

March 30, 2010

**For Immediate Release**

## Unions should Work Together to Improve Health Care

The President of the Union of Public Sector Employees, Shelley Ward, says that “Barbara Brookins’s (President of the PEI Nurses Union) recent comments are counterproductive to unionized labour and health care on Prince Edward Island. Insinuating that health care is in jeopardy because Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) are providing care in accordance to their education and training is misguided and does not serve in the interests of patients or providers. The health care system must operate as a team to deliver quality care for Islanders. We need to work together, not against each other.”

President Ward said “the Union of Public Sector Employees stands beside the Nurses Union in asserting that the province should not eliminate any vacant Registered Nursing (RN) positions. These positions are needed and should be filled appropriately. Government needs to step up and do what’s right. No one’s job or position, whether it be a Registered Nurse, a Licensed Practical Nurse, or a Patient Care Worker should be put in jeopardy because of the new model of care for health. And the fact that LPNs are now able to perform to their full scope of practice is good news for health care and should not be used as a bargaining chip by the Nurses Union. Instead, let’s work together to ensure government honours its commitments regarding recruitment and retention for all health care workers.”

“If we hold government accountable, the new model of care will have health care workers supporting each other in the roles they perform,” explained Ward. “LPNs are fully trained licensed professionals, working, as always, side-by-side with registered nurses.”