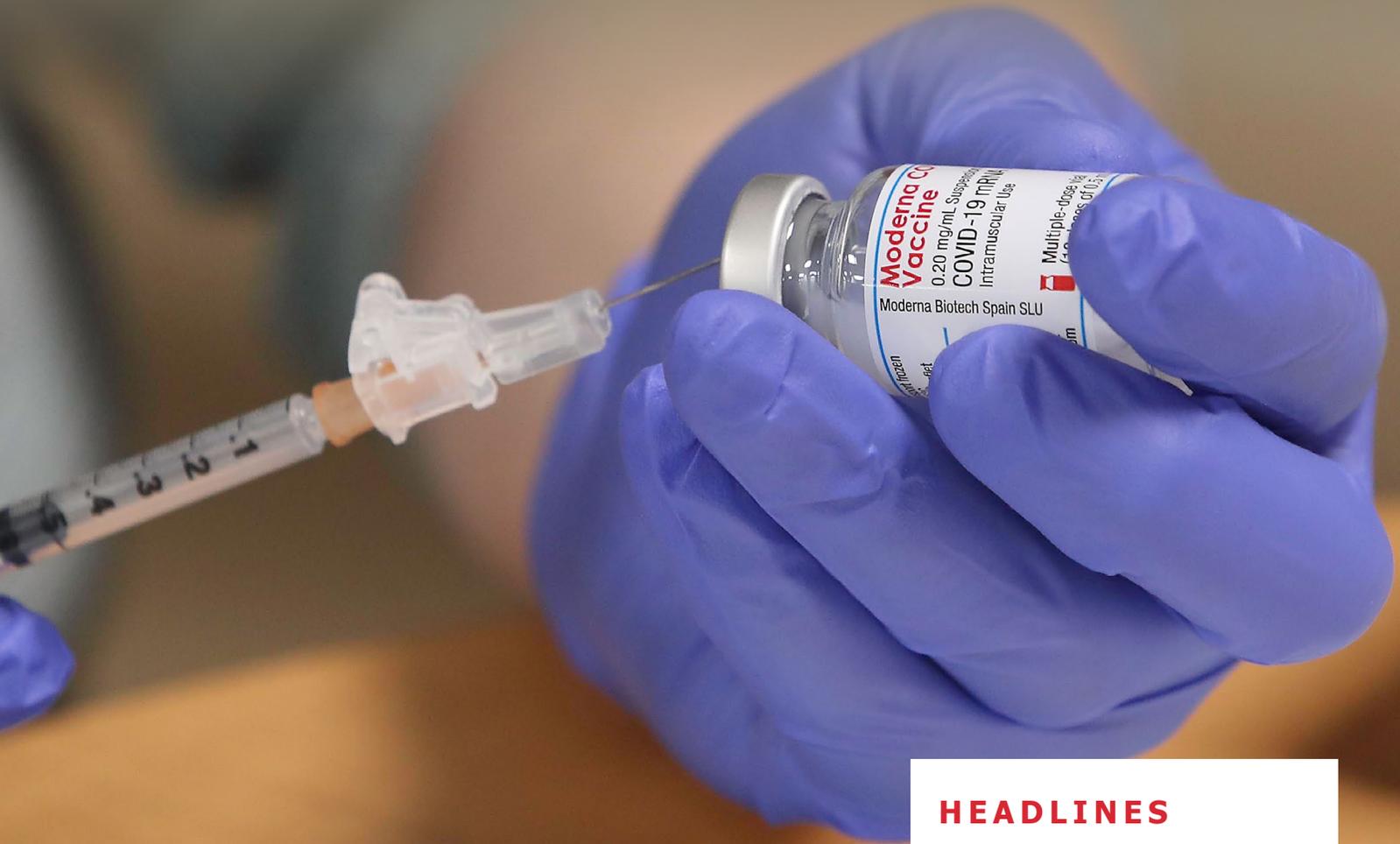


what's nu?

January 2021



HEADLINES

AGM 2021 in the
Virtual Sphere

Important New Mental
Health Resource for
First Responders

#COVID19Vaccine
Nurses' Union Encourages Nova
Scotians to Get the Vaccine

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- 3** Nurses' Union Encourages Nova Scotians to Get the COVID-19 Vaccine
- 6** *Share It. Don't Wear It.* New Mental Health Resource
- 8** AGM 2021 in the Virtual Sphere
- 10** NSNU Hires Labour Relations Rep

12 *Frontline* **FACES** Nurses Get Immunized



16 Cross-Country Check-In

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President's Notebook

Janet Hazelton, BScN RN, MPA

Nurses' Union Encourages Nova Scotians to Get the COVID-19 Vaccine

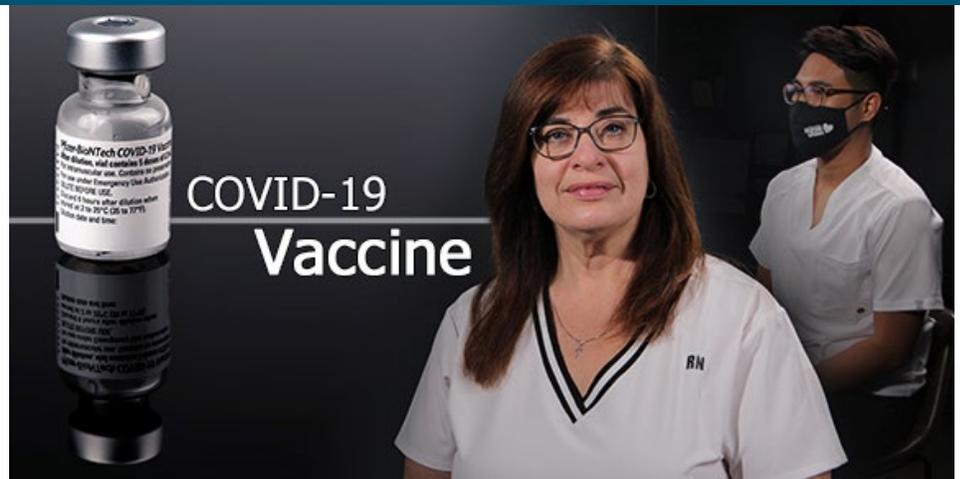
To encourage all Nova Scotians to get the vaccine, the Nurses' Union launched a campaign on January 22 featuring nurses who have received their full immunization.

