

what's nu?

June 2019



Continuing the Conversation

Nurses from across Canada congregate in Fredericton for the 2019 CFNU Biennial Convention

Update: *Nursing Potential* still top of mind and making waves

How to get involved in union activism as a young nurse

ON THE COVER: Janet Hazelton speaks to media as the conversation around health care and *Nursing Potential* continues

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President's Notebook

Janet Hazelton, BScN RN, MPA

Nursing Report Continues to Garner Attention and Support While Generating Debate

Following the May 7th release of NSNU's report, *Nursing Potential – Optimizing Nursing and Primary Healthcare in Nova Scotia*, I received an invitation to present before the Nova Scotia Standing Committee on Health to discuss our findings. That meeting took place on Thursday, June 20 in the Legislative Chamber.

The Standing Committee on Health is an all-party body that considers matters of access to and delivery of health care services. In attendance from the NDP were Tammy Martin and Susan Leblanc. The PC representatives included Karla MacFarlane and Barbara Adams. Liberal MLAs, the Hon. Margaret Miller, Rafah DiConstanzo, Ben Jessome and Keith Irving also participated. The session was chaired by Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Vice Chair.

Our report caused an immediate buzz in the health care community and in the media. Most of the dialogue was positive while some was divisive. Unfortunately, some detractors took the opportunity to drive a wedge between nurses and doctors. For the record, at no point in time has the Nurses' Union suggested that nurses should or could replace physicians. This report acknowledges the challenges in our province due to doctor and nurse shortages and the difficulties that presents for Nova Scotians.

Specifically, our book is not about taking work from doctors, and nothing we say detracts from the need to recruit and retain doctors in our province, a goal we whole-heartedly endorse.



Janet Hazelton (above) responds to questions from Committee members, including PC Karla MacFarlane (below)



However, nurses play an integral role in the delivery of primary healthcare, particularly when working to their full scope of practice. While most members of the Standing Committee support our assertion and applaud the NSNU for this comprehensive work, some questioned whether nurses were up to taking on more work given the nursing shortages and existing excessive workloads.

I was quick to point out that nurses are uniquely positioned as the largest group of care providers; a highly skilled and regulated workforce who are at the bedside, in homes and in our nursing homes, available to provide round the clock or “after hours” care.

Most MLAs said the book was of “extreme value” and that nurses offer a great opportunity with viable solutions. Most called for the immediate implementation of the recommendations. The NSNU now plans to develop an optimum timeline for implementation of the recommendations based on the complexity and degree of consultation required for each.

The line of questioning during the two-hour presentation was intuitive and meaningful. I am grateful for the chance to further advocate for nurses and the public using our report as a guideline for future development of our practice. I am also pleased that the Committee took genuine interest in our research and the manner in which we see it benefitting others,

including non-nursing health care workers.

Through the ongoing and well-established work of the Provincial Nursing Network, a portion of our recommendations are easier to implement than others. Changes to the *Nursing Act* also paved the way for nurses to take on enhanced responsibility.

During the presentation, I was able to talk about the importance of patient and nurse education, RN prescribing, NPs in LTC, community care and emergency departments, and many more aspects of the report and the state of nursing.

Since May 7th, the NSNU has entertained numerous media requests to discuss the contents of the study. I presented the report to the Provincial Nursing Network on May 31st. We mailed copies of the book to all our locals, stakeholders and key informants. We shared the findings online and on our social media platforms. During National Nursing Week we broadcast a new commercial which was produced in support of this campaign. We have also requested meetings with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness.

This summer, we will be asking members to participate in an informal survey regarding the report. Please take the time to complete the survey so that we can continue to make informed decisions based on your input.



CBC's Brooklyn Currie with Janet on June 20, 2019

We will continue to spread the word and advocate for nurses to play a more prominent role in the delivery of primary healthcare. We encourage you to view the video from the June 20th presentation at the Legislature using this link - <https://youtu.be/zTtVisVulHI?t=1028>.

Collectively we need to find solutions – everyone must be involved in this discussion. Politicians, doctors, nurses, other health care workers, and the public must all have a say. We cannot ignore the problems that exist. We must put a stop to the turf war. If in five years only 2 of the 35 recommendations have seen the light of day, we will have failed miserably. That will not be acceptable.

NSNU Board of Directors Fall Meetings

The NSNU Board of Directors holds meetings throughout the year to discuss current issues and to work on Union business. In May, the Board selected dates for their fall meetings – September 16, October 31 and November 18.

Members may attend meetings of the Board. If you would like to do so, we ask that you state your intention to attend at least one month in advance by emailing lorna.myers@nsnu.ca.





Advisory Council on Pharmacare Issues Definitive Verdict

Public Universal Pharmacare is the Only Option for Canada

Canada's nurses applaud the findings of the final report by the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare. The report recommends an end to the current costly and dysfunctional patchwork system of coverage in favour of a single pharmacare system that covers all Canadians.

"The report is a victory for Canadians!" said Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. "The ball is now in the Trudeau government's court to make this a federal election priority and to move as fast as possible towards full implementation."

