

What's **NU**?

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Broken Homes

Nurses speak out on the state of long-term care in Nova Scotia and chart a course for a sustainable future

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President's Notebook

By Janet Hazelton, BScN, RN, MPA

Broken Homes: Nurses speak out on the state of long-term care in Nova Scotia and chart a course for a sustainable future

I am pleased to say that after many years of concern for the nurses working in long-term care, as well as those they care for, the NSNU has finalized research and recommendations to support and address those very concerns. In January we will formally launch our report on the state of long-term care in this province releasing information that we hope will prove to change things for the better.

Research can become the impetus for change and, potentially, success, but it can also unearth profound and uncomfortable truths about the institutions we rely on for support.

Such is the case with the Nova

Scotia Nurses' Union report on long-term care, Broken Homes – Nurses speak out on the state of long-term care and chart a course for a sustainable future.

The Nurses' Union has repeatedly heard from its members about difficulties in long-term care – difficulties that are systemic, cultural, chronic and demoralizing. Long-term care (LTC) is in desperate need of resuscitation in order to prepare for the imminent and expansive growth in our seniors population. Our system is dangerously out of step with the times, desperately trying to keep pace but suffering from widespread malaise and neglect. An immediate, multi-pronged approach is required to remedy

the litany of current and critical ailments within the sector.

Shortly after I was elected as the President of NSNU in 2002, I met with government and representatives from the Department of Health to express the Union's concerns about long-term care, and to ask for a revised *Homes for Special Care Act* to reflect the then current realities of LTC, not as they were in 1977 (the year many of the *Act's* regulations were developed). It is truly lamentable that today, all these years later, and many governments later, we are still asking for the same thing.

As advocates for nurses and patients alike, the NSNU feels compelled to expose the current

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state of long-term care in Nova Scotia by examining the key factors that contribute to both the quality of resident care and the quality of working conditions. We feel ethically and morally bound to ensure that residents are provided with a place they can call home, without hesitation. Let's be clear – residents are in nursing homes because they require health care, and the care they receive there should meet the same standards as the care provided in our hospitals. As a bargaining agent for nurses in long-term care, we also owe it to our members to ensure that they have a respectful and safe work environment with manageable workloads.

Unfortunately, our research over several years confirmed what we heard from our nurses – the LTC sector suffers from understaffing, excessive workloads, demoralized workers, unsafe work environments and workplace violence. Tragically, several deaths have occurred in long-term care within the past few years. Resident to resident violence and resident-to-health care provider assaults have both become more prevalent. Clearly, violence in the workplace, regardless of the perpetrators' ability to control their actions, is unacceptable. It should never be considered a part of the job and every precaution must be taken to prevent violence, including verbal threats and harassment.

The acuity of residents now living in long-term care has reached a level not reflected in staffing plans and this leads to a myriad of problems, frustrations and dilemmas for care providers. LTC nurses require a high degree of training and autonomy. Their responsibilities are daunting on a good day, completely overwhelming on a bad day, and yet they feel undervalued. Nurses



and Continuing Care Assistants are keeping the LTC sector alive despite growing demands and a sense of feeling invisible. They can only prop it up for so long under such formidable pressure.

The NSNU entered into this project with an eye to improving the work lives of nurses and the quality of care for residents. Our hope is to work with other stakeholders to implement solutions that address retention and recruitment in this sector in order for it to be sustainable.

We must abandon antiquated notions, policies and practices that no longer apply to current realities in long-term care. We must create reliable and robust mechanisms for transparency and accountability so that we know where we have been and where we want to go. We must work together and forge a new path that allows for a dignified work-life for workers and a dignified place for seniors and other loved ones to live.

This report is not a condemnation of those who administer care or manage the system but an invitation to be part of the

restoration. The NSNU, for its part, is ready to examine what we, as partners in this community of care, can do to play a meaningful role.

I applaud the nurses who came forward to participate in the studies (polling, discussion groups, surveys), lending your voices as agents of change. While we have the utmost respect for those who maintain the LTC system under very trying circumstances, we can no longer turn a blind eye as the system crumbles. We have a responsibility and an obligation to support and protect those most vulnerable in our society and this involves protecting the people in charge of their care. We must act now, collaboratively, in order to rebuild our broken homes.

I would like to congratulate Paul Curry, NSNU Researcher, Educator and Government Relations Advisor on the outstanding work he did on this publication.

The report will be distributed to our long-term care nurses in the New Year, and a link to a PDF of the report will be posted on our homepage at nsnu.ca.

Bargaining Bulletin

At the time this publication went to print, teachers with NSTU, Civil Servants workers represented by NSGEU, as well as Medical Residents had reached tentative agreements with their employer groups.

Bargaining news broke as the provincial legislature began the first day of its fall sitting.

On November 12 the Nova Scotia government reached a tentative contract with the province's 9,000 public school teachers. The offer includes no wage increases in the first two years, a one per cent increase in the third year and a 1.5 per cent increase at the start of the fourth year and a 0.5 per cent increase on the final day of the fourth year. The deal would also see the end of the long service award.

The unions have recommended the agreements.

Since that time both the public servants (7600 in total), represented by NSGEU, and Medical Resident Doctors (who had initially applied for arbitration) also reached tentative agreements on the same wage package. The NSGEU's bargaining committee recommends members ratify their tentative agreement.

In August, the government said it wanted five-year deals with no increases in the first three years and increases of one per cent in each of the final two years. Within that framework the unions were encouraged to suggest ways to find program savings that can be used for wage increases.

Information sessions were taking place with these bargaining units and their union reps therefore the results were not available.

Once details are finalized the NSNU will issue either a Campaigner e-memo or a Union Calling message depending on the results of their ratification voting and impact those results may have on our bargaining.