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout of frontline workers began in December of 2020, with many eager nurses and other healthcare workers lining up to get their shot. However, for various reasons, some individuals need time and/or convincing when it comes to getting vaccinated against this virus.

Nurses understand the science behind the mRNA vaccine but have the right to question what's best for themselves and their families. Healthcare workers and the public are very concerned about contracting COVID-19 but may still seek reassurance that the vaccine is safe and effective.

In a series of video testimonials and online information found at nsnu.ca/COVID19Vaccine, the NSNU is offering insight and firsthand accounts from those who have been inoculated for anyone having doubts.

The majority of people are keen to roll up their sleeves, but some are "vaccine hesitant". Without at least 70% participation in this global immunization program, we will not achieve herd immunity. That's what's



required to eradicate the disease and get back to some degree of normalcy. That's the goal on a global scale.

As a healthcare union that is part of a large network of health organizations, we feel confident that the approval process in Canada is safe and effective. The assessment of scientific and clinical evidence is done independently by Health Canada; this process is known to be stringent and provides assurance that the vaccine is safe for distribution to the public.

Most healthcare workers will get the vaccine while some may not due to health reasons and or personal convictions. These decisions come with the understanding there could be consequences in the workplace.

Whether you're a nurse or any other

frontline worker, declining the vaccine could come with conditions. Some employers may insist on continued use of personal protective equipment, while other employers may restrict nurse-to-patient interactions. We don't yet know how a refusal will be managed, if vaccines will be mandated, or if another solution will be applied.

Employers, working in conjunction with nurses, have a role to play in educating healthcare workers and the general public about the benefits of vaccination. While immunization plays a significant role in infection prevention, it is only one element of a larger plan.

Employers must have a comprehensive infectious disease prevention and control plan that

Continued P.4



Vaccine Continued

includes adequate staffing, reducing hospital overcrowding, sufficient handwashing stations, isolating those with infectious diseases within facilities, and readily accessible appropriate PPE.

Approximately 50% of healthcare workers get the flu shot each year. The NSNU believes the vast majority of nurses will get the COVID-19 vaccine, seeing that the risks for exposure are higher, and the importance of their safety and those in their care.

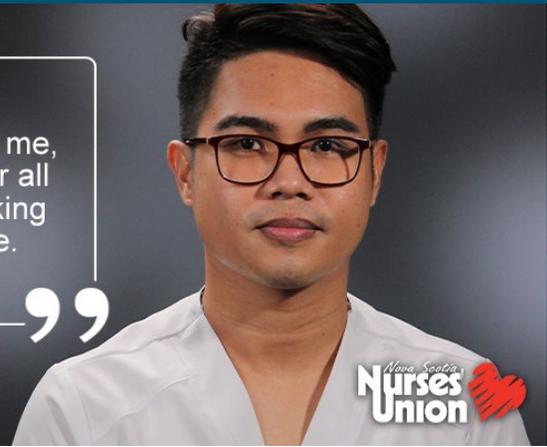
The union is hopeful that we will receive more vaccines, and quickly so that all of our members will have the protection they need to more safely do their jobs. You have been very patient and professional throughout this ordeal.

The NSNU would like to thank Jamie Stewart, Glenda Sabine, Ramir Bautista and Elaine Young for participating in the campaign and for their candor during the interviews. Their authenticity and insights made making the videos and other campaign materials an easier task. The results speak for themselves.

“ It’s an answered prayer for me, and not only for me, but for all the frontliners who are risking their lives to save people. ”

- Ramir

#COVID19Vaccine
#ImmunizeToNormalize
nsnu.ca/COVID19Vaccine



“ Even with every precaution we’ve taken, this is one more add on to our PPE that makes us so much stronger, more able to do our jobs, and to be with the people that we love. ”

- Elaine

#COVID19Vaccine
#ImmunizeToNormalize
nsnu.ca/COVID19Vaccine



“ This is the beginning of tomorrow for me, for everybody. I know it’s just a start, but getting the vaccine was very exciting. ”

- Glenda

#COVID19Vaccine
#ImmunizeToNormalize
nsnu.ca/COVID19Vaccine

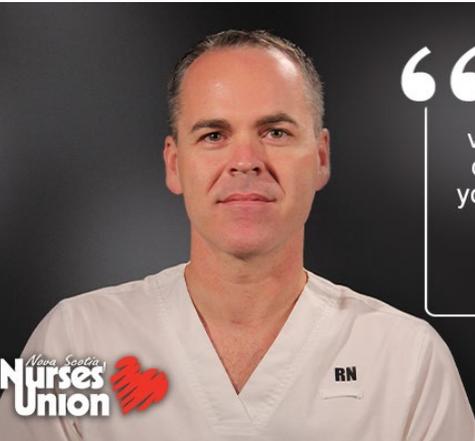


All campaign videos and shareable images are available at nsnu.ca/COVID19Vaccine

“ Fear of bringing home the virus to your family, giving it to your coworkers, maybe even giving it to your patients, the public – it was time to stand up and participate, and protect myself and others. ”

- Jamie

#COVID19Vaccine
#ImmunizeToNormalize
nsnu.ca/COVID19Vaccine



Standing Committee on Health Long Term Care Presentations

On January 12th, NSNU president Janet Hazelton was called upon to speak before the Standing Committee on Health about Nova Scotia's long-term care homes. Drawing on research and data from our *Broken Homes* report of 2016 and our more recent update, *Staffing Standards for Nova Scotia Nursing Homes*, which was released in June of 2020, Janet pressed government on hours-of-care, NPs in LTC and other matters that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak last year.

Our *Broken Homes* report called for significant changes to long-term care staffing, bumping up daily care hours from 3.4 to 4.1 per resident to adapt to growing need for acute care. Staffing levels at long-term care homes are set by the provincial *Special Care Act*, unchanged since 1977.

The acuity of residents living in long-term care has steadily increased over the years, yet there has been no corresponding increase to staffing levels to support this. Many people prefer to stay in their home for as long as possible, meaning they require a vastly higher level of care once admitted to an LTC facility.

While acknowledging the work that government and employers have done since 53 Northwood residents tragically passed away from the virus, Janet stated that serious problems in our LTC system were evident long before COVID-19 took hold. She went on to say that as Nova Scotians, we have an obligation to step up and do right by our seniors.

