

**March 8, 2024**

## **International Women's Day**

Today, March 8<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate International Women's Day. On this day we take time to reflect on issues that impact women, such as gender equality and parity, and we consider a world free of bias, discrimination, and stereotypes in favour of one built on equality for women. We are reminded of the importance of celebrating the achievements of women and taking action towards gender parity.

Based on data from the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), in 2021 91% of Canada's nurses identified as female. The gendered nature of the nursing workforce means that nursing is vulnerable to legislative and systemic biases endemic to the structures they work within. Moreover, nursing leadership positions are disproportionately filled by males, who while outnumbered across the nursing profession, tend to occupy a disproportionate number of leadership and senior-level positions. To underscore this, the World Health Organization (WHO) refers to the gendered state of nursing leadership a "glass elevator for men in nursing", not "just" a glass ceiling for women.

As nurses we must work collectively to address these barriers within the profession so that we can make the kind of change our health system requires. Our health system needs nurses working equally and equitably in leadership positions in government, hospitals, health centres, educational institutions, businesses, and organizations, so that we may effectively represent and influence health and social needs in the communities for which we care.

I'm happy to share with you just some of the resources developed by strong women that have inspired and taught me: "[\*Becoming\*](#)" by Michelle Obama and "[\*Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead\*](#)" by Sheryl Sandberg.

Happy International Women's Day, let us use this day to set a standard for a transformational future.



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