

what's nu?

October-November 2024

Nova Scotia
**Nurses
Union**



NURSE-PATIENT
RATIOS
SUMMIT 2024

SOMMET SUR LES
RATIOS
INFIRMIÈRE-PATIENT



Highlights

AGM Dates & Details

Opening the Black Box

Young-Nurse Exodus?

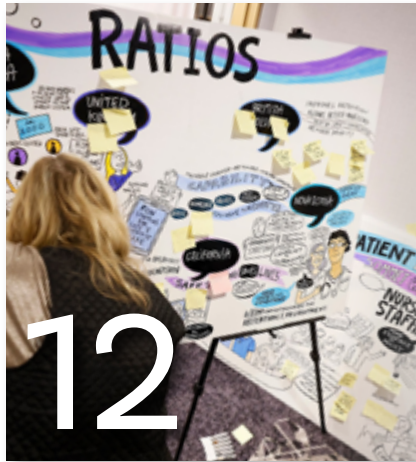
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150 Garland Ave. Dartmouth, N.S.





CONTACT

1.800 / 902.469.1474
Fax: 1.902.466.6935
nsnu.office@nsnu.ca

WEBSITE

www.nsnu.ca
Staff Directory: nsnu.ca/staff

SOCIAL MEDIA

-  Nova Scotia Nurses' Union
-  @NS_Nurses
-  @NSNursesU
-  NSNursesUnion

MYNSNU APP

 Available in Apple App & Google Play stores
OR: nsnu.itacit.com

Board of Directors



JANET HAZELTON

President
janet.hazelton@nsnu.ca



DONNA GILLIS

1st Vice-President
donna.gillis@nsnu.ca



JAMIE STEWART

VP Finance
jamie.stewart@nsnu.ca



LAURIE FORREST

Eastern VP
laurie.forrest@nsnu.ca



ANNE BOUTILIER

Central VP
anne.boutilier@nsnu.ca



DENISE ELMS

Northern VP
denise.elms@nsnu.ca



TRACY D'ENTREMONT

Western VP
tracy.d'entremont@nsnu.ca



ALAINE HALLIDAY

VP LPNs
alaine.halliday@nsnu.ca



GLENDA SABINE

VP Long Term Care
glenda.sabine@nsnu.ca



KIM WILLIAMS

VP Community Care
kim.williams@nsnu.ca



NATALIE NYMARK

IWK VP
natalie.nymark@nsnu.ca

Union Dues

If you work at more than one NSNU facility and pay union dues more than once in a pay period, you may be eligible for a refund from the Provincial Office.

Members who have been paid for less than 7.5 hours in Acute Care and less than 8 hours in Long Term Care in one bi-weekly pay period may also be eligible for a refund from the Provincial Office.

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

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

Updating Info

To add or change any member information, the NSNU asks that you **fill out the following form**, which can be found by following the QR code or the link below:

forms.office.com/r/paX34P4cmY

After submitting the form, please allow at least five business days for your information to be updated.



Land Acknowledgement

The NSNU sits on and operates in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional and unceded territories of the Mi'kmaq.

As settlers and visitors of Nova Scotia we acknowledge the importance of these lands, which we call home. We are all Treaty People.

We do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility to improve relationships between nations, to work towards healing the wounds of colonialism and to improve our own understanding of local Indigenous Peoples and their cultures.

We honour and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us to this land. We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

President's Notebook

Looking Ahead to 2025



It's hard to believe that a quarter of the 21st century is now in the past. It seems like yesterday we were preparing for the year 2000 and Y2K, or the infamous "millennium bug" that was expected to generate global chaos. For those who may recall, it also felt special, particularly when the world did not come to an end, as predicted.

Dial-up internet was a thing, flip phones were hi-tech, Big Brother and Survivor debuted, frosted tips and streaks were the rage, a dozen eggs cost 89 cents, General Hospital was still the most popular soap opera, boy bands and Destiny's Child conquered the music charts, the Atkins Diet slimmed us down, and denim tuxedos were on trend.