Last September, the Nova Scotia Health Authority presented a revised long-term care plan for the second wave of COVID-19. Part of the plan required rooms with more than two residents to be eliminated. Deputy health minister Kevin Orrell indicated that 42% of Nova Scotia's long-term care rooms are double occupancy, while 58% are single rooms. Triple and quadruple rooms will no longer be permitted.



Many advocates, labour leaders and legislators were on the call



Janet Hazelton spoke passionately about the need for more care hours in long-term care facilities

As the union representative for Northwood's registered nurses, NSNU welcomed the opportunity to provide feedback last summer to the Northwood Quality-improvement Review Committee to ensure the nursing perspective was included in the report's recommendations. Many of the goals of the Nurses' Union align with the proposed recommendations outlined in the report, especially the recommended funding of a standard minimum number of care hours.

Before being questioned by the various political party members on the panel, Janet closed by saying Nova Scotia's LTC sector needs new and increased funding that is specifically dedicated to the improvement of staffing standards. Such funding should be evidence-based and mandated by legislation in the form of an updated *Homes for Special Care Act*. Nova Scotia has an ageing population, so investing in long-term care is vital to helping residents now and planning for the sector's future.

Some of the other witnesses in the virtual meeting included:

- Dr. Kevin Orrell, deputy minister, Department of Health and Wellness
- Vicki Elliott-Lopez, senior director of continuing care, Department of Health and Wellness
- Susan Stevens, senior director of continuing care, Nova Scotia Health
- Jason MacLean, president, Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU)
- Michele Lowe, managing director, Nursing Homes of Nova Scotia Association
- Govind Rao, Atlantic region research representative, CUPE
- Linda MacNeil, Atlantic regional director, Unifor



A new online resource is available for first responders who are experiencing mental health distress.

First responders are exposed to trauma every day as an unavoidable part of their jobs. This puts them at higher risk of developing traumatic stress injuries like depression, anxiety and PTSD. The website was developed to help first responders access mental health support when they need it, understanding that mental health crises can happen at any time.

The website offers helpful tools and resources for first responders, their family members, employers, and colleagues who are dealing with mental health issues. Some

resources include self-assessments, online counseling, training materials, and mental health apps.

This resource is a collaboration between labour unions, including the NSNU, first responders, emergency service employers, Government and the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). Learn more at firstrespondersmentalhealthns.com.

On December 5th, the Chronicle Herald published the following opinion/editorial piece by Janet Hazelton. Janet was very closely involved in the development and execution of the PTSD resources. Featured in the campaign are NSNU members Jamie Stewart and Tracy d'Entremont.

At last, fresh hope for first responders in Nova Scotia

By Janet Hazelton, NSNU President

I'll never forget the first time a patient that I was caring for passed away.

I was just starting my nursing career – maybe a few weeks in. The family was devastated. And although I didn't show it on my face, so was I. Over the short time we spent together, we had gotten to know each other. Swapped stories. Held hands. Shared our best jokes.

As someone who is rarely at a loss for words, at that moment I couldn't speak. There was an incredibly large lump in my throat.

The nurse supervisor came in to help out. She could see I was having a tough time. Once we completed all the required duties, she pulled me aside

and told me – in a very kind but firm way - to go take a ten-minute break, and then get back to work.

That's how it was. That's what we all did when something terrible happened at work. We took a few minutes to pull ourselves together, and then got on with it. We didn't think about how witnessing all that trauma might one day take a toll on our mental health.

Over the course of my 30 plus years in nursing, I witnessed a lot of trauma. I was lucky. Some of my colleagues were not. Because for them, that trauma built up, and left them with psychological injuries that in some cases have derailed not just their careers, but their whole lives too.

I've heard many more stories about workplace trauma and psychological injuries from members during my time with NSNU. I've also worked with a lot of other first responder organizations, and I know that many people working across this sector have paid a high price for doing the important jobs that they do.

Thankfully, the 'suck it up' culture that used to define emergency service professions is beginning to change.

That's because we know a lot more today about the impact of daily exposure to pain, death and sadness. We know about traumatic stress injuries like PTSD, and we have effective treatment approaches that

are helping to manage the symptoms. Employers, unions, and the workers themselves better understand the risks, and are taking positive steps to protect mental health in the workplace.

But there are still a couple of key issues we need to address.

The first is timeliness. When a first responder is facing a mental health issue, they need to be able to access appropriate support and treatment quickly. The benchmark for access to mental health treatment in Nova Scotia is seven days for urgent cases and 28 days for non-urgent, but we're not consistently meeting those standards. Workplace EFAP programs help, but they generally rely on the same pool of mental health professionals as everyone else. Adding the benefit of presumption for first responders diagnosed with PTSD has streamlined access to WCB benefits. And while that may mean first responders can still pay their bills if they're injured, it doesn't necessarily offer an expedited path to treatment.

The second issue is stigma. Shame and fear still surround workplace psychological injuries in our province. First responders are often ashamed

to admit it when they have a mental health problem. Because in a job that's all about being calm and professional in terrible situations, there's no room for weakness.

Most first responders get into this line of work because they are natural heroes: they are the ones who run toward the fire. It's not just a job, it's who they are. And when mental health issues take them away from that work, it's not just a loss of occupation, it's a loss of identity.

We're getting better at recognizing and supporting first responders' mental health. But we still have work to do.

Over the past year or so, a group of first responders, employers, unions, the WCB and Government have been working together to address some of the gaps. It's the first time that many of these organizations from fire, law enforcement, corrections, nursing and paramedics have ever worked together outside of an accident scene.

We've launched a new website for first responders, their families, and their employers. The website – FirstRespondersMentalHealthNS.com – features real Nova Scotia

first responders, and links to online workplace mental health tools and resources such as self-assessments, online counseling, training materials, and mental health apps. It's based on a similar best-practice program from British Columbia but has been customized to address the needs of first responders here in Nova Scotia. The group plans to keep working together to develop more supports.

Initiatives like this one offer hope for first responders. Hope that more Nova Scotians will come to understand the mental health challenges they face every day. Hope that online resources like this new website can help them manage their symptoms as an effective part of their overall treatment plans. And hope that all first responder organizations prioritize mental health and do all they can to provide an open and accepting work environment that fosters resilience and provides support.

Personally, my hope is that those on the front lines of tragedies, like the one I experienced years ago, will have a caring and compassionate network that welcomes them and carries them when they need help the most.