Public support for pharmacare is very high among Canadians, with recent Environics public opinion polling showing support for public coverage of prescriptions, "the same way that doctors and hospitals are covered," at 84% across Canada.

"Once and for all, this report closes the debate about the best model of pharmacare for Canada," said Silas. "The answer is definitive: Canada needs a public universal pharmacare plan with a comprehensive formulary, and nothing less."

The grave consequences of Canada's current fragmented system of drug coverage are well understood, Silas noted. A 2018 report commissioned by the CFNU last year found that thousands of Canadians die prematurely and up to 70,000 older Canadians suffer avoidable health deterioration every year because they can't afford the high cost of prescription medication. In addition, the Parliamentary Budget Officer conservatively estimated that this model would save Canadians a minimum of \$4.2 billion annually.

"It is our hope that the Trudeau government will commit to an

implementation timeline that is more ambitious than the one provided in this report," said Silas. "Eight years is a long time in the world of politics, and Canada's nurses commit to working with government to help realize pharmacare for Canada as soon as is reasonably possible."

Although over an 8-year timeline, the Advisory Council's final report has called for the implementation of a pharmacare program similar to that of the Consensus Principles endorsed by a national coalition of more than 80 organizations from every region of Canada.

"We can no longer afford the status quo," said Silas. "The patchwork and flimsy system we have now costs thousands of lives and wastes billions of dollars every year. Canada deserves something better."

Nurses Praise Parliamentary Report on Violence in Health Care



Canada's nurses are eager for meaningful action following the first parliamentary study into violence against health care workers. A report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, released June 20th, makes reference to a number of recommendations championed by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions.

"Nurses are delighted that our urgent call to address the epidemic of violence in health care has been heeded in the health committee's report," said Linda Silas, president of the CFNU. "It's high time that our federal government helped ensure health care workers can do their jobs without being subjected to staggering rates of physical and verbal abuse."

Silas' testimony before the committee helped inform the report with input from counterpart unions like the NSNU. Recommendations include targeted federal funding for violence-prevention infrastructure within the public sector, support for amending the Criminal Code to hold perpetrators accountable, and federal research funding to better track violent incidents. The CFNU began calling for this federal study in January 2018.

In Canada, the number of violence-related lost-time injuries among frontline health care workers increased by close to 66% between 2006 and 2015 – three times the rate of increase among police and correctional service officers combined.

Given these staggering numbers, Silas expects legislators across the political spectrum to treat this as a top health care priority.

"We are calling on each party to heed the recommendations of the report and to announce the concrete actions they will take on this issue if voted into power by Canadians in the next federal election," declared Silas.

The committee's full report is titled *Violence Facing Health Care Workers in Canada*. The Committee was Chaired by Nova Scotia's own MP, Bill Casey.

The NSNU's first anti-violence campaign "It's Not Part of the Job" was launched in 2007. The NSNU and other health care unions in the province have been lobbying government on this issue since that time and are pleased to see this national initiative.

ADD YOUR VOICE

Trauma and stress
don't end when
the shift does.



NATIONAL NURSE STRESS SURVEY



nursesunions.ca/stress

Participate in Ground-Breaking Survey on Occupational Stress Injuries Among Nurses

The University of Regina's Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment has developed a survey to identify the prevalence, and root causes, of occupational stress injuries among nurses in order to provide recommendations for effective support and prevention. The survey was developed with the support of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions and its member organizations, including the NSNU.

"Occupational Stress Injuries (OSIs)" refers to work-related mental health issues including PTSD, depression and anxiety. This is the first anonymous, Canada-wide assessment of its kind, aiming to fill an important information gap about the prevalence of stress injuries among nurses. To date there has never been another national effort to identify risk factors to help inform programs and to prevent and respond to these injuries.

We encourage all NSNU members to complete this important survey. The link can be found on the NSNU website at nsnu.ca/OSISurvey. The deadline to complete the survey is August 31, 2019.

Canada's Nurses Launch Federal Election Campaign to *Choose Care, Not Cuts*

Canada's nurses launched a national public engagement campaign and website in early June to ensure the ongoing underfunding of public health care is a top-of-mind issue during Canada's federal election this fall.

The campaign and its online tools are designed to make it easy for nurses and members of the public to advocate to candidates and MPs of all parties about the urgent need for Canadian governments to invest in the country's health care system.

"The campaign will ask politicians to Choose Care, Not Cuts, and to stop chipping away at public health care in Canada," says Linda Silas, president of the CFNU.

"It's time to stop pretending that our health care system isn't under attack," Silas said.

Nurses know that funding cuts, privatization of services and chronic understaffing make it impossible for Canadians to get the care they deserve. We must make a commitment to stop underfunding programs which leads to longer wait times, hallway medicine, not enough long-term care, expensive prescriptions and understaffed units.

The federal election campaign website, StopPretending.ca, includes a tool enabling users to email their Member of Parliament asking them to invest in upgrading health care for Canadians, allowing users to share the key campaign message on social media.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION TOOLKIT



In 2018, the CFNU made a commitment to build on existing work with young workers and equity-seeking groups by creating an Equity and Inclusion Toolkit which was released in June of this year.