The Nova Scotia Council of Nursing Unions met with the employer on November 12th to discuss essential services as part of our ongoing bargaining preparation

NSNU Responds to Violent Incident at Hants Community Hospital

On November 10, a nurse and two security guards were assaulted at the Hants Community Hospital in Windsor. Luckily no serious injuries resulted from the potentially harmful situation.

Janet Hazelton, NSNU president says it's pretty startling that people that are working on a construction site are safer when they go to work than our nurses and our health care workers.

The NSNU has been warning about the alarming rates of violence in the health sector for a long time. Nurses must know that violence and aggression are not 'just a part of the job' and that with the right policies, procedures, protections and infrastructure in place, we can dramatically reduce the number of violent incidents. We just need a willingness, as a collective, to take on this challenge.

The incident in Windsor is not a one-off. All too often in this province, violent patients are discharged from forensic units, group homes and even long-term care facilities, and land in hospital emergency rooms. While the patients are typically not at fault for their behaviour, and exasperated families are lacking care and support for their loved ones, emergency rooms are not the appropriate settings for this type of care, and ER staff often lack the resources to deal with these cases.

The NSNU continues to advocate for change. There are no province-wide, evidence-informed policies and practices in place, at least not any that have involved input from the union. Janet says we cannot wait for someone to die. She believes the opportunity for change can come under the new, province-wide health authority – to sit down and develop a strategy that keeps security professionals, health care providers and their patients safe.

**WORKPLACE
VIOLENCE**

It's not part of the job

It's not part
of your job
to put up with:



Canada's Nurses Respond to VON Restructuring

On November 25 the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) announced they would cease operations in six provinces and decrease the size of its head office.

VON filed for protection under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) for Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada, Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada – Eastern Region and Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada – Western Region. Representatives for the VON say operations in Ontario and Nova Scotia have the best opportunities for sustainability and growth and will therefore remain intact.

VON is also reducing the number of employees in its head office in Ottawa, which provides corporate services to the operations, by 23 per cent. In total, 352 (including several positions located in Nova Scotia) of 6446 employees are affected by this restructuring.

NSNU president, Janet Hazelton was quick to respond to the news by saying even though the impact of the cuts and closures will not be directly felt in Nova Scotia it is a sad day for nursing in this province as well as the country.

"The VON has been an institution in this country since 1897, Canada's longest-standing home and community health care charity. It is unfathomable that an organization with a reputation as pristine and professional as the VON should fall victim to economic hardship," says Hazelton.

Like many organizations in the health care sector, VON has been challenged to serve a growing number of clients with finite resources. VON says this restructuring allows them to focus resources on core service areas where economies of scale can be achieved.

CFNU President Linda Silas says, "We are concerned about the impact this news will have on our communities and home care nursing, at a time when Canada's aging population needs a safe seniors' strategy more than ever. This opens the door for privatization which, evidence proves, is more costly and is a less safe model."

The charitable organization says it provides health and wellness services to more than 10,000 people in their two remaining provinces.

Representatives from the NSNU met with the VON multi-site group on Monday, November 30 where in-depth discussions took place on this subject. Currently, the employer states that operations in Nova Scotia will continue. Should the NSNU receive word that changes in the status of VON in this province are to take place, we will update our members in this sector. Currently, there is nothing new to report from the union on this matter. We understand that this has been a stressful time for all VON employees however, we remain hopeful that nursing positions in community care will be maintained and that VON Nova Scotia will make every effort to supply our members with the information they require in order to continue the important service they provide.



Correction

We would like to offer an apology to Janis Ritcey, whose name was misspelled in the September issue of What's Nu?.

Janis is a long time NSNU activist and represents LPNs in the Central Region on the Acute Care Provincial Negotiating Committee.

NS Federation of Labour Convention

Labour Rights are Human Rights

The 48th Convention of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour convened in Halifax on October 25 at the Holiday Inn Harbourview in Dartmouth with a celebration of Rick Clarke's 26 years at the helm as president of the Federation. Clarke announced he would be retiring as of this convention. It was fitting that the convention kicked off with a little ribbing from his many friends and colleagues from within the labour movement at a toast/roast. The man of the hour - a man who has made a major contribution to the lives of working people and their families in Nova Scotia - took it in good stride.

The theme of this year's convention was "Labour Rights are Human Rights" - a fitting theme given the number of assaults on the labour movement, workers and unions over the past several years. Delegates took the opportunity to channel the negative backlash they have been subjected to while debating a diverse range and number (over 30) of resolutions on pressing issues, including changes to labour legislation, occupational health and safety, pensions, public services and jobs.



Rick Clarke does an interview on one of his last days as NSFL president



Janet Hazelton joins labour leaders and workers during the rally in Halifax



Members hold NSNU signs during the labour rally

The business portion of the convention got off to a great start with a powerful presentation on Monday, October 26 from Canadian Labour Congress President, Hassan Yussuff. A Human Rights Panel that evening was a highlight of the meeting, gathering together delegates from varying backgrounds, age groups and work experiences to discuss hot-button topics.

On Tuesday October 27, a solidarity march to the Dartmouth ferry then on to Halifax took place. The raucous group chanted song and messages of solidarity while at the rally.

Finally, on last day of convention, elections for a new Federation of Labour President and Executive Council took place. Danny Cavanagh, formerly the president of CUPE NS, will take the helm of the NSFL. We wish Danny must success. Janet Hazelton, NSNU president now sits on the Executive Council of the Federation as a Vice President-at-Large. Janet's experience, built from a long association in the union movement, and her unrelenting commitment to worker's rights will serve her well in this position.

We especially want to congratulate Rick Clarke on his notable career and much deserved retirement. He has been a staple of the labour movement for many decades and a good friend of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union. We wish him well.

NSNU Members Marilyn and Kim Attend First Labour Event at NSFL Convention

The grassroots efforts of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour are the backbone of the local labour movement, encouraging boots on the ground activism and solidarity among unionized workers. The NSNU is an active member of the NSFL, and it is always encouraging see more of our members getting involved. During this year's NSFL convention there were two NSNU members for whom it was their first time attending a labour event.

