



MEDIA RELEASE

Ontario Nurses' Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ontario Nurses' Association Demands Action: Coroner's Jury Recommendations Must be Implemented

TORONTO – Members of the Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) are looking for quick implementation of the recommendations made by the Coroner's Jury examining the workplace murder of Lori Dupont, RN and subsequent suicide of her attacker, Dr. Marc Daniel.

The jury in Windsor returned today with its recommendations to prevent similar incidents in the future. ONA is thrilled that the jury considered all of the concerns raised by ONA, particularly the recommendation that there be a review of Ontario's *Public Hospitals Act* and *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. As well, ONA is pleased that the jury recommended that the review consider including emotional or psychological harm as a safety issue in the workplace.

"We're delighted with the comprehensive and thoughtful recommendations made by the coroner's jury," says Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN, ONA President. "ONA has said from the start that there is a double standard for nurses and doctors, and this clearly emerged during the coroner's inquest. We want immediate action to implement these recommendations, to ensure that physicians who act out can be called on their behavior, just as nurses are. A review of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and *Public Hospitals Act* is needed."

Haslam-Stroud says ONA members were "absolutely horrified" by the murder of Lori Dupont. During the 10-week inquest, testimony revealed that numerous hospital managers were aware of the prolonged, serious misconduct of the anaesthesiologist, not just toward Lori Dupont but aimed at others as well. It was revealed that Daniel had a long history of inappropriate outbursts of anger, of aggression and of sexually harassing nurses at work. Daniel had broken expensive operating room equipment, had broken the finger of another nurse in the OR, and had been a disruptive presence in front of patients.

"Hotel-Dieu allowed a culture to exist in which Daniel was able to continue to behave outrageously," says Haslam-Stroud. "By failing to confront Daniel, they allowed the behavior to escalate. Lori paid the price for the culture of physician dominance that continues in Ontario's health care facilities, that allows the double standard to continue for doctors."

ONA believes this culture of physician dominance that continues at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital is far from unique. Effective action has to be taken now to change the culture at healthcare institutions across the province and provide a safer work environment for front-line workers.

"Nothing can bring Lori Dupont back," acknowledges Haslam-Stroud. "But if these recommendations are implemented – quickly – then perhaps there can be something positive come from this tragedy. ONA will work to ensure these recommendations aren't forgotten or ignored, but implemented. We'll also continue our efforts to amend the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* – the safety of our nurses and other front-line care providers depends on it."

ONA is the union representing 53,000 front-line registered nurses and allied health professionals working in Ontario hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community and industry.

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