Showing Gratitude

WCB representatives expressed their gratitude to Janet Hazelton for her leadership and support of this new initiative. The following passages are excerpts from original correspondence:

I just wanted to send a note to thank you for your time and effort in support of the launch of the First Responders Website last week. As of today, the website promotional video in which you were interviewed has had more than a thousand views on YouTube. Your OpEd, which was featured in the Chronicle Herald print and online editions, delivered an honest and compelling

message to thousands more, and will help many first responders and others find their way to the website and the mental health supports they need. It also demonstrates the continued leadership of the NSNU, toward raising awareness and taking steps to improve workplace mental health supports.

*Shelley Rowan
VP Prevention and Service Delivery
WCB Nova Scotia*

I'm writing today to tell you how proud I was to see the video featuring our own Janet Hazelton, and to read her opinion piece, as part of the launch of Share it, Don't Wear it.

The building of this website has been collaborative with first responders and will have a positive impact on future outcomes. Janet was a key leader on the committee and her passion for what we do is on display here.

Janet: You are an amazing leader, always willing to step up on anything health and safety. Your personal dedication is inspiring, and your contribution here is remarkable. I'm so proud to call you a colleague.

*Stuart MacLean
Chief Executive Officer
WCB Nova Scotia*

AGM 2021 In the Virtual Sphere

NSNU was in the process of planning an in-person Annual General Meeting for 2021 when it became evident that restrictions on gatherings and safety issues were still of great concern. At the January 25 Board of Directors meeting, the NSNU made the decision to move to a virtual platform to host the event.

COVID-19 restrictions have significantly impacted organizations like the NSNU, requiring necessary modifications for large-scale events, including annual general meetings. Unfortunately, due to pandemic restrictions, we are unable to accommodate the Education Day and must defer until further notice.

The decision to move to a virtual environment is the responsible conclusion. In November 2020, RNUNL held their biennial completely online, welcoming delegates, observers and guests to participate. Many other unions have since done the same, while the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions and the Canadian Labour of Congress will hold their virtual conventions in June of this year.

The NSNU Board has determined that voting delegates and observers can participate. As per usual, NSNU will cover salary replacement for voting delegates while locals will cover those costs for their participating observers.

Committee members (AGM Nominations and Operations, Finance, Education, and Constitution and Resolutions) will attend via live



Standard Uniform Allowance Use and Disbursement

Due to the pandemic and restrictions imposed by public health officials, your uniform supplier, Keltic Clothing, has been unable to visit your sites and various regions within the province.

Currently, Keltic is servicing members via their website and online sales. In accordance with your collective agreements, those purchases are limited to black bottoms and white tops. The provider, Keltic Clothing, would be in breach of the agreement should they not follow these clear guidelines.

If your employer does not enforce the standard white/black uniform, that is within their purview. However, Keltic is required to sell only the white and black pieces under their contracts with employers.

If you choose not to use any portion of your allowance during the annual payment period, it cannot be carried over into a new year. Again, Keltic is unable to bend on this contract language.

If you have any questions or would like to place an order, Keltic Clothing can be reached at info@kelticgroup.ca, 902-539-6006, or online at kelticclothing.ca.



streaming for reporting purposes. In the interest of time, only a few guests will be invited to partake either by recorded or live-streamed messages.

The scrutineering process will be vetted via analytical reporting for live, online voting on resolutions and Board elections. A third-party streaming service, experts in hybrid and virtual conferencing, will be hired to oversee the technical elements.

These third-party specialists will assist us in executing a creative,

interactive production with stable state-of-the-art technology. The addition of Chad O'Brien, our Education and Technology Officer, to the NSNU fold will help ensure the stability of our inaugural online AGM.

Board members and required staff will be on-site at a venue yet to be determined for the necessary face-to-face segments. Safety protocols will be strictly adhered to for these attendees.

Staff are quickly transitioning to accommodate the new format,

and we have every confidence in their ability to take this leap. There are numerous logistical details to be sorted out; we appreciate your patience as we pivot.

A revised itinerary and agenda will be circulated and posted on the website, as will other pertinent information about the AGM.

In the coming weeks, more information will be distributed via email, and online, outlining our plans. Participants will receive detailed information instructing them on the tech side of virtual conferencing. We'll supply tips, links and credentials that will distinguish delegates from observers – as well as information that will better ensure the user experience is successful and enjoyable.

The AGM promises to be fast paced, visually interesting, engaging and dynamic. We hope you will register to take part.

Our hope is to host an in-person conference in 2022, with a return to our usual and action-packed itinerary and agenda.

2021 AGM Tentative Schedule

Regional and Component Meetings, Month of April

Seven unique meetings held virtually – dates yet to be determined. Held separate and apart from the AGM.

Tuesday, April 20

9 am – 3:30 pm: AGM Business

Wednesday, April 21

9:00 am – 3:30 pm: AGM Business

Registration Deadline

The deadline to register for the AGM is March 12th. Registration will be live online starting Wednesday, February 10th.

Once again, one representative from your local (likely a member of the local executive) will be responsible for the online registration of all your delegates and observers.

Expression of Interest for Standing Committees

All Standing Committees are due for selection in 2021. Expression of Interest forms can be found on our website, www.nsnuc.ca. The deadline for the Expression of Interest on Standing Committees is Wednesday, March 31st.

Scholarship Applications

Scholarship Applications can be found on the NSNU website at nsnu.ca. The deadline for submissions is Wednesday, March 24th.

All forms can be found on the Members' Only page.

NSNU Hires Labour Relations Representative

The NSNU is pleased to announce that we have hired a new labour relations representative. Shelley Richard began working at the Nurses' Union on Monday, January 18.

Her qualifications include direct labour relations experience - ten years employed in that capacity with the New Brunswick Nurses Union - making her transition at the NSNU relatively smooth.

Shelley, a mom of two active hockey players, is also lawyer who started her career as a social worker. Her extensive skillset and knowledge of contract interpretation and labour relations make her an asset to the organization and our members.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Shelley as she assumes Carl Quinlan's portfolio, following his retirement in December 2020.



New NSNU LRR, Shelley Richard

Win Your Way to CFNU Biennium 2021!