The toolkit provides resources to support the CFNU, Member Organizations and individual members to grow and expand our advocacy in these areas. The toolkit contains a range of materials, including: FAQs, an introduction to using an equity lens, a glossary of inclusive language, an organizational scan checklist, an event accessibility checklist, sample workshops and sample policies/position statements.

Using content and information from the toolkit, CFNU also launched at CFNU Convention 2019 a discussion tool entitled Cards Against Inequity. This beautifully designed deck of cards is intended to increase awareness by providing information and resources and by sparking conversations. And while language is always evolving, CFNU is confident that these cards will be informative and will challenge the reader to think about equity and inclusion in our unions.

The NSNU plans to mail the cards to locals across the province this fall. In the meantime, to access the toolkit visit nursesunions.ca/research/equity.





Nurses Gather in Fredericton for the 2019 CFNU Biennial Convention

During the first week of June nurses from across Canada were welcomed to Fredericton for the 2019 CFNU Biennial Convention, hosted by our friends at the New Brunswick Nurses Union.

The week-long event was jam packed with presentations, guest speakers, awards, panel discussions and so much more. NBNU went the extra mile to host special events including a kitchen party themed fun night and a banquet that showcased the best of Maritime Hospitality. For approximately 60 NSNU members who attended the event, it was a little taste of home, with a lot of New Brunswick flair thrown in.

As much as the Biennium is an ideal opportunity for networking and socializing between nurses from across the country, its primary purpose is to educate and engage nurse activists in the work being

done on a federal level to improve health care, communities and showcase nurses as part of the solution. This year's convention was all about nurses taking the lead in conversations around health care,

workplace violence and so much more.

Here are a few of the highlights from another remarkable event.



The NSNU delegation in Fredericton



Linda Silas

President's Address

In her president's address, Linda Silas called on nurses to join their provincial unions and federal counterparts in being a voice for change. Nurses are among the most trusted professionals in Canada, and the voices of the many easily overpower the voices of the few.

"Our message is getting out there, but the policy-makers aren't listening," she said. "This has to stop. But I can't do it alone. My twelve board members can't do it alone. We need your help."

"We all need to get active and get involved."

Linda spoke about workplace violence, increased workload and burnout among nurses, the fight to ban for-profit plasma, and other ongoing issues.

She also reported on some of successes over the past few years,

highlighting the work done by the CFNU and our partners to champion Universal Pharmacare, which is now closer to becoming a reality than ever before. She also discussed PTSD legislation being enacted in several provinces that includes nurses among first responders whose PTSD will be presumed to have resulted from traumas experienced or witnessed in the line of duty.

Finally, she spoke about the need for all nurses to have a fire in their bellies to get to work, use their voices to demand change, and become part of the fight for care, not cuts in the 2019 Federal Election.

With a motivating speech, and members eager to turn words into action, we anticipate a full and exciting progress report at the 2021 Biennium in Saskatchewan.

Enough is Enough

On Tuesday, June 4th a New Brunswick nurse who was brutally beaten on the job by a patient's husband was facing her attacker in court. Nurses from across the province came out to support her, and Biennium attendees joined the throngs of people outside the courthouse calling for an end to violence against nurses.

"Violence against healthcare workers and especially nurses is increasing and becoming more severe," said CFNU President Linda Silas. "This is a national problem that transcends provincial boundaries; all levels of government have a responsibility to take measures to protect health care workers in their workplaces."

Not for the first time, and likely not for the last, nurses from across country chanted in one voice, "Violence is Not Part of the Job."



Janet Hazelton demands an end to violence against nurses during the rally outside the courthouse

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH

IT'S TIME FOR NURSES TO ACT

-A Discussion Paper-



Wanda Martin, RN, PhD
Lindsey Vold, RN, MN

JUNE 2019

Nurses Speak Up on Climate Change

During the convention the CFNU released a discussion paper entitled "Climate Change and Human Health: It's Time for Nurses to Act." Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time, and it is as much a health crisis as an environmental one.

The report argues that nurses are in a good position to lead the way as trusted voices in their communities. The recommendations in this discussion paper offer nurses a starting-off point for advocacy and leadership to tackle climate change.

You can read the full report on the CFNU website at nursesunions.ca

Workshops & Plenaries

Education is an important component of the Biennium, and this year's event featured numerous workshops on issues of interest to nurses. Some of the topics on the 2019 docket included equity and inclusiveness, pharmacare, workplace violence, and reconciliation, among others.

NSNU Labour Relations Representative Lilo Wessels was on hand to present a workshop on Nursing and Substance Use Disorders, alongside Susanne Priest, a Nurse Consultant with the Nurses Association of New Brunswick. Lilo also serves as the NSNU Mental Health and Addictions consultant.

In addition to workshops, there were plenary discussions with speakers from diverse areas of expertise. Highlights included a look at how technology is changing health care, and an international panel discussion on workplace safety.

Hassan Yussuff, president of the Canadian Labour Congress was also invited to speak to attendees about the upcoming federal election, and the work being done to advance the labour movement. Following his address,

Yussuff was surprised with one of this year's Bread and Roses Awards for his long career in activism and support for workers.