"I've been hearing about the NSFL for years, it was something I wanted to learn more about and I decided the best way to do that would be to attend the convention," said RN Marilyn Ann Rizzato, who recently became president of the NSNU Local at New Waterford Consolidated Hospital.

"I feel it is important for me to increase my knowledge of the union, and attending these events will facilitate my learning," she said. "I was surprised with the number of people who have a true passion for their unions and how supportive they are of each other. So many issues have an impact on all of us regardless of what union we belong to."

She added, "I'm looking forward to my new role as president of NSNU New Waterford Local. I now know I have a strong support system with my own union members as well as those from other unions."

Kim Smith, an LPN and co-president of the NSNU Local at Shannex's Orchard Court, was also a first-



Marilyn Ann Rizzato, RN



Kim Smith, LPN

time attendee at the NSFL convention. Her local was drawn by the NSNU to have a fully sponsored delegate attend the convention – an opportunity she was all too happy to take advantage of.

"I was very interested to learn not only more about our union at a local level, but also a provincial level," said Kim. "I really enjoyed listening to the delegates openly and passionately speak and debate on issues that affect so many facets of our society. I didn't realize that unions were so involved in democracy, equality and human rights and advocacy for all citizens, and not just those belonging to unions."

Now that Kim has more information about the labour movement, she is motivated to learn more about the role of unions in Canada and beyond. She hopes to become more involved with the NSNU as well as the NSFL going forward.

Mary and Kim both noted the great sense of camaraderie between people from different unions, and the shared passion for the labour movement among all attendees as highlights of the convention. Both women hope to attend future labour events, like the NSNU Annual General Meeting coming up in April.



Janet Hazelton joins NSNU members in Halifax for the labour rally on October 27th

Seasonal Influenza and Immunization Promotion

Flu season is upon us once again. The province has launched its annual campaign encouraging everyone to get a vaccine. Getting a flu shot is a safe and effective way to prevent influenza. It helps us avoid getting and potentially spreading the flu to family, friends, co-workers and others.

The NSNU plays a pivotal role in advocating for voluntary immunization for health care workers. The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union is pleased once again to present a commercial promoting influenza immunization.

While the vaccine is recommended for all Nova Scotians it is especially important for people at high risk of complications including seniors, people age six months to five years, Aboriginal people, pregnant women and anyone with chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, asthma and diabetes.

This year, the NSNU chose to target our message to average, healthy members of the population – often the same people who feel naturally immune to illness - as the flu can strike anyone at any moment. A special day or a trip of a lifetime - the flu can spoil it all, no matter the time, no matter your age.

Whether you're in a high risk category or not, taking precautions and getting a vaccine can reduce your chances of getting sick with the flu. As well, influenza immunizations are free and often readily available at your workplace.

The NSNU would like to thank the many people who appeared in our commercial, including Courtney Oliver, RN for their participation in the production. The NSNU also extends special thanks to production partners at RPM for their expertise.

Remember - #GettheshotNS

More information about the flu is available at novascotia.ca/flu or <http://www.nsnucanada.ca/en/home/advocacy/flu/default.aspx> to view the latest NSNU flu commercial.



NSNU member Courtney and our hockey hero Kathleen during the November 5th commercial production shoot at the Cobequid Community Health Centre



Our film crew went to great lengths to get their shot



The NSNU campaign also includes web graphics and digital ads that show the importance of getting the flu shot

Leadership Matters 2015

A Workplace Safety CEO Summit

On Monday, November 9th, NSNU president Janet Hazelton participated in a panel discussion as part of "Leadership Matters: A Workplace Safety CEO Summit", an event hosted by the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia and the Province of Nova Scotia. She joined panelists from numerous industries to discuss the role of leadership in creating a safe workplace.



Janet Hazelton speaks about workplace safety for nurses

During the panel discussion Janet spoke at length about workplace safety issues faced by nurses in Nova Scotia and across the country, including the prevalence of workplace injuries, understaffing and the need for support not only from management, but between nurses as well.

"We have 395 people off today that will be off for at least a year because they were hurt at work. Sixty-one million dollars a year goes from our Department of Health to the Workers' Compensation Board. That's a lot of money, but that's a lot of people," Janet explained. "When they're not at work, someone is

there to do the job, and often that person is there on overtime. And when they're on overtime, they're tired, and they're more likely to get injured themselves."

As Janet went on to explain, 20% of the payroll in health care consists of people who have active Workers' Compensation claims, 1600 people. In contrast, the number of people who have claims in the construction industry account for 10% of the payroll, 500 people in total.

"It's pretty startling that people that are working on a construction site are safer when they go to work than our nurses and our health care workers," she said.

Later on in the panel Janet spoke to the very real problem of violence against nurses, and the need for more protections to be in place. She discussed the need to change the culture in health care that makes nurses believe violence and injury is just part of the job. She

stated unequivocally that it is not part of the job, and it should never be accepted. She expanded this to include mental health issues that stem from the emotional distress nurses often experience, especially when they are new to the job. She called on senior nurses to provide support for young nurses who are becoming acclimated to a career where seeing trauma is a daily event.

The panel included 15 other leaders from a variety of industries within the private and public sectors. In addition to Janet, health care was represented by Janet Knox, CEO of the Nova Scotia Health Authority; Joan Jessome, president of NSGEU; and Jason Shannon, president of Shannex. The panel was hosted by Danny Graham, business leader and former MLA for Halifax-Citadel.

Janet sits on the Board of Directors of the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia. She is a long time advocate for safe staffing and workplace safety for nurses.



