

PLEASE NOTE: Since sending this media release, we have changed the name of the SUN Patient First Initiative to be the SUN Patients and Families First Initiative.



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 9, 2009

Putting Patients and Their Families First: SUN Launches Patient First Initiative with \$20,000 Challenge

<<REGINA>> The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) has launched a “Patient First Initiative” to support registered nurses and their efforts to improve patient outcomes and monitor patient safety.

SUN is supporting their Patient First Initiative with a Patient First Challenge for patients, patient advocacy groups, and SUN members to develop and test sustainable innovations to provide patient-centered care.

SUN will offer two \$10,000 awards, one to a patient or patient group, and one to the SUN nursing group that develops the most promising innovation. The innovations may include chronic disease management, health promotion, accident or illness prevention, patient safety, or other Patient First innovations.

According to SUN President Rosalee Longmoore, the union has created a new “Patient First” team, dedicating a senior Director, Professional Practice Officers, a Research and Policy Analyst and administrative support to promote and support patient-centered care and patient safety initiatives led by Registered Nurses (RNs), Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs), and Registered Nurse, Nurse Practitioners (RN,NPs).

“Patients, the public, and the government were very supportive of nurses and SUN when we said we must act to solve the nursing shortage. Now that the SUN/Government Partnership has begun to solve the nursing shortage, SUN and its members can focus on exploring every means to ensure that patients are getting the care they want and need,” said Longmoore.

“Nursing care is a highly valued aspect of quality health care delivery for Saskatchewan patients,” stated Tony Dagnone, Commissioner of the Patient First Review. *“I applaud SUN*

for embracing patient and family centred care as a guiding principle as they respond to my report recommendations"

"SUN's 'Patient First' initiative is an example of the kind of leadership we need to ensure the patient care being delivered is what patients need and want." said Don McMorris Minister of Health. "The knowledge and experience, nurses have will be a crucial part to improve the patient experience. SUN's decision provides important energy and momentum for 'Patient First'. I'm very optimistic about what we're all going to be able to accomplish together."

As part of this new focus, SUN has joined a leadership learning program being hosted by the province's Health Quality Council (HQC). The union is also supporting an HQC-led program – called Releasing Time to Care – that is helping nurses spend more time at the bedside with patients. Marlene Smadu, HQC chair, praised SUN's efforts to improve patient service.

"Nurses have a unique and important role to play as we reorganize our health system around the needs of patients," said Smadu. "We welcome the opportunity to work with union leadership and with frontline nurses to make care better and safer for Saskatchewan patients."

"Nurses know that we can provide patient-centred care, and the system often fails patients. If we support patients and their families to make sure we are all working together to provide the best possible care, then all of us win," said Longmoore.

The deadline for application for the Patient First Challenge will be September 30, 2010. SUN will be developing the application form, criteria, and supportive resources for patient groups and SUN members (available on SUN's website (www.sun-nurses.sk.ca) in January 2010).

-30 -

For more information contact:

Rosalee Longmoore, SUN President (306)525-1666 (before noon) or (306)539-6162 (cell)