Hassan Yussuff accepts the award from NBNU's Paula Doucet and CFNU President Linda Silas

Game Changers Panel



NSNU president Janet Hazelton joined her fellow National Executive Board members on the stage for the Game Changers panel discussion. She spoke about the need for nurses to work to their full scope of practice, which was the primary theme of the recent NSNU research paper, *Nursing Potential - Optimizing Nursing and Primary Health Care*.

“We have untapped potential in all our nurses,” said Janet. “We have to challenge and change how we do our jobs. For so long we’ve let people take bits and pieces of our jobs away. This has to stop.”

Janet explained that when we allow nurses to work to their full potential, we will begin to ease some of the pressure on our overburdened health care system.



Nurses Rally for Political Action

To cap off a week of nurse action, CFNU attendees took to the streets for a rally. Weaving through downtown Fredericton, they landed on the steps of the New Brunswick Legislature where they called on governments at all levels to choose care, not cuts.

As she took the mic and delivered her message, Linda Silas stated plainly what needs to happen in health care in Canada: “We need to take care of our seniors. We need to take care of our children. At both ends of the spectrum, Canada’s nurses are going to be speaking for everyone, because everyone in this country counts.”

Celebrating Our History

For the past few years journalist Ann Silversides, with the cooperation and assistance of the CFNU and its member organizations, has been compiling the stories of nurse unions into the book, *Taking Our Place: Stories from Leaders of Canada's Nurses Union Movement*, which was officially launched during the Biennium.

Celebrating a rich history of nurse activism, *Taking Our Place* highlights the successes and struggles of nurse unions over decades. It profiles leaders and game changers who have worked to build Canada's nurse unions, and provide a voice for nurses on the provincial and federal stages.

"This is a book about our legacy," explained CFNU President Linda Silas. "As nurses – as highly skilled professionals, we've had to fight public and institutional notions of our role within the health care system."

"We've rejected the role of silent bystander. Far from being silent, as a movement, we are vocal advocates for better working conditions and quality patient care."

Taking Our Place is available to read in full on the CFNU website. It includes a robust section on the history and work of the NSNU and its leaders, including Tom Patterson, Winnie Kettleleson and Janet Hazelton.



Janet Hazelton presents the NSNU donation to Shiva Nourpanah

NSNU Donation Supports Women

The NSNU is a proud supporter of the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia (THANS), a charity that provides housing and resources to women leaving abusive situations, often with children at their side. As an organization that represents thousands of women, in a profession that often sees first-hand the horrific results of domestic violence, The NSNU is grateful to be able to donate to THANS year after year.

On June 18th, NSNU president Janet Hazelton was pleased to present THANS Provincial Coordinator Shiva Nourpanah with a cheque to help support their services. The donation was cumulative of funds collected throughout the year, including the proceeds from the 2019 Nurse Planner.

Shiva provided the following update to show how donations like ours go to help women and children in need across the province:

Approximately 1800 clients sought the services of the ten member organizations of the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia during the calendar year 2018. This figure includes 266 children, 78 youth, and 112 seniors.

Our ten organizations are located across the province, and are the one of the main supports in their community to offer 24/7 services to women and children experiencing family and domestic violence. From free shelter and basic necessities like food and clothing, to counselling, court navigation and advocacy, and child care, our organizations offer a wide range of services to meet the complex needs of women and their families as they navigate the complicated circumstances accompanying the crime of domestic violence.

The valuable donation from NSNU will be put to direct use of funding training for staff who work with families who are undergoing some of the darkest moments of their lives.



Leading the Way

Transforming Your Safety Culture

On May 29th, Janet Hazelton joined a panel discussion on *Transforming Safety Leadership – What do Transformational Safety Leaders Do?*

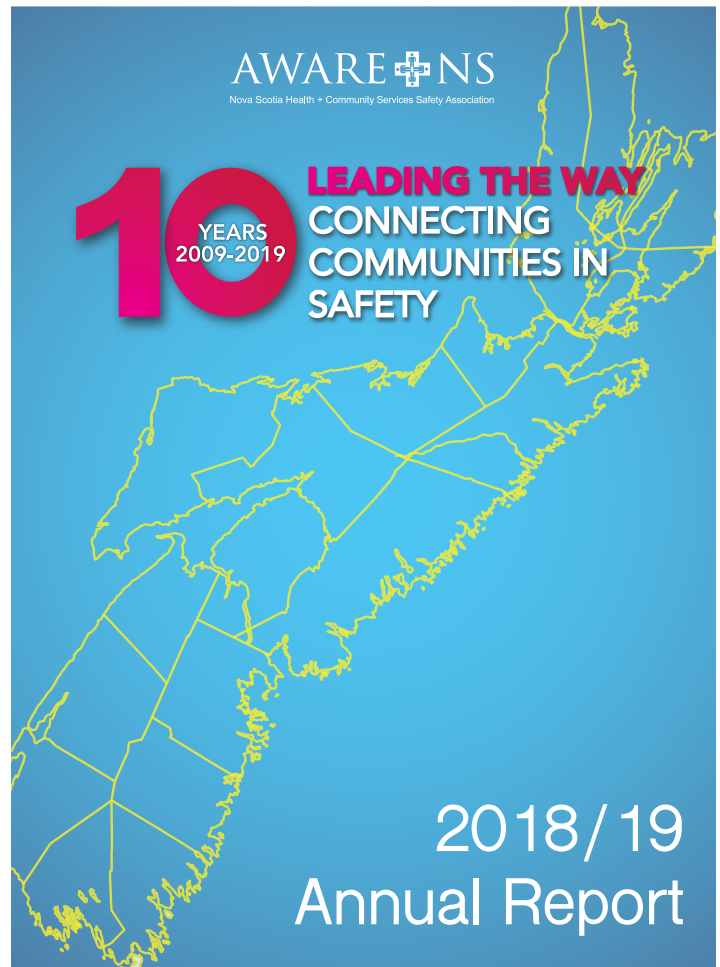
The NSNU president joined Debra Boudreau, CEO - Tideview Terrace, Carol Ann Brennan, Executive Director - Regional Residential Services Society, and Jo Anne Poirier, CEO - VON at the Aware-NS 2019 Annual General Meeting. The conversation with the key leaders was moderated by Stuart Maclean, CEO - WCB Nova Scotia.