Janet Hazelton joins a panel of 16 leaders speaking at the Summit

#Vote4Care

The CFNU Federal Election Campaign

On June 5, 2015 one thousand nurses took to Barrington Street, calling on Canadians to vote for the care we deserve in the October election. The rally launched the official federal election awareness campaign for the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU), an organization that represents nearly 200,000 nurses across the country.

What followed the spectacle of the rally was a campaign that promoted public awareness, and put pressure on federal leaders to commit to action on four important health care issues: a national prescription drug plan; a health human resources strategy; a safe seniors' strategy; and defending federal funding of a public, single-payer health care system with a key ask of 25% federal health funding to the provinces and territories by 2025.

Throughout the campaign the CFNU and its member organizations utilized many tools to engage nurses, health care workers, the general public and politicians in a conversation about health care. We achieved great success in disseminating our messages around health care needs in Canada, and became an important voice for Canada's Nurses in the run up to the election on October 19th.

It became evident during the course of the CFNU campaign that health care is a priority issue for Canadian voters. Website hits, video clicks, tweets, retweets and shares all helped to paint a picture of a Canada that values the publicly funded, publicly delivered health care system we enjoy in this country, and that understands the need to invest in health care to ensure the wellbeing of Canadians for generations to come.

Thank you to all of our NSNU members who became personally involved in the CFNU election campaign, and who took the time to #Vote4Care on October

19th. We now continue to put pressure on the Liberal government, as well as our new Minister of Health Jane Philpott, to move on health care promises made during the campaign.

Notable Campaign Highlights



Janet Hazelton and Linda Silas co-wrote an opinion editorial that was printed in the Chronicle Herald on September 16th

Linda Silas and Janet Hazelton co-wrote an opinion editorial that was published in the Chronicle Herald on September 16th, detailing the four key health care issues and the need to vote for health care on election day. Similarly, nurse unions across the country also sent out joint op-eds to their local newspapers, which were published in four other provinces.



Kevin Page, Linda Silas and Hugh MacKenzie present during the Council of the Federation on July 16th

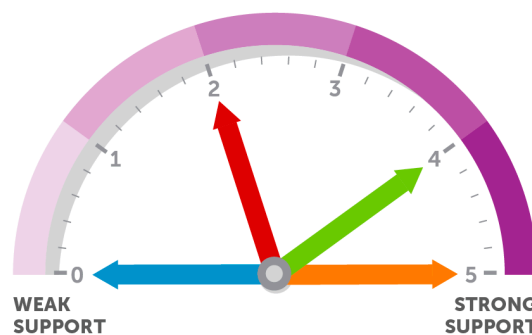
The CFNU published two research reports: *Before It's Too Late: A National Plan For Safe Seniors' Care*, and *The Canada Health Transfer Disconnect: An Aging Population, Rising Health Care Costs and a Shrinking Federal Role in Funding*. In June they presented the latter report to premiers at the Council of the Federation in St. John's, Newfoundland. Following that presentation, the premiers issued a press release in support of the recommendation that party leaders commit to a minimum of 25% federal funding of health care by 2025.



NSNU nurses from the Cobequid Community Health Centre in Sackville pledged to #Vote4Care

The CFNU launched #Vote4Care, and encouraged nurses and the public to share images of themselves with the hashtag to show their intention to vote for health care on election day. The hashtag received a great deal of traction among nurses from all over Canada, especially here in Nova Scotia. Each member of the NSNU Board of Directors pledged to #Vote4Care.

National Prescription Drug Plan



Performance ranking cards for all four issues can be found on www.vote4care.ca

CFNU launched an election microsite, www.vote4care.ca, early in the campaign. The site included detailed descriptions of the four key health care issues, and was used as a hub for sharing information about the how these issues would affect each province.

Near the end of the campaign, the site was updated with party performance rankings cards, which offered a detailed account of how party promises stacked up against the health care priorities for Canada's Nurses. The microsite had over 30,000 views by election day, which shows just how important health care issues are to Canadian voters.

The Twitter logo (a blue bird) is positioned above the hashtag "#AskANurse" in a large, bold, blue font.

The CFNU National Executive Board gathered for the #AskANurse Twitter event on October 6th

The CFNU held #AskANurse, a Twitter event that invited people to ask National Executive Board members, including Janet Hazelton, questions relating to health care and the election. The hashtag was so successful that it became a national trending topic for the majority of the event, drawing great questions and lots of interest.

CFNU National Executive Board Meets in Ottawa



Janet Hazelton and Jean Candy join the CFNU National Executive Board in Ottawa for the #AskANurse Twitter event.

During the week of October 5th the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions held a meeting of their National Executive Board (NEB) in Ottawa. The NSNU is represented on the NEB by President Janet Hazelton and Executive Director Jean Candy.

One of the key topics during the week was the Federal Election campaign. With just a few weeks left until voting day, the CFNU continued to focus its energies on getting important health care messages out and engaging the public. On October 6th, leaders

from eight provincial nurse unions took part in a Twitter event where nurses and members of the public were invited to #AskANurse about health care and the federal election. The hashtag was a trending topic in Canada for much of the two-hour event.

Another important issue the NEB discussed was the NCLEX-RN exam, which has been a source of stress and frustration for nursing students and recent graduates. The CFNU and its member organizations, including the NSNU, have been working with the Canadian Nursing Association and provincial Colleges to address the issues with the exam, and will continue to do so to protect student nurses and ease the transition into the workforce.

Other agenda items that the NEB discussed included strategic directions, violence in the workplace, and updates from the provinces. The next meeting of the National Executive Board will be held in February, 2016.

Atlantic Caucus Meets at NSNU Head Office

On November 9th NSNU President Janet Hazelton and Executive Director Jean Candy welcomed fellow Atlantic nurse union presidents Marilyn Quinn (NBNU), Mona O'Shea (PEINU) and Debbie Forward (RNUNL), along with their team members for the Atlantic Caucus. Each year the group joins together in one of the Atlantic provinces to discuss issues like bargaining, political events and concerns that are shared by nurses in our region. They take these opportunities to share insights and work on strategies for tackling those issues.