On **February 19th**, the NSNU will make a draw to randomly select 2 provincially sponsored members-at-large and 18 local presidents/co-presidents to attend the CFNU 2021 Biennium. The lucky winners will be notified immediately so planning can begin to attend the virtual experience **June 8-9**. To enter the draw, please email lorna.myers@nsnu.ca by midnight **February 18**, indicating which category you are entering, the member-at-large or local president/co-president category.

All other locally sponsored members planning to participate in the Biennium are asked to register as soon as possible. Registration is now open online at <https://nursesunions.ca/convention2021/>. Registration closes on **May 8, 2021**.

The Biennium features knowledgeable keynote speakers as well as online interactive workshops and plenary sessions designed specifically for nurses working in today's health care environments. Delegates also take part in determining issues that the CFNU and its member organizations, including the NSNU, will address in the coming years. To learn more about the Biennium, visit <https://nursesunions.ca/convention2021/>.

What Sponsored Attendees should know:

Each NSNU **sponsored attendee** (winner) must register for the conference through the NSNU office. If taking Union time off to attend, the Employer shall provide for salary continuance for the member and the NSNU will reimburse the Employer for the cost up to a maximum of 2 shifts. If attending on days the member will be paid by NSNU directly and compensated for 15/16 hours (based on 1950/2080 hour pay scale).

Best of Luck!



New Leaders at the CFNU NEB Table

In 2020, two Nurse Union leaders stepped away from their role as provincial president to join the ranks of the happily retired.

After 10 years of service as President of PEINU, Mona O'Shea called it a day. The NSNU congratulates Mona, who has been a powerful and steadfast voice for nurses on the Island. She has been an equally strong advocate for patients, championing many causes and achieving inroads on numerous healthcare and social justice issues.

The NSNU thanks Mona for the many times she crossed the Confederation Bridge to attend an NSNU or CFNU event in Nova Scotia, and for the stories, encouragement, kindness and words of wisdom she often shared with us.

NSNU Also wishes RNUNL's president a very happy retirement.

For 24 years, Debbie Forward has been at the helm of the Registered Nurses Union of Newfoundland and Labrador. The nurse of 40 years gave her last address at their virtual



Barbara Brookins and Yvette Coffey are the new presidents of PEINU and RNUNL, respectively

biennial convention at the Delta Hotel in St. John's on November 24th, 2020.

Debbie has been admired for her strength, passion and leadership during her tenure, and respected by many. She is looking forward to three main things in her retirement: "Relaxation, relaxation, relaxation."

We thank Debbie for the many times she visited our province to attend NSNU/CFNU events, sharing her humour, vast knowledge and experiences with us. We wish her a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Best wishes Debbie and Mona as they follow new paths. They have left lasting impressions, valued legacies and big, fabulous shoes to fill!

The NSNU looks forward to working with Barbara Brookins, president of PEINU and Yvette Coffey, president of RNUNL. They now join the National Executive Board of the CFNU, working closely with Janet Hazelton and others on issues that impact nurses across the country.



Mona (above) and Debbie (right) were frequent visitors to the NSNU AGM, and invaluable members of the Atlantic Caucus. Their contributions have left an indelible mark on nursing advocacy in the Atlantic region.



Frontline FACES



Jamie, Cobequid Community Health Centre



Zoe, Colchester East Hants Health Centre



Robin, Valley Regional Hospital



Elaine, Cobequid Community Health Centre

NSNU members were among the first to receive the long-awaited COVID-19 vaccine in Nova Scotia. Thank you to all who sent their photos in for us to share, and to all nurses, first responders and members of the public who are choosing to get vaccinated. Together, we can end the pandemic.

#ImmunizeToNormalize | #COVID19Vaccine



Erinn, Cape Breton Regional Hospital



Glenda, Parkstone Enhanced Care



Ramir, Parkstone Enhanced Care



Irene, Cape Breton Regional Hospital



Canadian Nurses Foundation Celebrates NSNU Members

In the December 2020 issue of *What's Nu?*, we shared a story about NSNU member Manju Kochukunju who was nominated for the Canadian Nurses Foundation's #ThankANurse initiative. As a nominee, Manju was invited to attend their virtual gala, and was honoured alongside other nurses from across the country for her efforts during the pandemic.

But Manju wasn't the only member of the NSNU to be singled out during the event. Nominees also included

VON Halifax nurses Geneviève Boudreau and Émilie Fitzpatrick. Our three NSNU members were among seven Nova Scotian nurses honoured during the gala.

Also nominated was former president of the Registered Nurses Union of Newfoundland and Labrador, and friend of the NSNU, Debbie forward.

Congratulations to all nominated nurses for this well-deserved honour.



CNSA Hosts a Fresh and Exciting Virtual Convention

In January the Canadian Nursing Students Association (CNSA) hosted a virtual convention for their members from across the country. With the second wave of COVID-19 taking its toll, an in-person conference was impossible, but that didn't stop CNSA from planning an exciting event with informative panels, keynote speakers and networking sessions for nursing students to learn from. NSNU president

The six-day event took place from January 19-24 and included the standard fare – elections, business sessions and regional meetings – as well as networking opportunities, breakout sessions and plenaries on topics of importance not just to nursing students, but all who work in the field. NSNU president Janet Hazelton participated in some of the educational sessions, and was impressed with the breadth of information and diversity of perspectives offered to future nurses.

Just a few of the many topics up for discussion included:

- Principles of Practice in Light of Canada's Overdose Crisis
- Helping Others Deal with Loss
- A De-escalation Workshop
- Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour Panel - Navigating Systemic Racism in Healthcare
- Climate Change, Health, and Nursing Practice

The event also included keynote addresses from nurses and first responders. The presentations included a panel on the crisis response to the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire, one nurse's experience volunteering with Doctors Without Borders in war-torn Yemen, and crisis intervention from the perspective of a nurse who works for the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service in Saskatoon.

All in all, it was a very successful event which offered great insights for future nurses who are now beginning to consider what career path they will take within the diverse nursing profession. Congratulations to CNSA on hosting an innovative virtual convention that shows we don't need to gather in person to learn and grow together as a community.

The NSNU was pleased to be a sponsor and exhibitor for this online event.

Northwood

Holiday Magic Fundraiser

On December 19th, CTV broadcast Holiday Magic in support of the Northwood Foundation featuring talented local performers. The NSNU was proud to support and sponsor this event.