The theme for the Aware NS AGM was *Leading the Way – Transforming Your Safety Culture*.

With the message that we need to put money behind our commitment to safety if we are going to effect real change, Janet took a hard line on the issues of violence in the workplace and called for increased and sustained funding for Aware-NS in order to reduce injuries in healthcare.

Among other things, she says it's also time to enact special criminal charges for those who strike a healthcare worker, similar to offenses committed against police and transit workers.

Aware-NS is committed to making a difference in helping to build a culture of safety in organizations through leadership, stakeholder engagement, and effective OHS program training and development.



Janet Hazelton participates in the Aware-NS safety leadership panel discussion

VON Multisite Meeting Tackles Issues Arising from the Collective Agreement

On June 20th, representatives from the VON met at the NSNU in Dartmouth for their multisite gathering of employee, employer and Nurses' Union reps.

The daylong gathering included discussions around new Collective Agreement language, including the formation of three new committees charged with tackling nurse safety, night shifts and nurse identity.

Nurses working for the Victorian Order of Nurses ratified a deal reached between the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union and the employer on February 6th of this year. The new collective agreement included important health and safety provisions and compensation improvements for the 800 or so members working in that sector.

One significant gain was the creation of a province-wide committee to explore workplace violence and other safety concerns. Community care nurses are highly susceptible to injury and assault. Statistically, VON are more at risk than acute care and long-term care workers.

This committee will examine ways to protect VON who work in isolation, and support nurses in this sector who, at times, feel vulnerable.

The other committees will address night shifts and identity, issues also requiring in depth discussion from a variety of nurse-participants in the province.

The last multisite meeting was held in November 2018, prior to bargaining.



VON members representing 12 different locals join NSNU LRR Angela McKenna and a representative from VON for the multi-site meeting



Janet Hazelton tours the new NICU, which features private rooms for every family and the IWK's most vulnerable patients

IWK's Newest NICU Opens

The IWK has transformed its NICU from open-bay care sites to private, single family rooms. This is one of the largest, most complex redevelopment projects undertaken by the IWK.

NSNU's Janet Hazelton was invited to tour the unit on June 18, experiencing first-hand the beautiful renovation proudly presented by those who spearheaded the project.

This space is unique in Canada because of the focus placed on what it takes to make this a home for families. This new environment enhances patient privacy and confidentiality, while giving families a more comfortable space to stay with their babies.

The first phase, NICU North, opened in April 2018. The second and final phase, NICU South, opened on June 26th. The new units include 38 private rooms.

These state-of-the-art care rooms feature noise, temperature and sound controls, specialized alarms, overview stations, in-room monitors and other technical amenities to aid both patients and nurses, all in calming and comfortable surroundings.

The unit was 100% donor funded and would not have been possible without the generosity of donors.

In 2018, there were approximately 750 babies treated in the IWK NICU.

Congratulations to the IWK for this extremely impressive work.

United Nurses of Alberta

In June the newly elected United Conservative Party in Alberta pushed through an all-night session to pass a bill to delay wage arbitration for public sector unions, including the United Nurses of Alberta, until October.

The UPC have been open about considering wage cuts as a means of balancing the budget. With this new legislation, UNA says they are subverting the bargaining process.

The bill was passed just one week after the Alberta Labour Board dismissed a complaint by UNA against the government for breach of contract after mandated wage arbitration was postponed. Not absolving the government, the Labour Board argued that such a judgement was outside their jurisdiction.

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses

The NSNU has previously reported on the case of Carolyn Strom, a member of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses who was penalized for taking to social media to criticize the care her grandfather received in a long-term care facility. Despite an outpouring of support for Strom, she was ultimately found guilty of unprofessional conduct and fined \$1000 plus \$25,000 to cover the cost of the investigation.