The 2000s were a time of significant technological advancements with the rise of the internet, the social media explosion, a video gaming revolution, mobile phones and the early introduction of cellphone cameras. Today's younger nurses grew up on the internet - a constant presence in their lives - and had greater access to information (for good or bad) and communication devices.

Since that time, the rate of technological change has been accelerating. With the proliferation of AI in our personal and professional lives, and as it reshapes health care, we are challenged to adapt and be alert.

Twenty-five years ago, we started talking about staff shortages and overcrowding. Those affectations to the healthcare system were on the rise and unions were confronting problems in patient care and the nursing profession.

Fast forward to today when nursing seats have been added to educational institutions, incentives to retain

and recruit nurses are more plentiful, internationally educated nurses have joined our ranks by the hundreds, and improvements to collective agreement language aimed at achieving better work-life balance for our members have addressed many issues.

Unfortunately, unlike the rapid speed of technological change, systemic change in healthcare is taking years to advance. Prolonged neglect and reactive measures to resolve problems (like agency nursing) have resulted in deeply entrenched obstacles to quality care and universal instability.

It's a complex situation that relies on a holistic approach for recovery. Fixing problems in isolation will only compound the problems. Working collaboratively with stakeholders, including frontline nurses, is the best hope for recovery. Any other process will continue to be costly, ineffective, redundant and futile.

What makes me optimistic is that we have answers, we know what is required to lessen the burden on nurses and improve care. Nurse unions have been researching and meeting on these issues for over two decades and are well versed in recommendations that can ease the struggles. Implementing those remedies takes time, patience and determination.

I encourage all members to speak up, to be your own best advocate while also making your voice heard within the union ranks. Your opinions inform the decisions of the union.

I wish you a safe, healthy and productive 2025, filled with hope and pride for your professional and personal accomplishments.


BScN RN, MPA, ICD.D

Alexa McDonough Lecture

NSNU President, Janet Hazelton was a panelist at this year's Alexa McDonough Lecture hosted by Mount Saint Vincent University and moderated by Claudia Chender, leader of the Nova Scotia NDP.

In partnership with the Alexa McDonough Institute at Mount Saint Vincent University, the Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation presented the 2024 Alexa McDonough Lecture, "Women on the Frontlines".

The topic of discussion was "Women on the Frontlines: How unions improve women's working conditions." Union leaders shared their insights into the challenges

and gains that have been made collectively over the years, and what more must be done.

Whether it is women on the frontlines of healthcare, public service, or teaching future generations in the classroom, women's voices must be heard. The Foundation aims to ensure women have the tools they need to succeed on their terms. The hope is to continue Alexa's legacy through these types of initiatives.

The event welcomed Janet Hazelton, Sandra Mullen, President of NSGEU, and Heidi Yetman, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) for the panel discussion.

They discussed similarities between nurses and teachers in terms of staff shortages, burnout, and violence. The esteemed speakers helped navigate how we can stand up for the workers on the ground and support them so they can succeed, how we work with the government to get wins, and run successful campaigns that garner the support of the public. If you missed it and would like to watch please [click here](#).

Alexa McDonough was a much-admired Canadian politician who became the first woman to lead a major, recognized political party in Nova Scotia when she was elected the Nova Scotia New Democratic Party's leader in 1980.

McDonough, who passed away at age 77 in 2022, was elected the Member of Parliament (MP) for the federal electoral district of Halifax in 1997. She stepped down as party leader in 2003 but continued to serve as an MP for two more terms until 2008 when she retired from politics. In 2009, she became the interim president of Mount Saint Vincent University and was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in December of that year.

NSNU PRESIDENT REAPPOINTED TO THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA

Earlier this fall, NSNU president, Janet Hazelton was reappointed to the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia as an employee representative of the Board.

The Honourable Jill Balsler, former Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration made the Order-in-Council. The two-year appointment expires in the fall of 2026.

Janet has been the NSNU's worker representative since 2005. Her longstanding involvement with WCB includes participation in the Finance Committee, Audit and Risk Committee, Governance and Policy Committee and as Chair of the KPI Committee.