They are also making plans for next year's Eastern Labour School, which will be held in St. John's from May 15 – 17.



Janet Hazelton and Jean Candy welcome nurse union leaders from the Atlantic Provinces

Temporary Licensing Update

On November 24th NSNU Labour Relations Representatives Patti Humphries and Chris Albrecht participated in a focus group session at the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia (CRNNS), the second such meeting hosted by the College. A focus group had already been held with senior leadership prior to this meeting. The purpose of the meeting was strictly to discuss the change to the temporary licensing process - the pros, the cons and suggestions for the future.

As part of the rigorous progression to become an RN in Nova Scotia, all applicants must successfully complete the new entry-level exam, the NCLEX-RN® Exam, that measures the competencies required of entry-level nurses and temporary licence holders in this province. However, nationwide this exam has received less than stellar reviews and results leaving those in the nursing field tasked with the responsibility to identify the problem areas and modify various aspects of process accordingly.

The topics discussed at the November 24th focus group session included:

- Accountabilities of the temporary licence holder, the employer as a whole, the manager, the union and the college
- Discussion re: what new grads really understand about being "licensed"- need for education in this regard
- Financial impacts resulting from four month temporary licences, etc.

Temporary licensing policy conditions and restrictions for applicants who have failed the NCLEX-RN now dictate that the new grad must have a designated RN on each shift to provide assistance, consultation and guidance. The grad must not assume the responsibilities of a care area (facility or unit) which would include making client assignments based on client acuity and must not perform delegated functions. They cannot independently initiate a care directive.

For their part the College has made additional supports and resources

available to students writing the NLCEX-RN® to help make exam preparation as straight forward as possible. This guide offers supports, resources and a check list that will help exam writers develop a study plan that works for them.

The College continues to conduct member surveys, manager surveys and surveys for those who have had to re-write and will gather the information, including best practices and national/international data, analyze the data to determine if additional revisions are necessary in order for the current policy to be successful. CRNNS will present their findings and recommendations to their Board of Directors board early in the New Year so that any changes can be implemented before the next round of new grads is subjected to the exam.

The NSNU wishes to thank the College for the opportunity for consultation. We look forward to continued transparency and cooperation where this matter is concerned.

Student Seeking Study Participants

University of Lethbridge student Zhanna Lyubykh is seeking participants for a 10-15 minute online survey that will be used to support her Master thesis on the relationship between employees with musculoskeletal injuries and their supervisors after the employee has returned to work. She has asked us to extend an invitation to our members to participate.

Occasionally we are asked to assist in research like Zhanna's study. We consider these requests carefully before deciding whether to promote member involvement. As this is an issue that affects many nurses, we felt it would be worthwhile to offer this opportunity to our members.

Zhanna is looking for participants who have musculoskeletal injuries (e.g., tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, back pain, sprains, arthritis, etc.). If you fit this criteria and would like to participate, please contact zhanna.lyubykh@uleth.ca. Study participants will be entered in a draw to win one of five \$100 gift cards. The study is tentatively slated to begin in February 2016.

- Benefits of the change to the licensing policy
- Safety re: issuing a Temporary licence to individuals who have not passed the NCLEX RN
- CRNNS criteria for issuing a temporary licence

AGM Dates and Deadlines - and a Contest too!

NSNU is about to celebrate 40 years as the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union. That's a ruby red anniversary and we're eager to celebrate. We are looking for ideas from members for a slogan that reflects our forty years of leadership, dedication and commitment. Please send your suggestions to coleen.logan@nsnu.ca before January 30, 2016. The author of the slogan will win a fabulous prize.

Members are also reminded that the attire for the April 27th Banquet and Dance is anything red. Be sure to watch for dresses, shoes, shirts, ties, blouses, etc. at post-holiday markdown prices to get your banquet apparel.

The **2016 Annual Meeting** is scheduled for four days, Monday April 25 – Thursday April 28, 2016 at the Best Western Glengarry Hotel in Truro. Noted below is the **tentative** structure for the week:

| April 2016 | | | | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

Monday April 25 Morning Meeting / Afternoon Component & Regional Meetings

Tuesday April 26 AGM Business Day / Evening Hospitality Event

Wednesday April 27 AGM Business Day / Evening Banquet, Auction and Dance

Thursday April 28 Education Day

The following are important submission deadlines which must be adhered to:

Under 35 & New Member Submissions

Friday January 8, 2016

Resolutions, Honorary Members Submissions, Board of Director Nominations, NSHAO LTD Trustee Nominations, Expression of Interest for Standing Committees

Friday January 22, 2016

AGM / Education / Component Meeting Registration

Thursday March 24, 2016

Scholarship Applications

Thursday April 7, 2016

All forms can be found on the NSNU website (www.nsnu.ca) under Member Services / Forms & Resources. Please submit forms to **Jen Graham at jennifer.graham@nsnu.ca** on or before the deadlines indicated.

Sponsorship of Under 35 Members & New Members

NSNU will sponsor 5 members under the age of 35 as well as 7 members who have never attended the AGM. This is above the usual sponsorship complement. Interested members who meet the criteria are encouraged to send their Expression of Interest Form ASAP. A random draw to select the successful applicants will take place January 13, 2016. Only those selected will be contacted on that date.

Honorary Members Submissions

Per NSNU Policy, honorary member submissions must be submitted to the NSNU Office 90 days in advance of the Annual Meeting. If you wish to nominate a nurse to become an honorary member, the criteria and the 'Honorary Member Nomination Form' can be found on the NSNU website.

