

# Supreme Court ruling deeply disturbing: RNAO

## Decision must kick start unprecedented campaign against two-tier health care

**TORONTO, June 9, 2005** – Today’s Supreme Court ruling striking down a Quebec law banning private health care is deeply disturbing and must kick start an unprecedented campaign to stop the spread of two-tier health care across the country, says the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario (RNAO).

“All Canadians want better and quicker access to health-care services. But the answer is not to allow a select few to buy their way to the front of the queue while boosting private health-care profits and siphoning resources from the public system,” says RNAO president Joan Lesmond.

“The answer is to strengthen public, not-for-profit health care and to improve access to health services for all Canadians. We must focus on healthy reforms such as improved primary health care, expanded home care, and strategic investments to reduce wait times and increase the number of health-care providers,” says Lesmond.

RNAO executive director Doris Grinspun says while the implications of today’s ruling for the rest of Canada may not yet be clear, the views and values of Canadians on the issue of health care always have been.

“Canadians have stated again and again that they do not want two-tier health care. Canadians do not want a fast-track lane to health-care services for a minority who can afford private health care, and a race to the bottom for everyone else. Research continues to show that two-tier health care and for-profit delivery is exclusionary, expensive, inefficient, and leads to poorer health outcomes,” says Grinspun.

Grinspun says today’s ruling will mobilize registered nurses in unprecedented ways to protect and strengthen the health-care system they fought to establish so that the individuals, families and communities they serve can get the care they need – regardless of income. RNAO urges all Canadians and nurses to mobilize, call their members of parliaments, and fight to defend Medicare, she says.

“Health care is a human right and access must be determined by the severity of your need, not by the size of your wallet,” says Grinspun.

The Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario (RNAO) is the professional association representing registered nurses wherever they practise in Ontario. Since 1925, RNAO has lobbied for healthy public policy, promoted excellence in nursing practice, increased nurses’ contribution to shaping the health-care system, and influenced decisions that affect nurses and the public they serve.

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