At the time of the appointment, Minister Balsler thanked Janet for her willingness to serve in this capacity.

The Workers' Compensation Board provides workplace injury insurance to workers and employers in Nova Scotia. WCB Nova Scotia aims to protect the workforce, inform and inspire Nova Scotians in the prevention of workplace injury, but when it occurs, provide security from its impact to workers and their families, in support of healthy and safe return to work.



Janet Hazelton; NSGEU President Sandra Mullen; Heidi Yetman, President of CTF; Claudia Chender, Leader of NS NDP



CANADIAN FEDERATION OF NURSES UNIONS NEGOTIATORS MEET IN NOVA SCOTIA

Negotiators from across the country met in Dartmouth in late September to discuss nursing issues and share bargaining strategies and data from national and provincial findings.

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union welcomed representatives of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions counterparts from far and wide to our office in Burnside, bringing together some of the best and brightest negotiators in Canada.

Their collective experience and knowledge made the meetings informative and constructive. These are difficult times for the labour movement as some governments continue to make cuts and concessions at the expense of hard working and dedicated employees. It is comforting to know that our nurse unions take a collaborative approach to bargaining and have skilled professionals at the bargaining table.

The CFNU negotiators meet twice annually to compare collective agreements, the political climate and will, work-life issues that impact nurses, and bargaining tactics.



BILLIONS OF PUBLIC HEALTH DOLLARS Spent on For-Profit Nursing Agencies

Nationwide spending on for-profit nursing agencies has boomed to billions within one fiscal year, reveals a new report from the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions.

“While governments, employers and unions have been working to fix workplaces and solve the health care crisis, corporate stakeholders have been taking advantage of the hardship facing our health care system,” says CFNU President Linda Silas. “One thing is now crystal clear: for-profit nursing agencies are not a sustainable solution to Canada’s staffing crisis.”

Aiming to shed light on the skyrocketing use of for-profit agencies across Canada, the CFNU worked with Queen’s University to conduct this mixed methods study led by Dr. Joan Almost. Released this fall, ***Opening the black box: Unpacking the use of nursing agencies in Canada*** unveiled a sharp increase in agency spending and a concerning lack of regulations and transparency over how these companies operate.

\$1.5 billion public health dollars are projected to be paid out to for-profit nursing agencies in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The rise in spending has been rapid, with a 6-fold increase over just three years, up from \$247.9 million in 2020-2021. These estimates are based on available data, but, given the lack of transparency, the real values are much higher.

Dr. Almost emphasized the impact of the industry operating largely unregulated and the need for accountability.

“Employers are being put into pressured situations when an agency they are working with further increases the rates, leading to a lot of conversations about the

ceiling and deciding when enough is enough,” said Dr. Almost. “Do they go along with the unexpected rate hikes, or leave units without adequate staffing, or cancel services?”

Silas says employer testimonies underscore the dire need to sustainably address staffing shortages through proven retention and recruitment initiatives.