Strom's case is now headed for the Court of Appeals, and three organizations, including SUN, have been granted intervener status to speak on her behalf. They intend to argue that her freedom of expression has been limited by the investigation, and that this sets a dangerous precedent for nurses who speak out about issues they encounter in the health care system.

Strom's appeal will be heard in September. We will continue to monitor this case as its conclusion could set a precedent for nurses beyond Saskatchewan.

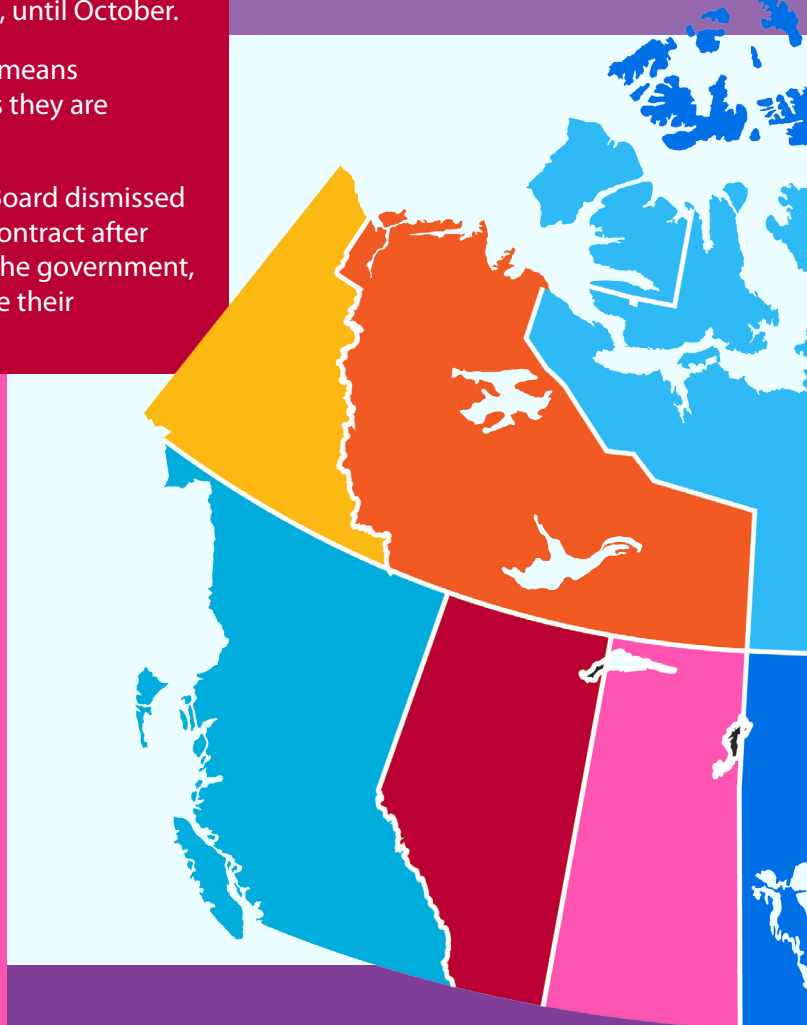
Manitoba Nurses Union

Escalating violence, an opioid crisis and long wait times have led to a marked increase in Workers' Compensation claims on behalf of nurses in Manitoba. In May it was reported that claims filed with the WCB had jumped an astounding 311% over a five-year period.

"We know that violence is escalating in healthcare partly due to the meth crisis, but also, we believe a lot has to do with the consolidation of the healthcare system," said Manitoba Nurses Union president Darlene Jackson. "Patients are getting more frustrated, families are getting more frustrated and tempers are getting short."

Concurrently, Manitoba hospitals and emergency rooms have reported a significant increase in "Code Whites" over the past year, which are called when a violent or aggressive incident is taking place.

Cross-Canada



Ontario Nurses' Association

Public Health nurses in Ontario are facing wage cuts and job losses as a result of funding cuts from the provincial government, and a plan to amalgamate 35 public health units into just 10 across the province. Nurses within these units would be expected to cover impossibly large geographic areas, leaving many of the provinces' rural regions without adequate service.

In a media release, Ontario Nurses' Association president Vicki McKenna said, "Cutting the provincial share of funding means a reduction in services.... Contrary to the government's promise to end hallway health care, the cuts to public health will increase the burden on our hospitals – with less access to public health services, people in our communities will be sicker and forced to find care in hospital. These cuts are a false economy, increasing costs to the system as a whole."

ONA has launched a letter-writing campaign encouraging Ontarians to contact their MLAs and the Premier to encourage them to protect these important jobs and ensure access to public health services.

Nursing News

Registered Nurses Union of Newfoundland and Labrador

The Registered Nurses Union of Newfoundland and Labrador ratified a new collective agreement with the province at the end of May. The agreement spans four years, and will end in 2020.

RNUNL was forced to accept a deal with no wage increases, the payout and elimination of a severance bonus, and changes to retirement benefits. There will also be no layoffs, extended parental leave, and a forum to discuss workplace violence in health care.

The agreement stipulates that a core staffing review will take place in select areas to assess workload, and 35 additional permanent float positions will be created to ease the burden on nurses working overtime, an issue that has become critical over the past several years with nurses in some regions regularly working 24-hour shifts.