Board of Directors Nominations

As per Article 11.02 (a) (i) of the Constitution, the deadline for the nominations papers to be returned is 90 days before the Annual Meeting. Those interested in running for positions on the Board of Directors of the NSNU are encouraged to have all applicable forms

completed as soon as possible. The Nomination Form can be found on the NSNU website.

Article 11.01 (a) of the Constitution indicates that all positions on the Board will be elected for a term of two years. Thus, the NSNU Nominations Committee is accepting applications for the following positions:

President, Vice President, VP Finance, VP Central Region, VP Eastern Region, VP Northern Region, VP Western Region, VP Community Care, VP Long Term Care, VP LPN/Grad

NSHAO LTD Trustee Nominations

The NSHAO LTD Trustee position is also up for renewal, therefore, an election will be held for that position. The Nomination Form can be found on the NSNU website.

Expression of Interest for Standing Committees

All Standing Committees are due for selection this year. As per Appendix G of the Constitution, the Selection Committee for the AGM Operations and Nominations Committee is the Board of Directors. The AGM Operations and Nominations Committee becomes the Selection Committee for the Education Committee, Constitution and Resolutions Committee and the Finance Committee. The 'Expression of Interest Form' can be found on the NSNU website.

AGM / Education / Component Meeting Registration

More information will be distributed to Locals in February; however, *please note the deadline to register for the AGM, Education Day and Component Meetings is Thursday March 24, 2016.*

Small Local Observer's Draw

As in previous years, NSNU will host a draw for Locals with 100 members or less to have a delegate attend the AGM on behalf of NSNU. More details pertaining to this draw will be distributed to Locals in early March once we are aware how many potential spots may be available.

Scholarship Applications

NSNU offers various union scholarship options. Annual \$1,500 scholarships available are the 'Dolores Chase Scholarship', 'Nursing Degree or Diploma Scholarship', 'Certificate Program Scholarship' as well as the \$1,000 'Elizabeth and Brittany MacPherson Scholarship'. For family members of NSNU members there is also two (2) 'NSNU Family Scholarships' for \$500. Scholarship Applications can be on the NSNU website at nsnu.ca.

Building for the Future - Literally

NSNU staff and leadership within the organization have been engaged in conversations surrounding issues with our physical location in Burnside. This newsletter insert will provide you with an update on this subject. Our existing location has limited boardroom space, parking, offices, and storage.

Several months ago the NSNU struck a committee that has since looked at various options available to us to address our situation. The Building Committee consists of three Board members (Lillian Fynes, Michelle Lowe, Chris VanZoost).

The Committee has considered the following options:

- A) Building an addition onto our current location – which does not solve parking issues
- B) Purchasing an existing building. Unfortunately there are not many office only buildings on the market that would satisfy our needs without extensive renovations
- C) Purchasing land and building a new provincial office - Land is available in Burnside

After much consultation with an architect regarding building specifications as well as a geological survey the Committee approved placing a deposit on a lot in Burnside.

Three builders were invited to present proposals to the Committee and Lindsay Construction was chosen primarily because they are a unionized employer.

In September the Building Committee and BOD met and approved engaging Lindsay Construction as a partner in a design/build process. Lindsay and the Committee are now in the process of finalizing a building design in order to complete the land purchase requirements for HRM. We hope to be in our new location by late spring or summer of 2016.

It is important to point out that no dues increase will be required to accommodate any changes in location.

We will provide project updates on our progress via our newsletter, Campaigner e-memos and general email. In the meantime, Janet Hazelton, NSNU president is happy to field comments or questions at janet.hazelton@nsnu.ca.

RN Prescribing: The UK Experience

On Thursday, October 22nd Dalhousie University partnered with the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness and the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia (CRNNS) to present "RN Prescribing: The UK Experience". Several NSNU staff members attended the panel presentation, including President Janet Hazelton and Executive Director Jean Candy.

RN prescribing is slowly being integrated into Canada's health care landscape. According to the Canadian Nurses Association, six provinces are currently offering or are in the process of developing a framework for this service. At this point, Nova Scotia has not adopted RN prescribing, however CRNNS notes that there are 150 Nurse Practitioners in the province who are able to prescribe medications.

The UK has been using RN prescribing for several years and has been able to study the effectiveness of this practice, offering a glimpse into the possible future of Canadian health care if this policy is fully adopted.

The UK defines three different kinds of RN prescribers:

- Independent Nurse Prescribers can prescribe medications on par with doctors,
- Supplementary Prescribers works off a patient's management plan and can only prescribe drugs that are on that list,
- Community Prescribers can only prescribe over-the-counter medications and wound dressings.

Each level of prescribing is supported by a relevant level of training. Nurses who choose to become Independent Nurse Prescribers are required to take a six-month post-graduate pharmacology course and successfully complete a challenging testing process to prove their competency. However, even though nurses have received extra training, RN Prescribers in the UK do not receive any additional compensation for their expanded professional practise.

The most common conditions prescribed for by RNs include pain, respiratory conditions, diabetes, cardiology, wound care and musculoskeletal conditions. Authorities in the UK estimate that because nurses are able to prescribe for this wide range of conditions, access to health care has improved, service is faster, and doctors are able to focus on patients who have more serious medical needs.

Concerns around RN prescribing in the UK have largely centred on patient safety, and nurses' understanding of the medications and conditions that are being prescribed for. However, a recent study out of Scotland has shown that 93% of non-medical prescribers are meeting safety related outcomes. Further, 75% of doctors said that the training for RN prescribers was good or excellent, and the public has shown confidence in the expertise of nurse prescribers.

The NSNU supports opportunities for expanded professional practice, however our labour relations representatives have expressed concerns around liability issues. In the interests of our members, the Union is currently taking pause to consider both the benefits and drawbacks of this practise. Going forward, it is important for the Nurses' Union to work closely with the College to develop a comprehensive policy that will address this change in scope and ensure it is implemented responsibly.

