



RNAO

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

October 29, 2015

Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister-Designate
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Trudeau:

On behalf of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO), we are delighted to congratulate you and the Liberal Party on the recent election win and the overwhelming mandate Canadians gave you to form the next federal government.

As the professional association that represents registered nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students who live, work and study in communities across Ontario, we take our commitment to speak out for nursing and health very seriously.

We believe the federal government has a central role to play in ensuring the health and well-being of Canadians is advanced and strengthened. This role includes, but is not limited to providing adequate levels of federal transfers to the provinces. During the campaign, RNAO released a policy platform called *Why Health Matters*, which laid out the crucial areas that affect an individual's ability to be healthy. It outlined policy recommendations to create healthier communities in five key areas: Medicare, access to care, social determinants of health, the environment, and fiscal capacity. Although the campaign is now over, we believe this document will help inform your government as it begins its mandate.

We are encouraged that many of our recommendations touch on areas that you outlined during the campaign as policy priorities. These include: the need for a new *Health Accord*; increased health-system funding; improved home-care services, including palliative care; restoration of the *Interim Federal Health Program*; consultations on assisted dying in light of the Supreme Court of Canada's February decision; investments in affordable housing; steps to address poverty; adoption of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report; action on the environment; and fairer taxation.

We also want to urge you to move ahead with a national pharmacare program. Currently, Canada has some of the highest drug prices in the world. Our existing system of private and public plans is both costly and inefficient. A number of studies have found that a national drug coverage plan could save over \$7 billion annually. Adopting such a plan would allow us to negotiate better pricing and ensure that Canadians have access to the prescriptions they need.



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We also believe increased access to primary health care through interprofessional teams is key to ensuring the overall health and well-being of Canadians.

We look forward to the fulfillment of other promises made by the Liberal Party, such as reinstatement of the long-form census. Good, reliable data is essential to ensure evidence-based policy decisions are made in the best interests of Canadians.

During the 2015 federal election campaign, RNAO members organized 11 all-candidates debates in which Liberal candidates participated. We know our members will continue to reach out to their respective MPs. We would also like to thank you for completing the RNAO election questionnaire, which was distributed to our 41,500 members.

We very much look forward to partnering with you so we can build the kind of country that is the envy of others around the world.

With warmest regards,

Vanessa Burkoski, RN, BScN, MScN, DHA
President, RNAO

Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD, LLD(hon), O.ONT.
Chief Executive Officer, RNAO