Prince Edward Island Nurses Union

The Prince Edward Island Nurses Union is combatting a nursing shortage of their own. According to Union president Mona O'Shea, there are more than 70 vacant nurse positions that they are unable to fill. She called on leaders to make an investment in recruitment to help ease the strain on nurses working untenable overtime hours.

"You have nurses that [have] burnt out. They just can't provide one more hour of overtime," O'Shea said. "It affects the nurses. They do the best they can on every given shift that they work. However, we're fearful that the patients are not getting the care that they deserve."

In the recent provincial election, the Progressive Conservatives formed a minority government. In response to the call from PEINU, they promised to fund new incentives, expand nurses' scope of practice and hire more nurse practitioners to bring the number up to 40 on the Island. It remains to be seen whether these changes will, in fact, take place.

New Brunswick Nurses Union

Compounding an ongoing nursing shortage, the government of New Brunswick recently slashed \$9 million in funding for the province's post-secondary nursing programs at the University of Moncton and the University of New Brunswick. The justification for the cuts was that the schools had failed to add more seats to their nursing programs, and were having challenges filling the existing seats.

Disturbed by the sharp turn, New Brunswick Nurses Union president Paula Doucet said, "There are New Brunswickers ready, willing and able to go into the program to become registered nurses. The longer they sit on a wait list, they may choose to take another program. They're not coming back to nursing."

Doucet added that 41% of NBNU members would be eligible to retire in the next five years, which would significantly exacerbate the shortage.

Each year the Nova Scotia College of Nursing (formerly CRNNS and CLPNNS) honours nurses during an annual awards ceremony held as part of their AGM. Award recipients are nominated by their peers for excellence in their personal practice and positive contributions to the nursing profession. This year, five of the award recipients were members of the NSNU.

Congratulations to all nurses who were recognized by their colleagues and their professional regulator. Once again, Nova Scotia nurses have proven their dedication to patient care and commitment to excellence.



**CLPNNS Award of
Excellence**

Ruth Burns
LPN
Dartmouth General
Hospital



**CRNNS Excellence
in Nursing Clinical
Practice Award**

Cynthia Mann
RN
IWK Health Centre

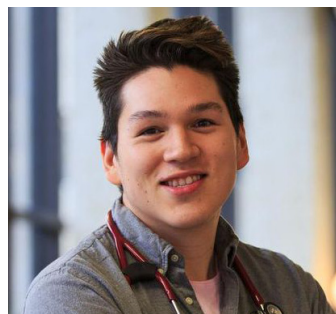


**CRNNS Health
Advocacy Award**

Janet Bickerton
RN
Cape Breton Regional
Hospital



Shannon Googoo-Paul RN
Victoria County Memorial
Hospital



Athanasius (Tanas) Sylliboy
RN (NP Candidate)
Cape Breton Regional
Hospital

CRNNS Rising Star Award

The Continued Necessity of Unions

On the first day of the job, a young worker is asked, "Have you ever worked in a unionized position?"

Most don't understand what this means, or how a unionized position differs from the alternative. Over time, their understanding will grow, and about 30% of workers become active in their union. They will hoist signs at rallies, attend meetings or sit at the bargaining table. They will soon speak the union lingo, understand and appreciate labour relations, and share their passion with new colleagues who are asked that very same question.

This is the story of thousands of Nova Scotians who are involved with their unions. Unions are more than just a bargaining agent, although this is of course one of their most important roles. In representing workers, unions tackle a variety of issues and provide a home base for workers of all stripes.

"My introduction to union activism and the labour movement began after I had children. I had questions about maternity leave and other parental rights, but few answers. When my kids were born moms took a couple of months off then returned to work. We didn't have top-up or maternity leave, to speak of," says Janet Hazelton, president of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union.

That was over thirty years ago, now much has been said and learned about the history of the labour movement – the people who marched for some of the most basic workers' rights. Often in conversations about the history of unions, the question inevitably arises, are unions still needed in today's workforce?

"Almost everyone has a different story about why they became involved. Whether they witnessed some level of injustice or questionable favouritism on the job, bullying, unsafe working conditions, unfair or inequitable labour practices - the list goes on. Today, more than ever, unions provide a platform to speak up, the mechanisms to right many wrongs, and the solidarity necessary to feel supported", says Hazelton.

For more than a century, unions have served as the backbone of the labour movement. They fight not only for those they represent, but for all workers. Today the labour movement is fighting for a \$15 minimum wage, enough for Nova Scotians to support their families. They're fighting for women and minorities to have equal opportunities, because they still lag behind in wages and leadership positions. They're fighting for improved safety standards in

{ "Today, more than ever, unions provide a platform to speak up, the mechanisms to right many wrongs, and the solidarity necessary to feel supported." }

- Janet Hazelton

the workplace, because everyone deserves to return home safely at the end of the day.

These goals may seem lofty, but unions are built on big goals. The biggest perhaps being the core belief that workers deserve a voice and representation.