The COVID-19 pandemic created unmet needs above and beyond the usual. Northwood's demand for support services, recreation and mental health programming continues to grow while fundraising dollars dwindle. As such, Northwood reached out to the community for a boost. CTV and performers gladly answered the call, resulting in an hour-long production of top-caliber entertainment.

Planning began last year for an in-person performance, the inaugural Holiday Magic fundraiser. Created in the spirit of giving, the show included musicians, dancers and circus aerialists. Adapting to COVID-19 meant the



Halifax-based soprano, Abigail Sinclair, was one of many featured performers during the televised event

production moved forward as a virtual event because, as the saying goes, the show must go on.

Many businesses and organizations happily stepped up to promote and sponsor the show. In the words of the event organizers, sponsorships don't just help fund programs and equipment – they change people's lives.

The Holiday Magic team has reported that over \$225,240 in sponsorship and donations was raised for the Northwood Foundation. All funds raised go directly to residents and tenants in the Northwood Community.

Aberdeen Nurses Recognized for Excellence in Vascular Access

In healthcare facilities across the province, exceptional work is being done by nurses who go above and beyond for their patients. Obtaining certifications in their specialties and strengthening skills and knowledge through continuing education are just a few ways nurses strive for excellence.

At the Aberdeen Hospital in New Glasgow, NSNU members demonstrate their commitment to evidence-based practices through the nurse-lead vascular access



Award recipients, Janice Buttle and Chanda MacDonald



Janice Buttle and Shawn Parnell – RN PICC Inserters

program. Since its development in 2015, the utilization of the latest equipment and technology, and the application of best practice guidelines, has led to positive patient outcomes.

Some nurses at the Aberdeen have been recognized for their excellence in this area by the Canadian Vascular Access Association (CVAA). In 2018, Janice Buttle was honoured with the CVAA/BD Excellence in Vascular Access Management & Infusion Therapy Award, and then in 2020 the award was given to Chanda MacDonald.

Janice and Chanda are joined by others at the Aberdeen who are nationally certified by the CVAA and are dedicated to continued education.

Cross-Country Check-In

The past year has been uniquely challenging for nurses, and indeed all healthcare workers. The unions that represent nurses across the country have worked diligently to advocate for their members when and where they are needed. This is a snapshot of some of the work being done by our fellow members of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU), as well as nurse unions in British Columbia and Quebec, to combat the intensifying second wave of COVID-19.

Saskatchewan

Since the early days of the pandemic, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) has been a strong voice advocating for nurses and public health measures, including masking, social distancing and hand washing. Saskatchewan was not one of the harder hit provinces during the first wave of COVID-19, but the second wave has taken a significant toll on the province. With ICU beds filling up, nurses and other healthcare workers are bearing the brunt of the virus.

“Public compliance is a critical point. It must happen and if we’re not seeing public compliance, that’s where strong leadership has to come in and has to impose stronger restrictions. We’re going to be at a point where we have no choice but to impose stronger measures,” said SUN president Tracy Zambory.

As of January 20th, Saskatchewan had 354 cases per 100,000 residents, nearly twice the national average and the highest per-capita rates of infection in the country.

Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island has been dealing with an ongoing nursing shortage, made even more challenging due to the pandemic. The province has just over 100 vacant nursing positions, but their health care system is feeling the strain even more due to pandemic regulations preventing nurses who work in other health facilities from taking shifts in long-term care. The restriction aims to prevent COVID-19 from entering nursing homes, where it can do the most damage. Unfortunately, this takes a bite out of their LTC nursing workforce, and puts even more strain on the nurses tasked with picking up the slack.

Due to staffing constraints, many nurses in PEI have been denied vacations or had their planned breaks cancelled in efforts to maintain levels across all areas of health care. Recruitment continues to be a challenge.

New Brunswick

While COVID-19 introduced many new challenges to healthcare workplaces, it also served to exacerbate existing problems, like the nurse overtime crisis in New Brunswick. In the 2019/2020 fiscal year, nurses employed by Vitalité Health worked 153,077 hours of overtime – an increase of 40%.

At any given time a significant number of nurses and other healthcare workers may be off work to self isolate, putting even more pressure on nurses who are still in the workplace.

“If it wasn’t for overtime, we’d have no healthcare system,” New Brunswick Nurses Union president Paula Doucet told CTV News in December.

New Brunswick has struggled with nurse recruitment and retention in recent years. Excessive overtime only makes it more difficult to achieve targets in this area, especially during a time where the health system and its workers are under so much pressure.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador has weathered COVID-19 better than most provinces. Even in the midst of the second wave of the pandemic, the province has seen relatively few cases of the virus, a relief to those who work in health care, especially in small communities. It has been pointed out that in many smaller acute care facilities, there are no ventilators available should a severe case of COVID-19 emerge. That patient would have to be sent to a better equipped facility, rather than receiving care close to home.

Manitoba

Accessibility of PPE has been a hot button issue since the beginning of the pandemic. All provincial nurse unions and the CFNU have been advocating for nurses and healthcare workers to have access to appropriate equipment to protect themselves and their patients.

In January, the Government of Manitoba announced that it had reached an agreement with the Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU) and Shared Health which requires all healthcare providers across the province to ensure that staff working with COVID-positive and suspected patients have access to N95 respirators. The agreement enables nurses to make a judgement call about what kind of PPE is needed, and mandates that equipment to be readily available.

In their announcement, the Government of Manitoba thanked MNU specifically for their work in helping to bring about this new policy.

Ontario & Alberta

In January, the United Nurses of Alberta signed an agreement with their provincial government ensuring nurses who had to quarantine due to a non work-related exposure would be paid using their regular sick leave. Those who were exposed on the job would be able to apply for Workers' Compensation.

In Ontario, the absence of a province-wide policy has left it up to individual employers to decide whether or not they will cover an employee's pay during quarantine. In some cases,

employers were willing to pay if a COVID test came back positive, but not if the test was negative or if employees were a-symptomatic.

These challenges have come up in numerous provinces and are often handled on a case-by-case basis. The lack of a standard policy for compensation across all provinces has made working in health care during the pandemic a crap-shoot for nurses, who put themselves at risk every day in the course of doing their jobs.

Quebec

In a province that has struggled since the beginning of the pandemic, Fédération Interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ) is praising a government initiative which will bring nursing students into COVID units to help ease some of the strain on nurses who have been working tirelessly for months.

