



# Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions

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THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR NURSES

## **A Position Statement on Internationally Educated Nurses**

### **Background**

In an attempt to address the chronic shortage of registered nurses in Canada, provincial governments and regional health authorities have embarked on aggressive international recruitment campaigns.

To date, the focus of this drive has been the Philippines, a country where poverty and lack of opportunity have yielded hundreds of candidates eager to pursue brighter prospects for themselves and their families.

Upon arriving in Canada, a growing number of these nurses find themselves in strange and inhospitable circumstances, alone, and are provided minimal community support. CFNU has observed that these nurses express an exaggerated obligation to the employer, which sometimes prevents them from expressing their concerns or demanding their rights or seeking the assistance of the Union.

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) and its member organization are committed to representing these nurses.

CFNU believes that all contracts between employers or their agents and internationally educated nurses should be reviewed by the appropriate Provincial Nurses Union in advance of the offer of employment.

Further, the employer must demonstrate accountability for third parties contracted to recruit nurses, including the following items:

- ◆ Appropriate accommodations
- ◆ Relocation allowances
- ◆ Demonstrated sensitivity and attention to cultural issues faced by both internationally educated nurses and their co-workers
- ◆ Facilitating contact so that internationally educated nurses are assisted in establishing a community.

Additionally, CFNU believes the employer must ensure that any recruitment initiatives do not create additional fees or barriers to internationally educated nurses obtaining employment in Canada in one of its affiliate bargaining unit, such as to allow an agent of the employer to charge a fee to the nurse will constitute employment interference in the matter of hiring.

Since many of these nurses have never been unionized, CFNU in conjunction with provincial nurses unions will provide enhanced/expanded union orientation, focusing on areas which initially affect their employment, such as hours of work, overtime, no discrimination/harassment, etc. to ensure that they are aware of their rights and are able to actively participate in the workplace.

As with all new CFNU members, they will be provided contact information for union representatives who will provide advocacy and support for workplace issues.

**Approved March 13, 2009**