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UK-Based Professional Standards Authority Report Findings Indicate No Threat to Public Safety

REGINA, SK—May 13, 2019—In 2018, the SRNA set out to improve its complaints, investigations and discipline functions and increase transparency with the membership and the public. The SRNA wished to assess its performance against the Professional Standards Authority’s (PSA) Standards of Good Regulation and against other regulators to identify where it was performing well and to highlight any areas for improvement. The results of this external review were released today.

“We recognize that the culture of profession-led regulation is changing, and we are embracing the philosophy of right-touch regulation in the way our work is approached by improving regulation of registered nurses,” says SRNA Executive Director, Cindy Smith. “By applying the principles of right-touch regulation, the SRNA is focused on protecting the public while reviewing and responding to change and using the appropriate amount of regulation.”

Right-touch regulation means using only the regulatory force necessary to achieve the desired effect. It sees regulation as only one of many tools for ensuring safety and quality. Professional regulation exists not to promote or protect the interests of professional groups but to enhance patient safety and protect the public.

The review by the PSA occurred in three phases: background research and scoping, including understanding the regulatory context and Saskatchewan legislation; an onsite audit in December 2018, including observing an Investigations Committee meeting and interviewing stakeholders and staff; and finally completing the audit and drafting the report.

“A key theme that has arisen from the report and the audit, in both findings and recommendations, is the importance of transparency. When you review the report, you will see that we were primarily concerned with the SRNA demonstrating what it is doing and why,” says Simon Wiklund, head of legal for the PSA. “We did not find the SRNA is failing to protect the public. On the contrary, staff, committee and council members we talked to all have good instincts and are well intentioned. And we observed practical changes that were made recently that are a step in the right direction.”

Wiklund also noted that even though the SRNA only met four out of the 10 standards of good regulation, there is no indication that past investigations, and the decisions resulting from them, were mishandled.

The report commends the SRNA’s willingness to seek improvement by undergoing this review and acknowledges the active cooperation received. The report is available on the PSA’s website, as well as www.srna.org.

The PSA is the oversight body for the nine health and social care regulators in the United Kingdom (UK) and is responsible for reviewing the complaints and investigations functions of these national regulators, in addition to their other regulatory functions. The PSA’s Standards of Good Regulation are the standards used to review the performance of the UK regulators.

The SRNA is a profession-led regulatory body and association established in 1917 by provincial legislature. The SRNA is accountable for public protection by ensuring members are competent and promotes the professional interest of its members in the public interest.

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