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FEDERAL FUNDING FOR SASKATCHEWAN NURSING PROJECT

Saskatchewan has today received \$284,000 in federal funding for a research project designed to keep registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses working in the province.

The Research to Action – Applied Workplace Solutions for Nurses is a collaborative effort involving the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, Health Canada, Canadian Health Care Association, the Canadian Nurses Association and nine provinces.

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN), the Saskatoon Health Region and the Ministry of Health will examine levels of staffing in order to develop a process to determine a ratio between nurses and patients that is specific to nursing units.

In addition to the federal funding for this project, the Saskatchewan government has devoted \$103,000, the Saskatoon Health Region \$93,000 and SUN \$28,000.

“As a government we made a decision last year to develop a strong relationship with SUN to improve the workplace for nurses,” Health Minister Don McMorris said. “Already we are seeing the benefits to this approach and are pleased to partner in this project with SUN and the Saskatoon Health Region.”

“Nurses, employers, and government all believe that staffing levels should be sufficient to ensure safe, quality patient care, but there are currently no minimum staffing standards,” SUN Vice-President Marlene Brown said. “We hope this project will create a process to establish a minimum standard for a unit and a ratio that is flexible enough to meet changing patient needs. We are really excited about the partnerships that will make all this possible.”

“Saskatoon Health Region looks forward to working with the Ministry of Health and Saskatchewan Union of Nurses on this project,” Saskatoon Health Region People Strategies Vice-President Bonnie Blakley said. “Engaging staff in a process that will assess and set appropriate patient-to-nurse ratios on a unit will most importantly benefit our patients, but the entire region as a whole.”

In October 2008, Health Canada approved a proposal by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions to implement nine pilot projects. These projects aim to help nurses develop skills and expertise, and to help employers increase capacity for collaborative project development and research.

Saskatchewan’s project will begin in April and be completed by 2012.

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