



NEWS RELEASE COMMUNIQUÉ

Nurses Association of New Brunswick • L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers du Nouveau-Brunswick

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROVINCIAL HEALTH CARE PLAN:

BULK OF SPENDING WILL NOT BE IN 2004-05

FREDERICTON, 9 June 2004 — The Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) is concerned that the bulk of funding to implement the Provincial Health Care Plan, tabled today in the Legislature, will be available from 2005 forward and will no doubt mean a slower than anticipated implementation of programs.

While the Plan calls for close to 300 hospital beds to be cut, a balance seems to have been struck with Government's continuing focus on developing community-based services to increase access to primary health care for New Brunswickers.

Investment in wellness strategies while modest are an important step in improving the health status of the people of this province. NANB supports the focus on youth and adolescence.

“Government is incrementally adding essential building blocks to improve access and that will be a positive move for health care consumers in the long run. The focus on chronic disease management will improve the quality of life of individuals already suffering, decrease complications and reduce costs, but more importantly reduce the incidence of these diseases,” said Beth Sparks, NANB president.

Mrs. Sparks went on to say that “the addition of four more community health centres, four collaborative practice clinics, and the addition of 40 nurse practitioners to the health care system will further enhance community-based health care and ease the pressure put on hospital emergency departments.”

The Nurses Association believes in an organized, province-wide methadone service. Without the service, clients must continue to have access to essential treatment. Recognition and treatment of the problem enables individuals to contribute to society and access ongoing counselling.

Commenting on bed cuts, Mrs. Sparks said that “those announced in the Plan must not translate into job losses for nurses. I’m confident that, given the current number of existing nursing vacancies and overtime hours worked by nurses across the province, those affected will be re-aligned into new positions.”

Concluding her comments, Mrs. Sparks said that “we can’t wait any longer to implement the 95 additional nursing seats in universities. A working committee needs to be struck immediately with concrete action to ensure an increase in September 2004 enrollments and to provide “protected

funding” earmarked specifically for nursing faculties.”

The Nurses Association of New Brunswick is a professional, regulatory body representing 8600 registered nurses and nurse practitioners. NANB’s is responsible for advancing and maintaining the standards of nursing in the province, for governing and regulating those offering nursing care.

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