



NEWS RELEASE

Community Health Nurses of Canada collaborate with provincial affiliate to advocate on the Social Determinants of Health

June 17, 2010: Downtown Sheraton Hotel Toronto, ON

The unique knowledge and experience community health nurses possess equip them to advocate for the vulnerable clients and help them access the right services. Community health nurses also advocate for changes in policies, health systems as well as the need for more resources for this important sector of nursing.

This year, 400 community health nurses from across Canada will have an opportunity to strengthen their advocacy capacity, share and learn new strategies at the 4th National Community Health Nurses' Conference: *Knowledge to Action; Engage, Enable and Inspire*.

The conference demonstrates this commitment to advocacy starting with pre-conference sessions such as '*Unpacking the Canadian Context for the Determinants of Health: What do we really mean by 'Culture' and 'Strengthening Advocacy and Social Justice in Community Health Nursing'*'.

Dr David Butler Jones, Chief Public Health Officer of the Public Health Agency of Canada will deliver a keynote presentation called '*Addressing the Social Determinants of Health: the Knowledge and Practice Relationship*'. Community health nurses routinely advocate and care for clients on issues of child development, poverty, food and housing.

On June 18th participants will experience a play during lunch entitled '*In my Shoes*'. This play will expose the vulnerability, brutal honesty, disappointments, and triumphs of those living in poverty. It will also bring new understanding of the barriers and isolation they experience. Many of the actors are playing out their story of how homelessness and poverty affects their lives. Cathy Crowe, a nationally recognized Street Nurse who has spent her career advocating for the homeless will give the closing address by sharing what she's learned about working with vulnerable populations.

Community health nurses are exceptionally qualified to advocate for and with those living in poverty. This conference will give them the opportunity to further their knowledge in this area and engage, enable and inspire knowledge to action on the Social Determinants of health.

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Backgrounder

The Community Health Nurses of Canada (CHNC) is an associate member of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and a voluntary association of community health nurses consisting of community health nurses and provincial/territorial community health nursing interest groups. CHNC provides a unified national voice to represent and promote community health nursing and the health of communities.

The Community Health Nurses Initiative Group (CHNIG) is an initiatives group of the Registered Nurses' of Ontario (RNAO). Their mission is to act as the voice of community health nurses influencing the health care system, health and social policy in areas which affect the work of community health nurses in Ontario and the public we serve. All members of CHNIG are members of CHNC.

The Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments have identified the following determinants for health:

- socio-economic determinants including income, education and literacy, employment and working conditions;
- social determinants including social support, safety in the home and community, participation in civic activities and healthy child development;
- physical environmental determinants including the state of the natural environment, the presence of environmental tobacco smoke, availability of transportation and affordable and adequate housing; and
- other determinants such as personal health practices, health services and biology and genetic endowment.