health and addictions nurses work in the community with patients who may be agitated or even violent; home care nurses work

independently and are alone in clients' homes night and day to provide care; and nurses working in busy community clinics are faced with high volumes of patients seeking care. These are just some examples of nursing outside of the hospital setting where incidents of violence also occur.

Kevin and Eric, RNAO applauds the work underway and urges you to expand its scope and adapt the report's recommendations to make these implementable across all health sectors. RNAO's specific comments on the report can be found in the attached template.

Thank you for your continued support in the prevention of violence in the workplace.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doris Grinspun", with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD, LLD(hon), O.ONT.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario

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<sup>1</sup> RNAO (2008). Position Statement: Violence Against Nurses: 'Zero Tolerance' for Violence Against Nurses and Nursing Students. [http://rnao.ca/sites/rnao-ca/files/storage/related/4013\\_Violence\\_in\\_the\\_Workplace\\_Against\\_Nurses\\_and\\_Nursing\\_Students.pdf](http://rnao.ca/sites/rnao-ca/files/storage/related/4013_Violence_in_the_Workplace_Against_Nurses_and_Nursing_Students.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Hesketh, K., Duncan, S., Estabrooks, C. Reimer, M, Giovannetti, P. Hyndman, K., et al. (2003). Workplace violence in Alberta and British Columbia hospitals. *Health Policy*, 63, 311-321.

<sup>3</sup> Lipscome, J. & Borwegan, B. (2000). Healthcare workers. In B.Levy & D.Wegman (Eds.), *Occupational health recognizing and preventing work-related disease and injury* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). pp. 767-778. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins.

<sup>4</sup> Duhart, D. (2001). *Violence in the workplace, 1993-99* (No. December 2001, NCJ190076). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of justice, Office of Justice Programs.

<sup>5</sup> McCall, B., & Horwitz, I. (2004). Workplace violence in Oregon: an analysis using workers' compensation claims from 1990-1997. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 46(4), 357-366.