



Canadian Nursing Students' Association  
Association des étudiant(e)s infirmier(ère)s du Canada

## PRESS RELEASE

### Nursing Students Support the Francophone Nursing Group

Monday, August 12th, 2019

#### Summary

- Canadian nursing students have spent several years outlining multiple serious concerns regarding the NCLEX-RN®, with a particular focus on the 61.4% pass rate for students who took the exam in French in 2018 without being unseen, the large difference of exam takers between 2015 (145) and 2018 (57).
- The concerns raised by nursing students have not been addressed satisfactorily and no solution has been met.
- A recent coalition of nurses, nursing students, and retired nurses from New Brunswick have lodged a complaint to the Office of the Commissaries of Official Languages against the NANB and the Prime Minister of New Brunswick
- The Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA) strongly supports this complaint being brought forward and will continue to work collaboratively with nurses, nursing students, retired nurses, professional nursing associations, and stakeholders to advocate for NCLEX-RN® reform

#### Information

As of January 2015, the NCLEX-RN® has replaced the long-standing Canadian Registered Nurse Examination (CRNE) as the official entry-to-practice examination for nursing students. Despite multiple concerns from nurses, nursing students, professional nursing associations, and stakeholders, the NCLEX-RN® was implemented in Canada with less than desirable outcomes for students. Nationally, 4,701 nursing students wrote the NCLEX-RN® between the months of January and June 2015. The pass rate for all candidates who wrote during this period was 70.6%, which was lower than the American pass rate of 78.3% (CCRNR, 2015). Since then, research shows an increase in pass rates for students who take the test in English, with the 2017 federal average pass rate being 82.1% (CCRNR, 2018). However, the pass rate for students who take the exam in French is **still extremely alarming at 29.7** in 2017 (CCRNR, 2018). In 2018, the report states that the exam success rate rises significantly at 61.4%, but the major problem is that the number of exam takers in French plunged by half from 145 in 2015 to 2018 at 57 (CCRNR, 2018). Resolution and position statements on NCLEX-RN® advocacy were passed at our 2013, 2015, and 2017 national conferences, clearly showing that students are concerned and highly engaged in the conversation of entry-to-practice examination.

Several attempts have been made by CNSA to communicate our concerns to the regulating bodies without any significant responses, including a visit to the House of Commons



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in the summer of 2018. CNSA wrote a press release in October 2015 asking for immediate action to

- Address the translation issues and lack of French resources for Francophone students;
- Increase the amount of attempts available to students while the issues pertaining to the NCLEX-RN® are being addressed, and;
- Urge all educational institutions to incorporate study guides and preparation support for the NCLEX-RN® into their curriculum to ensure they are using current practices that best support our students.

None of these concerns have been addressed in a satisfactory manner by regulatory bodies.

Recently, a New Brunswick based coalition group of over 500 Francophone nurses, retired nurses and nursing students has come together to try to continue facilitating communication. They are asking for a bilingual Canadian-made exam. They have submitted an official complaint to the Office of the Commissaries of Official Languages against the NANB and the Prime Minister of New Brunswick for not fulfilling their duties. This includes breaching the provincial and federal official language laws as for articles in the Canadian Charters of Rights and Freedoms. The 2017 NCLEX-RN® pass rate for New Brunswick students writing in both English and French is 63.4%, the lowest throughout Canada (CCRN, 2018)

CNSA recognizes that nurses at all stages of their careers are affected by this exam and need to support each other. CNSA has spent a significant amount of time, energy, and resources investigating the NCLEX-RN® and how it discriminates against non-English speakers. This is not just an Atlantic Canada problem, there are Francophone students all across Canada, and it is their right to be able to write their licensure exam in their primary language without jeopardizing their success. Students have raised their voices and made it clear that the lack of support for Francophone students is absolutely unacceptable.

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