

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Canadian Nurses Association concerned new safe injection site rules pose extra barriers

**Ottawa, June 6, 2013** — The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) is questioning new rules for establishing supervised injections sites, unveiled today by the federal government. Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq tabled a bill in the House of Commons today that outlines criteria for obtaining permission to open a supervised drug injection site in Canada.

“Evidence demonstrates that supervised injection sites and other harm reduction programs bring critical health and social services to vulnerable populations — especially those experiencing poverty, mental illness and homelessness,” said CNA president Barb Mildon. “A government truly committed to public health and safety would work to enhance access to prevention and treatment services — instead of building more barriers.”

In a press release, Aglukkaq said that sites “for sanctioned use of drugs obtained from illicit sources has the potential for great harm in a community.” CNA is concerned that conservative “tough on crime” ideology will overshadow evidence that demonstrates positive outcomes for communities with harm reduction programs. In Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, where the Insite safe injection site is located, business owners, service providers and residents in the neighbourhood agree that the clinic has had a positive impact on the health of the people who use it and on the health of the community.

“Community consultation and support are indeed necessary, especially because harm reduction programs are meant to benefit a community and promote the health and safety of its members,” said Mildon. “We expect more clarification from the government on what ‘broad community support’ entails. We don’t believe one dissenting voice should be able to derail progress.”

CNA, along with the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario and the Association of Registered Nurses of British Columbia, was an intervener in the 2011 Supreme Court of Canada case that unanimously ruled in favour of keeping open Vancouver’s safe injection facility, Insite.

*CNA is the national professional voice of registered nurses in Canada. A federation of 11 provincial and territorial nursing associations and colleges representing nearly 150,000 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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