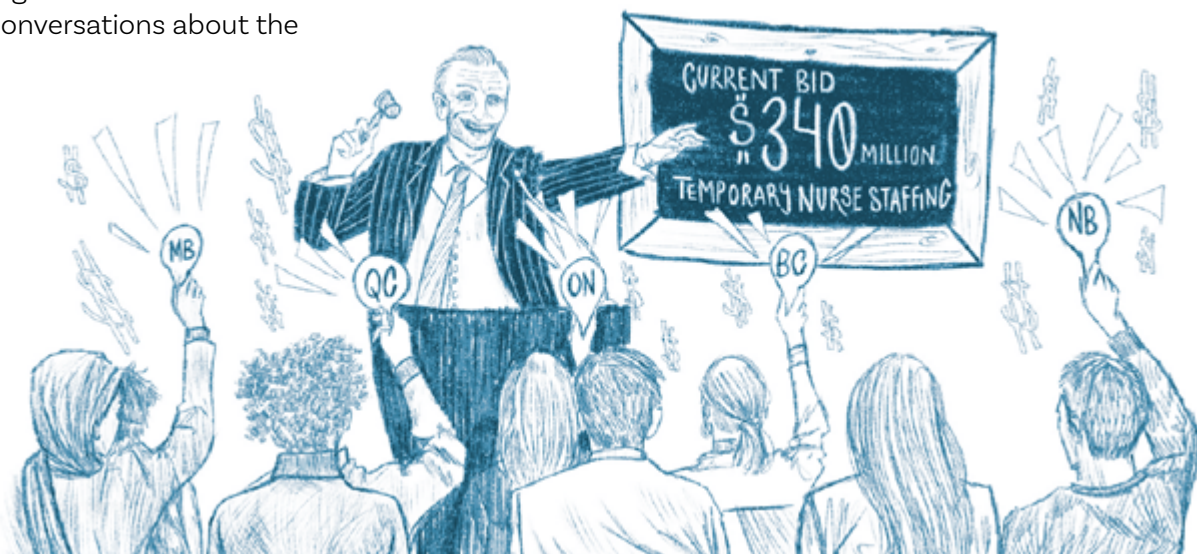
“Billions of dollars have been pushed into short-term fixes when we could have had an incredible impact on the nursing shortage and our health care workplaces with that investment,” Silas explains.

Opening the black box outlines key recommendations to address this costly trend, including:

- Governments must immediately begin working towards phasing out the use of private for-profit nurse staffing agencies in Canada.
- Governments and employers must take immediate action to solve the nursing shortage crisis.
- Until private nursing agencies can be completely phased out, actions must be taken to implement regulations and oversight.

“We can’t allow this profiteering of the health care crisis to continue,” says Silas. “It’s time to do right by nurses and do right by the public and implement sustainable solutions to pull our country out of this crisis.”

To read the report, follow the QR code or go to nursesunions.ca/research/opening-the-black-box/





CFNU PRESIDENT APPOINTED TO COMMITTEE GUIDING EXPANSION OF PHARMACARE

In November 2024, Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU), was appointed to the National Pharmacare Committee of Experts tasked with making recommendations for the government's implementation of the next stage of national pharmacare.

“As a nurse and lifelong advocate for universal pharmacare, I am humbled and honoured to be a part of the committee working on this historic and much-needed expansion of our public health care system,” said Silas.

“Nurses know the impact universal pharmacare could have on their patients. Imagine watching a patient leave your care while knowing they cannot afford the prescription they need,” explained Silas. “Millions of Canadians can’t afford medications that are essential to their health and well-being. A truly comprehensive, universal and single-payer pharmacare program will change lives.”

Bill C-64, *An act respecting Pharmacare*, follows nurses’ and health care workers’ recommendations to create a framework for a national, single-payer, universal and comprehensive pharmacare program. The legislation included coverage for prescription medications starting with birth control, diabetes medications and a fund for critically needed diabetic equipment.

Over the next year, the National Pharmacare Committee of Experts will develop recommendations on how to operationalize and finance the next phase of a national pharmacare program.

A Message from CFNU President Linda Silas

MAKING NURSES' VOICES HEARD

Canada needs a bold vision for the future of our health care and Nova Scotia is no exception. Over the last few years of a growing staffing crisis, the cracks in our public health care systems have only grown deeper and wider.

These cracks are symptoms of an incomplete health care system. I first noticed it when I was nursing at the bedside: patients ending up in the emergency room with dire illnesses that could have been prevented if they had a primary care provider monitoring early symptoms. I know for nurses and health care workers across the country, this experience is all too familiar.

As nurses, we are uniquely positioned to see the cracks in our health care systems. But our unique position, combined with our grit, compassion and determination, means we also see the solutions.

From safe nurse-patient ratios to universal and comprehensive pharmacare, we are ensuring our governments and elected leaders are not only hearing nurses' voices - they're listening, respecting and acting.

With a federal election looming, nurses' voices are as important as ever. We know, politicians don't see the light, they feel the heat. And we're holding their feet to the fire.

