

POSITION STATEMENT

JOB ACTION

The College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba (CRPNM) is not part of the collective bargaining process between Registered Psychiatric Nurses and employers. The CRPNM supports the right of all RPNs to be involved in the collective bargaining process. Such involvement may include job action.

As the regulatory body for RPNs, the CRPNM has the legislated responsibility to ensure the public receives safe, effective psychiatric nursing services. This responsibility is a shared one with employers, governments, unions and RPNs themselves.

During a strike or job action, all parties may be faced with difficult ethical dilemmas which they have an obligation to resolve.

The CRPNM's position is as follows:

- Clients whose safety requires ongoing or emergency psychiatric nursing services are entitled to have those needs met.
- Members of the public are entitled to information about the steps taken to ensure the safety of clients.

Registered Psychiatric Nurses are expected to follow the CRPNM Code of Ethics and Standards of Psychiatric Nursing Practice when facing decisions about refusing to provide services. Patients/clients/residents can not be left unattended. If a qualified replacement is not available at the end of a regular shift, the RPN will ensure that the client is not left unattended. Patients in crisis, at serious risk and/or acutely ill should be given priority to ensure safety whether in community or institutions. However, if a RPN's work schedule has been such that he/she can no longer provide safe practice, he/she should not accept overtime hours or extra shifts. The use of professional judgment is critical in such cases.

The College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba has issued a detailed statement on *Duty to Care* and it has been used as a reference in the development of this statement.

If any member of the public has a concern about the practice of a Registered Psychiatric Nurse, he/she should call the CRPNM at 888-4841 or fax at 888-8638 or e-mail: crpnm@psychiatricnurse.mb.ca

June 12, 2002