In their day-to-day activities, when unionists are not hitting the picket lines, they're simply supporting workers. Union work is not always flashy. For every rally you see on the news, there are countless hours spent mediating grievances, helping workers and employers find resolutions for issues small and large, ensuring that collective agreements are being honoured, and planning for the next round of bargaining. It's paperwork, meetings, time, energy and commitment.

One of the most important things unions do is work with employers to improve workplace conditions. The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union, for example, has worked for years with the government and employers to make health care environments safer for workers and patients. Safe from violence, bullying, physical injury

and emotional abuse. It is one thing to have contract language requiring certain safety standards, but it is quite another to find ways to make those standards achievable. As unions say, It's Not Part of the Job!

"I speak to nursing students shortly before they graduate about their rights as workers and the value of unions. I encourage them to read and ask questions about their collective agreement, and to be responsible and reliable employees. They won't get involved in their union right away, but eventually they will gain an appreciation for what unions can achieve."

Unions create balance between employers and workers. That need has never wavered, even as great strides have been made to improve labour legislation and working conditions. For every success, as is the natural course of life, there is another major issue waiting to be tackled. As long as unions are able to do their work, we will continue to make life better for workers in Nova Scotia and across Canada. That is, and has always been, the purpose of the labour movement.

Members 35 and Under

How to Get Involved in Union Activism

There are many ways you can become more involved in the labour movement as a young worker. Through engagement with your Local and Provincial Union, embracing opportunities for education, and expanding your network, you can take your interest in labour relations and build your resume as an activist.



Local Union Involvement

- Attend local meetings
- Attend Union events, like the AGM & Education Day
- Take on a role in your local executive
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Shop Steward
 - Joint Occupational Health and Safety Rep

Provincial Union Involvement

- Board of Directors
- Committees
 - AGM Operations and Nominations Committee
 - Education Committee
 - Constitution/Resolutions Committee
 - Finance Committee

Embracing the Labour Movement

As a member of the NSNU you are already a member of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL) and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). You can get involved at this level by attending events and rallies, or serving on committees:

- Young Workers' Committee
- Anti-Racism/Human Rights Committee
- Committee on Political Action
- Education Committee
- Occupational Health and Safety/Workers' Compensation Committee
- Women's Committee
- International Solidarity Committee





Education and Premiums

Members of the NSNU can take advantage of many educational opportunities throughout the year. You may be eligible for premium points based on the courses you take, including participation at the AGM.

Practice and Leadership premium points are built into most NSNU collective agreements. They allow members to accrue points throughout the year, and then cash in those points for a bonus at the end of October each year.

You should always check with your employer to determine if a particular course or event is eligible for points.

These are a few of the opportunities available to members of the NSNU:

- NSNU AGM and Education Day
- NSNU Webinars/Courses
- On-Site Education (Contact NSNU Research Associate Justin Hiltz to book local education on the following topics):
 - General Labour Relations
 - Safe Staffing and Nurse Workload (CCRs)
 - Exploring Workplace Respect
 - Professionalism for the Digital Age
 - Occupational Health and Safety Basics
 - Workplace Violence
- CFNU Biennial Convention
- Eastern Labour School

Connecting with the Union

The NSNU communicates with members on a regular basis about major issues, opportunities and events. These are the tools we use:

Web and Social Media

- Web – nsnu.ca
- Facebook & YouTube – Nova Scotia Nurses’ Union
- Twitter - @NS_Nurses

The MyNSNU App

- Download from Apple and Google Play Stores by searching “MyNSNU”
- Visit online at nsnu.itacit.com
- Log in with Members’ Only password

Campaigner Email Service

The NSNU newsletter – “What’s NU?”





St. Martha's Alumnae Dinner

St. Martha's Alumnae Annual Dinner will take place Thursday, October 3, 2019. The celebration will be held at St. Ninian Place in Antigonish, beginning at 6 pm with a reception, followed by dinner at 7 pm.

Tickets can be purchased at Janet's Canteen on the main floor of St. Martha's Hospital, or by calling Janet Gottschall at 902-863-9414. The final day to purchase tickets is Friday September 27, 2019.

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For more details about the Johnson scholarships, visit nsnu.ca/JohnsonScholarships.

Are You Paying Double Dues?

If you work at more than one NSNU Facility and pay union dues more than once in a pay period, you may be eligible for a refund from the Provincial Office. Members who have been paid for less than 7.5 hours in Acute Care and less than 8 hours in Long-Term Care in one bi-weekly pay period may also be eligible for a refund from the Provincial Office.

The Provincial portion of NSNU union dues (\$29.24 for RN's and \$21.48 for LPN's) will be refunded by cheque on a quarterly basis. Your rebate will only be retroactive for a period of up to 12 months prior to contact with the NSNU.

If either situation applies to you, please contact the NSNU Provincial Office (B.L. Moran at 902-468-6748 or bl.moran@nsnu.ca).



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GREAT DEALS

Have you seen the Discount List on the Members' Only page of the NSNU website?

Check in frequently for new offers from local businesses and vendors, and be sure to keep your NSNU member card on hand to take advantage of great deals.

Contact us if you require a new member card.

1-800/902-469-1474 | nsnu.office@nsnu.ca



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