This winter, Nova Scotia Nurses' Union leaders will join nurse union leaders from across the country in Ottawa for a full day of face-to-face meetings with federal policymakers about nurses' most pressing issues. We're pressing our federal leaders to put \$1billion of funding behind Health Canada's Nursing Retention Toolkit, aimed at improving your working lives through concrete actions and programs to improve health working conditions.

Canada relies heavily on internationally educated nurses to fill our growing need for nurses, but we're hearing from too many that they don't have the support they need as they try to join the nursing workforce. We're taking these concerns directly to MPs at our parliamentary breakfast when we launch a new report recommending expanded pathways and support for IENs. IENs need and deserve respect and support every step of the way, and it cannot stop at recruitment. Retention and respect are necessities when nurses are moving across the world to provide care.

But we know IENs are only one piece of the puzzle.

To truly address the staffing crisis, Canada must take a leadership role in implementing sustainable solutions to the poor working conditions and poor staffing models pushing nurses out of the profession. The evidence is clear: safe nurse-patient ratios improve working conditions, nurse retention and, critically, patient care. Canada needs a national plan to bring this life-saving strategy to all of our health care settings across the country. Our historic summit on safe nurse-patient ratios was only the start. Together, we will make sure every politician who wants to be elected knows that we need nurses. We're facing a critical shortage of health care workers, and we will fight to ensure cuts to health care and health staffing are not on the agenda.

As Canada's largest group of regulated health professionals, we are a critical and influential part of the country's health care system. We will fight to ensure nurses' voices continue to be heard. And when we fight, we win for nurses, for Nova Scotia, and for all of Canada.

In unwavering solidarity,



Linda Silas
CFNU President

AGM 2025 Dates & Details

DREAM, DARE, DELIVER

In 2025, the 48th Annual General Meeting of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union will take place from **April 14-17** at the Best Western Glengarry Hotel in Truro. The theme for the 2025 NSNU AGM is **Dream, Dare, Deliver**, a catchy and meaningful title that captures the spirit of nursing professionals and the determination of the Nurses' Union.

This upcoming event will include Board elections, requests for Expression of Interest for Standing Committees, nominations for Honorary Members, Resolutions and more. We will conduct union business, develop strategies, make important decisions for the coming year, and discuss past, present, and future activities.

All AGM related **documents, guides** and **forms** are available at nsnu.ca/AGM2025. You will require your login credentials.

HIGHLIGHTS & DETAILS

- Nominations for the **Board of Directors** and **Honorary Members** will close on **January 16th**.
- **Resolutions** must be submitted by **January 31st**.
- Those applying for **First Time** or **35 & Under** draws, and **Small Local Observers** must submit their forms by **January 31st**.
- **Online registration opens February 3rd** and closes on **March 3rd**. One representative from each local is responsible for registering all participants (delegates and observers) who will be attending. Links to registration forms will be available on the Member's Only section of the NSNU website in the new year.
- For those attending **only the Education Day** on Tuesday, April 15th, there will be a **separate online registration form** to be completed by the individual attending. Payment of **\$50** will be required to complete your online registration.
- The **hospitality event** will take place on the evening of Tuesday, **April 15th** at Belly Up BBQ & Grill in Truro.
- **Keltic Clothing** will be on site selling uniforms and accessories.
- The NSNU will be selling an assortment of **merchandise**. NSNU accepts cash, credit, NSNU Local cheques and debit.
- NSNU will once again be collecting **dignity items** (menstrual hygiene products and incontinence briefs) for those in need.
- The **NSNU Charity Draw** continues! Each local is asked to donate an item to the fundraiser. All proceeds from the 50/50 draw during the hospitality event and tickets sales from the charity draw go to The Marguerite Centre in Halifax and Hope Project in Sydney.
- The deadline to apply for most NSNU or affiliate **scholarships** is **March 15th**. Go to nsnu.ca/resources/education/scholarships for details. Successful recipients will be announced at the AGM.

