A time to celebrate! National Nursing Week, May 9-15

Ottawa, May 9, 2011 – Today marks the beginning of National Nursing Week. The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) invites people nationwide to celebrate and recognize the vital contribution nurses make to the health and well-being of each Canadian.

This year’s theme, Nursing – the health of our nation, prompts Canadians to consider the cumulative impact of individual nursing gestures in building a healthy society. From leading innovations in research and clinical care, to defending and improving medicare, to advocating for a healthy environment, nurses work tirelessly – but never thanklessly – to serve the public interest. For example, a coalition of nursing groups will this week present arguments before the Supreme Court in the Insite case, which will determine the fate of North America’s first and only supervised injection facility. The groups will argue in favour of harm reduction and ethics-and-evidence-informed care. CNA will also be releasing a paper on harm reduction and illegal drugs; it will present evidence on harm reduction strategies and outline the public health and safety benefits.

“Every single day, nurses apply their extensive knowledge, experience and skills to assure the well-being of individuals, families, and communities across the country and around the world,” said CNA president Judith Shamian. “National Nursing Week is a time for us all to reflect on the tremendous positive impact of nursing on our lives.”

Of special interest this year is the Canadian Nurses Foundation’s first annual Nightingale Gala in Ottawa on May 10, which will see a who’s who of health care come together in support of nursing research, education and clinical excellence. May 12 will also be significant, as Canada’s nurses will join their colleagues from around the globe in celebrating International Nurses Day. The event, which marks the birthday of nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale, will focus this year on the need to address inequities in health and social conditions around the globe.

“Nurses are by far Canada’s largest group of health-care providers and they support the health of our nation through an astounding diversity of roles,” said Shamian. “Take a moment to acknowledge and celebrate nursing – a profession in which going above and beyond is a daily occurrence.”

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CNA is the national professional voice of registered nurses in Canada. A federation of 11 provincial and territorial nursing associations and colleges representing 143,843 registered nurses, CNA advances the practice and profession of nursing to improve health outcomes and strengthen Canada’s publicly funded, not-for-profit health system.

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