Between March and September, more than 1,700 Quebec nurses quit due to COVID-related stress and burnout. To compound that pressure, in December 6,500 health-care staff were unable to work, sick with COVID-19 or awaiting testing.

As a stop-gap measure, the government introduced a bursary for nursing students who would be willing to take a semester away from their studies and work on COVID units. FIQ applauded the program as a way of aiding nurses on the ground while providing invaluable experience for the students who volunteer to take part.

British Columbia

Since the vaccine became available, the British Columbia Nurses Union has had concerns with its rollout in the province. With reports of "queue jumping" and a provincial decision to delay second doses longer than the recommended waiting period, the Union believes decisions are not being made in the best interests of front line workers.

They also made their concerns known when inoculations were halted over the Christmas holiday, saying there was no reason to stop immunizations when capable nurses and doctors were still on call and able to administer the vaccine to their colleagues.

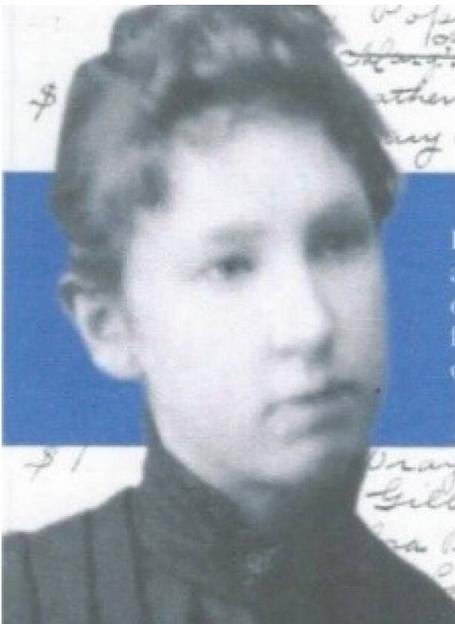
BCNU continues to watch the situation closely to ensure their members receive the vaccine in a timely fashion, and that access isn't hindered by bureaucratic interference.

The Nurses Who Repaid Halifax's 1917 Debt to Boston

Jon Tattrie | CBC News, Jan 04, 2021

Nova Scotia has sent a Christmas tree to Boston each year for decades as thanks for that city's help after the 1917 Halifax Explosion, but research on the 1918 Spanish flu shows nurses from the East Coast province may have repaid that debt a century ago.

Gloria Stephens is the manager of the nurses archive in the Bethune building of the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax. Before that, she worked as a nurse in British Columbia for 46 years. Recently, she's been



Eveline Pemberton led the volunteers to nurse the flu-sick in Boston

digging into the response to the 1918 flu outbreak.

Halifax had just begun to rebuild after the 1917 December disaster that killed nearly 2,000 people and erased much of the north end. The Great War in Europe that had killed many more Nova Scotians was grinding to a close, but any sense of peace was upended by the devastating Spanish flu.

Some 55,000 Canadians would die of the disease, among more than an estimated 50 million worldwide.

Stephens found that Nova Scotia nurses who had served overseas quickly turned their attention to tending to the flu-stricken people at home. The "fever nurses" were skilled at comforting and treating the very ill. The nurses and doctors had no ventilators, vaccines or antibiotics. They used sponge baths to cool people, and helped them sip water.

"The nurses did really difficult, hands-on nursing care, without the equipment that the nurses have today," Stephens says.

Boston 'desperate' for nurses

And then nurses at Halifax's Victoria General Hospital got an unexpected call for help.



Christine H. MacInnes was beloved by patients for her skill and compassion

"When the 1918 influenza was rampant, mostly rampant in Boston, the hospital in Boston contacted the VG hospital and said, "Would there be any chance of sending nurses? We're so desperate for nurses," Stephens says.

Boston had most of Massachusetts's 85,000 flu cases and 1,256 deaths that September. Despite the clear danger, several Nova Scotia nurses immediately volunteered to go.

"They knew there was a desperate

need, they knew their colleagues were under stress, and that they could be of some help. I think it's a nursing thing that you want to help wherever you can, wherever you're needed," Stephens says.

"Boston helped us in Halifax in 1917 and we helped them in 1918."

Stephens says Halifax's mayor and the chief medical officer had swiftly shut public spaces for six weeks and told people to wear masks. But in 1918, social distancing wasn't widely practised and children were actually encouraged to sneeze and cough into their hands.

Eveline Pemberton, a Prairie woman who had moved to Nova Scotia, had been the night supervisor at the VG when the explosion hit. When she heard Boston's call for help during the flu outbreak, she and eight other women raced to New England.

Their names were Gertrude Crosby, Christine MacInnes, Nora Duncanson, Ethel Redmond, Jessie Chisholm,



Georgina and Winnifred Flemming died together in Boston. Their grave in Massachusetts notes their role as 'Nurses Flu Epidemic, Natives of Londonderry, Nova Scotia.'

Hilda Chisholm, Annie Gilmour and Ethel Taylor.

MacInnis had graduated from the VG nursing school earlier in 1918. Her compassion and skill with critically ill Bostonians soon earned her the nickname "the Nightingale of Nova Scotia," after the legendary British nurse Florence Nightingale.

Sisters died on same day

Nurses spoke in hushed tones about the "blue death" people suffered when they couldn't get enough oxygen.

"The nurses stated in some of their writing about the experience they had to watch these patients struggle to breathe. One nurse said, "I used to stand by the patient's bed and I found myself breathing deeply, thinking that I was helping them breathe," she says.

At least 32 Nova Scotia nurses worked in Boston in the fall of 1918. Research shows at least 12 made the ultimate sacrifice, dying of the very flu they were fighting.

Sisters Georgina and Winnifred Flemming were among them. Young and healthy, the women from Londonderry went to Boston to help the sick. They got the flu and died on the same day in October 1918.

Another nurse, Ethel Redman, spent time treating patients in Boston before learning of a terrible flu outbreak in Lockeport. Redman raced back to Nova Scotia and treated the 800 sick people in the coastal community and was herself traumatized by daily death counts rising to 15. She and two other nurses were the only medical staff in the town.

"Between the three of them, they managed to save quite a few people," Stephens says.



Lottie Flick died on duty in Halifax during the 1918 flu outbreak

Redman and her colleagues survived, but many nurses died. Lottie Flick had cared for explosion victims in 1917 and flu patients in 1918. She caught the flu and died while on duty in Halifax.

