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April 28, 2021

The Hon. Dennis King
Premier of Prince Edward Island
By email: premier@gov.pe.ca

Dear Premier King,

On the National Day of Mourning – while we mourn the 50 health care workers who died from COVID-19 and the over 85,000 who have become infected – we are calling on your government to urgently take the necessary steps to counter the pan-Canadian third wave of COVID-19, thereby supporting our frontline health care workers and their patients.

Fears are mounting across the country about ICUs reaching capacity, and that we may soon have medical professionals being forced to choose who receives intensive care and who does not. The failure to address longstanding nursing shortages that predate the pandemic is playing a significant role in the challenges we currently face. We will need to work together to fix this soon, but for now we have a health emergency on our hands requiring our urgent attention.

We cannot afford any delay. It is incumbent upon you to ensure our health care system can withstand the overwhelming pressures of the third wave – and that means taking measures reflective of an extremely dire public health emergency.

Such measures should include – but not be limited to:

- prohibiting all non-essential travel into and out of Prince Edward Island until the third wave is fully under control across the country;
- limiting health care services to essential care, freeing up as much capacity as is possible to support our exceedingly overstretched ICU teams;
- an increased focus on fully vaccinating frontline nurses, health care workers and other essential workers; and
- implementing both self-isolation pay and paid sick days so that essential workers do not feel compelled to show up to work when they should be quarantining.

We are eager to work with you on implementing these measures in earnest. Our members are frustrated, terrified and beyond the point of burnout. We plead with you to act now, and we will stand beside you to offer our support.

Sincerely,

Linda Silas, President
Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions

Barbara Brookins, President
Prince Edward Island Nurses' Union