Some issues the NSNU is focusing



on includes contract language to assure financial and job security for nurses who choose to participate in the lengthy and expensive training program associated with RN prescribing, including Return to Service Agreements. We will also focus on fair compensation for nurses who take on this new form of professional practise.

We will provide updates on RN

prescribing as the conversation continues. There currently are no plans to implement this practise in Nova Scotia.

*The RN prescribing panel included presentations from four UK-based experts: **Sue Axe** is a Course Leader for Nurse Prescribing at Buckinghamshire New University; **Reverend Sarah Jones** is an Independent Nurse Prescriber at*

*the UK Health Promotion Clinic; **Maureen McKay** co-led a unit supporting development of Primary / Community Healthcare in Oxfordshire; and **Dr. Stephen Smith** is a physician at the Windrush Medical Practise in Oxfordshire. **Sue Smith**, CEO and Registrar of CRNNS, also spoke at the event.*



Linda Silas joins nurse leaders from around the world in Brazil

Global Nurses United Update

In late September, members of Global Nurses United (GNU) met in Brazil for the annual meeting to discuss issues affecting nurses and the nursing profession worldwide. The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) is a member of GNU and President Linda Silas attended on behalf of Canada's Nurses.

Global Nurses United is made up of 21 countries and represents over one million nurses worldwide.

"I am truly honoured to bring the voice of Canada's nurses to each meeting, and it is so important to contribute to the global nursing discussions," said CFNU President Linda Silas. "What we often discover in each meeting is although we all may speak different languages, and there are hundreds of thousands of miles between our countries, many of our issues are very similar across the board."

This year there were several action items discussed, including:

Costa Rica's challenge with a proposed government Bill to outsource nurses - GNU signed a letter supporting the union against the proposed Bill

Peru's general strike regarding the number of nurses and number of hours worked

Philippines and Honduras fight against privatization

"By working together we are able to discuss the different issues and provide ideas to one another, and by standing we are able to bring positive changes to the nursing profession at the global level," said Silas.

- Via CFNU

Nova Scotia Health Coalition Annual General Meeting

By Paul Curry, Researcher/Educator, NSNU Staff Representation to the NSHC

The Nova Scotia Health Coalition held its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, September 20th, at the Best Western Hotel and Convention Centre in Bridgewater, NS.

The NSNU has been a proud sponsor of the Coalition since its inception in 1996 and has representation on both its Board and Executive Committee. The Coalition works to prevent privatization of the public health care system, and to promote public solutions to improve it. Members include community groups, organized labour and concerned individuals dedicated to protecting, strengthening, and expanding our health care system.

The AGM provides an opportunity

for members to review the Coalition's work and set priorities for the year to come. A big success over the last year was the push back against the government's plan to tender home care services to a competitive bidding process, a move that would introduce for-profit providers to the system. Future work will include continued resistance to privatization efforts and a push for improvements to long-term care, home care, hospital services, the elimination of ambulance fees and action to address the social determinants of health.

After the AGM, the Coalition hosted an all-candidates debate with federal election candidates running in South Shore - St. Margaret's. The debate was

moderated by Dave Stephens, News Director of *Lighthouse Now*. The discussion focused on key health care issues, including a national drug plan, seniors care, women's health, privatization, the social determinants of health, and health care for refugees.

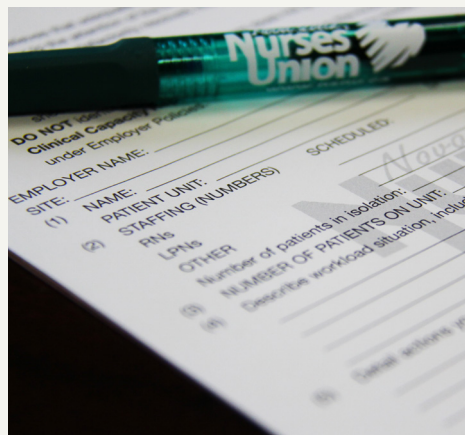


Coalition President James Hutt speaks at the all-candidates debate

CCR Success in Day Care Surgery

By Justin Hiltz, Research Associate

The Clinical Capacity Report (CCR) process continues to show the value of reporting workload and staffing issues, with a recent success in a Day Care Surgery Unit on the South Shore. In this unit, staffing decreased to one RN after 4:30 p.m. which was not adequate for the safe operation of the unit.



Subsequently, a CCR was filled out detailing the reasons for why this level of coverage was not enough. At times, clients were added to the OR list, or were late arriving in recovery, which created a situation where there were too many post-anesthesia patients for one nurse to care for.

Shortly after the first, another CCR was filled out highlighting similar issues on this particular unit, and it also referenced literature from the National Association of Peri-Anesthesia Nurses of Canada Standards of Practice, which supported the need for two RNs. To fulfill this need, nurses had been required to stay beyond their scheduled shift in order to provide safe care.

In total, three CCRs outlined the situation in the Day Care surgery unit. These CCRs were forwarded to management and NSNU BUGLM where a resolution was sought. Based on the input and evaluation of the nurses who filled out the CCRs, the unit manager agreed that the best way forward was to increase the number of nursing staff on the unit during this time of day. This solution was supported through the Department of Surgery and Anesthesia, leading to an additional position being created to cover this time of day.

In the end, the CCR process resulted in additional staff being present on the unit, thus increasing overall patient and worker safety.

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women



Every year on December 6th we observe the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. On this day 26 years ago Canada experienced one of its greatest tragedies: 14 women were murdered at École Polytechnique, simply because they were women. Although this is an extreme case, the Montreal Massacre serves as a reminder of the kind of violence that women face every day in this country and nations around the world.

On December 6th we reflect on the prevalence of violence against women and make a commitment to protecting our sisters, regardless of who they are, what they do, or where they come from. In many ways Canada is a great country for women, but there is still so much work left to do.

For more information about the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and events in your area, visit women.gov.ns.ca.