2025 AGM TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

- **Sunday April 13**
Board of Directors Meeting
- **Monday April 14**
Component & Regional Meetings
- **Tuesday April 15**
8:30 am - 4:00 pm: Education Day
6:30 pm - 11:30 pm: Hospitality Event
- **Wednesday April 16**
8:30 am - 3:00 pm: AGM Business
6:30 pm - 12:00 am: Banquet and Dance
- **Thursday April 17**
8:30 am - 4:00: AGM Business

The theme for the Wednesday, April 16th Banquet and Dance is **1950's Sock Hop!** Start planning your costumes now before all the poodle skirts and James Dean bomber jackets are snatched up! Binge watch Happy Days, Grease, American Graffiti, and Peggy Sue Got Married for inspiration.

More information will be featured in the January 2025 issue of What's NU?, emailed in Campaigner e-memos to members and Local executives and posted online at nsnu.ca/AGM2025 in the coming weeks and months.





Global Nursing Leaders Gather for First Canadian Summit on Safe Nurse-Patient Ratios

Nursing leaders from around the world gathered in Ottawa November 27-28 for the first Canadian summit on safe nurse-patient ratios, hosted by the CFNU.

“The nurse staffing crisis knows no borders. We are facing a global nursing shortage, and whether in Canada or the United Kingdom, safe nurse staffing is critically important,” explains CFNU President Linda Silas. “Safe staffing models are being brought into effect in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, and we know strong implementation is critical to success and to bringing safe staffing across the country. Working together across jurisdictions, we can solve the nursing shortage with tangible evidence-based solutions and set the stage for a global recovery.”

British Columbia became the first jurisdiction in Canada to commit to establishing minimum nurse-patient ratios in April 2023. Nova Scotia followed suit only months later, committing to develop a safe staffing framework to determine the appropriate number of nurses for safe care in different settings. NSNU president, Janet Hazelton was a panelist/presenter at the conference.

“Staffing is not a matter of dollars and cents – it’s a matter of safety for both nurses and their patients. Staffing decisions need to reflect this reality,” explained Silas. “The evidence is clear: we need higher nurse staffing levels to improve nurse and patient outcomes. This summit provides an opportunity to get academic experts, nurses unions, employers and government officials in the room together to practically explore how we can bring this vital tool for nurse and patient safety across the country.”

The Nurse-Patient Ratios Summit brought together national and international nursing leaders with academic experts, nurses unions, employers and government officials. The Summit was co-chaired by Silas and Prof. Jane Ball, Director of the Institute of Nursing Excellence at the Royal College of Nurses in the United Kingdom. Prof. Ball delivered a keynote at the Summit, focused on moving nurse staffing from evidence to policy.



OTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDED

- Leigh Chapman**, Canada’s Chief Nursing Officer
- Lisa Fitzpatrick**, State Secretary, Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation (Victoria)
- Adriane Gear**, President, British Columbia Nurses’ Union
- Janet Hazelton**, President, Nova Scotia Nurses’ Union
- Professor Alison Leary**, Senior Consultant, World Health Organisation
- Michelle Mahon**, Director of Nursing Practice, National Nurses United in the USA
- Kim McMillan**, Associate Professor, University of Ottawa
- Helen Whyley**, Executive Director, Royal College of Nurses in Wales

Attendance was by invitation only. The CFNU is grateful for Health Canada’s financial support for the Nurse-Patient Ratios Summit.

NOVA SCOTIA NURSES' UNION COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union hosted a Council of Presidents (CoP) meeting on Tuesday, November 5th at the Best Western Glengarry Hotel in Truro.

The fall gathering, which invited Local presidents, co-presidents or a designate from each of our 124 Locals, welcomed representatives from 59 Locals and close to 85 participants in total to discuss the latest collective agreements, Local administration, and CFNU's recent report, **Safe Hours Save Lives: Study on Safe Working Hours for Nurses** for a 90-minute session.

Guest presenters of that report, Dr. Heather Scott-Marshall and Imelda Wong, joined virtually to provide an overview of the **Safe Hours Save Lives: Study on Safe Working Hours for Nurses** report.