Carrie Mitchell, a Dartmouth woman, had studied nursing in Massachusetts and stayed there during the outbreak. She said of the 100 nurses she worked with, 96 caught the flu. It's not clear how many died, but Mitchell survived.

Julie Cadegan left her home in Glace Bay and travelled to Boston to be with her soldier son, who had caught the flu. She helped him recover before travelling back to Cape Breton to treat flu patients there. She volunteered to go into a big outbreak in Inverness County, where she got the dreaded disease and died.

Stephens says the women's sacrifices have largely been forgotten. She hopes her research will bring their stories to more people as they reflect on the risks and sacrifices nurses are making again today as we deal with the deadly COVID-19 outbreak a century later.

Local Holiday Celebrations

During the holidays the NSNU received photos from members across the province demonstrating how they celebrated with their locals and communities. Take a look at a few of these great photos and stories from nurses working through the holidays in Nova Scotia.



HSAS – Fisherman's/South Shore

Some of our South Shore members, including Colleen Cameron-Mosher (the eyes behind the camera) and Michelle Lowe (as Santa), spread a little cheer to 14-month old Luke, seen with his mom, Rachel Sarty. Rachel is also a member of the NSNU and a cancer patient navigator. The holidays can be very difficult for families in need of care, but compassionate and dedicated nurses and other healthcare workers make a world of difference.

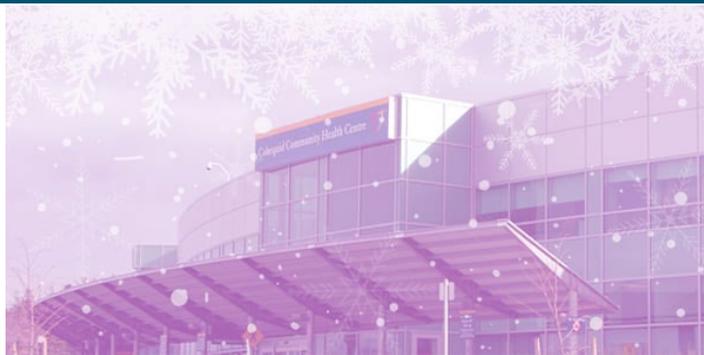


Aberdeen Hospital

The 4th floor Medicine Unit decorated a Christmas tree in a Nova Scotia Strong theme, as seen in the photo with nurse, Sandy (right). A fitting tribute to the holidays and our resilience as a province.

But that was not the only tree decorated at the Aberdeen. Another resided in the emergency department (above). Emergency staff donated \$650.00 to Big Brothers/Big Sisters and made a donation of money and supplies to the Pictou County SPCA. The nurses featured in the photo include Janet, Terri (and her niece Faith), Heather, Shirley and Kelly.





Cobequid Nurses Give Back

Nurses and staff working in the emergency department at Cobequid Community Health Centre in Lower Sackville gave generously during the holidays; they supported Shelter Nova Scotia, Feed Nova Scotia and the SPCA with donations totalling \$1000.



VON Yarmouth

Nurses working for VON Yarmouth were surprised with some beautiful and delicious cookies over the holidays, baked by Brooke, daughter of VON nurse Kim. Now that's one great way to get into the holiday spirit!



Cape Breton Regional Hospital

Continuing the tradition of giving during the holidays, the NSNU local at Cape Breton Regional Hospital provided donations of \$1000 each to Loaves and Fishes food bank and the Every Woman's Center in Sydney. CBRH local co-president Laura-Lee Sharpe personally delivered the donations on behalf of their members.



NSNU Gives to Feed Nova Scotia



NSNU Executive Director, Chris Albrecht presents a cheque to Feed Nova Scotia Executive Director, Nick Jennery on behalf of the staff of the Nurses' Union.

Throughout the year, NSNU staff collect Casual Day funds each Friday to give to Feed NS during the holidays. In 2020, the Board of Directors generously matched the employee contribution, then added an extra \$500.00 for a total of \$1340.00.

Feed NS distributes almost 2 million kilograms of donated food to their member network of 140 food banks and meal programs across the province. Their mission is to increase food security through food distribution, education and collaboration.

NSNU is pleased to support their efforts to serve communities and raise awareness of the challenges hunger and poverty create each day for thousands of Nova Scotians.



so everyone can enjoy
safe holiday fun.

Supporting the Snowsuit Fund

CFNU has a tradition of donating to the Snowsuit Fund in Ottawa in lieu of sending holiday greeting cards. This year, they expanded the program to include member organizations, like the NSNU, across the country.

They donated \$1000.00 to Nova Scotia's Family SOS snowsuit fund in the name of CFNU and NSNU! Thank you to our national affiliate for this generous contribution to a worthy cause. If you'd like to give to the snowsuit fund, visit www.familysos.ca.

NSNU Masks and Lanyards

A quick reminder to members that the NSNU masks and lanyards are not intended for clinical settings. These items are for your personal collection.

Use in the workplace is discouraged by the Union, your employers and infection control personnel.

The NSNU uses them in promotional materials for effect, but they're best used for shopping and other public outings.



Nurse Not Alone in Her Love of Solitaire



NSNU member, Vicki, makes an exciting appearance on the Dr. Phil show

Critical Care nurse and NSNU member, Vicki, recently received some international exposure for her solitaire prowess on a popular daytime talk show.

Vicki appeared in a sponsored segment of the highly rated Dr. Phil on Friday, December 18. She graciously gave NSNU permission to share her story, saying she really enjoyed the experience and that the producers were extremely appreciative of nurses.

When asked, Vicki told the good doctor that the game is a great way to relax and have a little fun. She is one of many in his virtual audience who play the game.

"I find that this Pandemic has been so hard on hospital staff, that I go to the Solitaire Grand Harvest on my much needed breaks just to give me a little peace and quiet, just to get away from all the realities we face in life right now."

Dr. Phil challenged Vicki and another fan, Aleshia from Washington State, to an on-air solitaire duel. With steely concentration, Vicki won the battle, proving once again that you can't beat a Nova Scotian nurse!



NSNU Scholarships & Bursaries

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union and Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions offer several annual scholarships and bursaries to NSNU members and their families. The deadline to apply for 2021 scholarships is March 24, 2021.

Learn more:

www.nsnu.ca/scholarshipsandbursaries

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