McGillivray Guest Home Adopts Black and White Uniform

The McGillivray Guest Home in Sydney has joined several other long term care facilities that are bringing in the standardized white and black uniform for their NSNU nurses. It is encouraging to see more employers joining the effort to help make nurses more easily identified in the workplace.

In 2011, the NSNU introduced the standardized uniform for our members as a way of making them more recognizable in the workplace. This makes it easier for families and patients to identify nurses, and it enhances the professional image of our highly trained members. Since the NSNU pioneered this project, several nurse unions across the country have adopted the new uniform standard, including those in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The NSNU represents 29 RNs working at McGillivray Guest Home. We congratulate the employer and our members for taking this important step.



Janet Hazelton Addresses NSCC Practical Nursing Students



Janet Hazelton with students and staff from the NSCC Practical Nursing program

NSNU President Janet Hazelton was in Port Hawkesbury on September 15th speaking to NSCC Practical Nursing Students about the importance of health care unions. Janet speaks with nursing students in various schools and programs several times each year. She was pleased to be able to return to the Strait Area NSCC campus again in September.

During her presentation, Janet addressed the role of the Nurses' Union, the importance of nurse involvement in the NSNU, as well as safe staffing and safe practice.

Janet graduated from St. Francis Xavier University in 1984 and thoroughly enjoys the opportunity to go back into the classroom to share her experiences as a nurse and a union leader. Many thanks to NSCC for their continued interest in the NSNU.

Season's Greetings from the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union

The holiday season is a time to reflect on the good fortune in your life, and to lend a helping hand. Each year the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union celebrates the holiday season by making a donation to a worthy charity in our community. This year our board has chosen the Marguerite Centre.

The Marguerite Centre supports women who are healing from addictions and abuse, offering a safe and secure home for them as they go on their difficult journey. Thank you to the wonderful people at the Marguerite Centre for all of your hard work and dedication. We are so pleased to be able to give this donation to such a worthwhile cause.

On behalf of the nurses of the NSNU, we wish all Nova Scotians a safe and healthy holiday season and a Happy New Year.





NSNU Merchandise for the Winter

Are you looking for some new NSNU gear to get you or members of your local through the winter? Good news – the NSNU has a great selection of merchandise for even the coldest and snowiest of seasons. Come by the NSNU office to see our new additions, or email christie.blotnick@nsnu.ca to learn about some of the

items we have for sale. You can also visit www.nsnu.ca to view a sample of our merchandise online.

The NSNU does not profit financially from the sale of branded materials.

NSNU Office Holiday Closure

The Board of Directors has decided that the NSNU office will close for the holiday season on December 23rd and reopen on January 4th. While technically the building will be closed to the public and members, some staff will be working on site while others will be using vacation or lieu time during the closure. That said, staff will be available via email should you have an urgent need to speak with your Labour Relations Representative or other members of the team. Emails for all staff can be found at www.nsnu.ca.

Thank you and Happy Holidays.



From Russia With Love

Board member Chris Van Zoost showed her NSNU pride on a recent trip to Russia. This is not the first time the NSNU flag has shown up in unexpected places! Thanks to our members for remembering us on their travels.



New NSNU Labour Relations Representative: Carl Quinlan

"I have always been passionate about working with employees in helping to make their workplaces safe, productive and contented places to be. In no other industry is this more important, than in healthcare."

- Carl Quinlan, B. Comm

Carl Quinlan is the new Labour Relations Representative (LRR) and Respectful Workplace and Diversity Consultant for the NSNU. He has a Bachelor of Commerce degree in addition to 16 years of experience in public health care settings, most recently working with Capital Health as a Human Resources Consultant. We are pleased to have someone with his expertise joining our team.

Here is a little bit more about Carl, in his own words:

Can you describe your role with Capital Health?

I worked with Capital Health as an HR Consultant for more than six years, initially in a labour relations capacity, assisting with collective agreements and policy interpretations relating to employee workplace concerns. Later in my tenure, I took on a more specialized role, dealing with complaints reported through the Organization's SAFE Line – the incident reporting and investigation service.

Is this an area of which you are particularly passionate about?

Respectful Workplace. As part of dealing with conflict complaints, I also facilitated training sessions to assist employees in how to deal with day-to-day conflict, provide examples of typical types of workplace conflict, and how we might best deal with workplace situations whereby we feel bullied or mistreated. Another part of this process involves self-awareness, knowing what it is that we may be doing to contribute to workplace conflict, and how we may need support and/or direction to assist us in handling situations in different ways.

How does it feel to be on the other side of the table?

I like the reference to "the table" because that insinuates a desire to sit down together to work things out. That's what I am passionate about. Sometimes this requires a more formalized approach, and other times it requires two sides learning more about one another's perspectives and finding common ground. I find this to be very invigorating and motivating.

What is your favourite thing to do in your free time?

I'm an avid runner, which helps me to clear my head, alleviate stress, and burn off a few calories. But my absolute favorite thing to do is spending time socializing and interacting with others: family, friends and colleagues. I am drawn to others who enjoy fun and laughter, and a glass of wine!

What do you most look forward to as you begin your career with NSNU?

I look forward to supporting the membership to the best of my ability. To achieve this I want to align myself with NSNU's collaborative and professional approach in dealing with employee concerns. This means actively listening to members' concerns, collaborating with employers, relying on my colleagues' expertise regarding NSNU collective agreements and nursing standards of practice, and finally offering my skills and abilities to add value to the Union.



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May we hope that, when we are all dead and gone, leaders will arise who have been personally experienced in the hard, practical work, the difficulties, and the joys of organizing nursing reforms, and who will lead far beyond anything we have done! - *Florence Nightingale*

In the Next Issue of What's **NU**?

Bargaining Bulletin

Update from Province House

CFNU Hosts Health Care
Stakeholder Meeting



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