Safe Hours Saves Lives delivers a critical examination of escalating burnout among Canadian nurses due to excessive work hours and its impact on nurse well-being and patient safety. It serves as a blueprint for creating a sustainable and safe future in nursing, emphasizing the need for immediate action to reverse the current troubling trends. That report can be found at [this link](#).

Attendees were also afforded time during an open forum to voice their concerns and ask questions of NSNU representatives.

We thank those who attended for their contributions and for making time for this important meeting.



The NSNU would like to extend thanks to **belairdirect** for their contributions of coffee and tea, chocolate, notebooks and pens for members in attendance at the Council of Presidents.

HOW TO MEASURE THE YOUNG-NURSE EXODUS

In a summary report released September 24th, the Montreal Economic Institute (MEI) made staffing-shortage claims that prompted numerous media calls to NSNU. For several days, nurses' union leaders from across the country spoke to reporters to provide clarity on a convoluted subject.

The MEI categorized staffing shortages as a worsening situation, faulting the Canadian systems' (presumably public health care) inability to retain nurses, especially young nurses. Their data collection showed that in 2013, for every 100 young nurses entering the profession 32 left before the age of 35. By 2022, the most recent year for which the MEI cited data, the number climbed to 40 departures per 100.

The report asserts that Manitoba and British Columbia lost less than a third of their new young nurses in 2022, while many provinces' ratios were closer to half. MEI claims New Brunswick performed worst of all, losing eight young nurses for every ten who entered the profession. The article states, six in ten nurses under the age of 35 in Nova Scotia are abandoning their professional nursing career.

The MEI report referenced numerous literature reviews and studies including two CFNU citations but failed to connect all the dots that led to their assumptions. The report does not demonstrate that their findings are accurate.

No doubt there is a nationwide nursing shortage. Whether 60 per cent of young nurses leave Nova Scotia annually, is still up for debate. The province had 12,738 registered nurses in 2023, up 18 per cent from 2022, according to the Nova Scotia College of Nursing. Since April 2022, the largest provider of health services in the province, Nova Scotia Health, has added 372 nurses under 35.

The author of the MEI article maintains that improved wages and more flexible collective agreements would alleviate some of the problems, including systematically assigning weekends and evening shifts only to young nurses – a practice that

is not proven to be widespread. Wages, for one, have improved significantly since 2022, the timestamp for MEI's data.

Furthermore, the author says nurses need complete freedom to practice their profession the way they want and wherever they want, whether in a public hospital, self-employment in a nurse practitioner clinic, or contractual work through an independent agency. MEI alleges independent nursing agencies provide essential healthcare professionals with more employment options and is highly critical of the "war" on nursing agencies.

Across the country, billions of dollars are being paid out to agencies to fill nursing gaps. Propping up nursing numbers with temporary workers is not a long-term solution and does not resolve issues that lead to burnout, physical and moral injury. Nor does this practice guarantee improved patient outcomes. This money could and should be better spent on more innovative solutions.

Case in point, the NSNU and other unions are working with the province to establish an internal travel nurse program where nurses have more autonomy and are remunerated at a higher rate of pay for travel in Nova Scotia, while remaining employed in the public healthcare system, complete with pension, benefits, employee rights and union protections. Other pieces of contract language address retention and work-life balance, especially for our rural and remote members.

At the crux of this argument is the lack of consistent data that clearly and objectively tracks career transitions, factors are genuinely indicative of a fluctuating nurse workforce. The MEI's "suggestions" infer that young nurses are foregoing their licensure, leaving the profession altogether without fully examining the reasoning and presenting all of the facts.

In late 2022, CFNU called on governments to establish a Pan-Canadian health human resource (HHR) strategy backed by sufficient long-term funding and real accountability. We need data collection and

analysis that provides accurate interpretation of information and allows for effective nursing workforce planning. A national body charged with the collection and effective use of data could provide a better roadmap to avoid recurring and drastic nursing shortages.

To further support the call for a national HHR data repository, a Professor in the School of Nursing at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario is currently conducting an environmental scan on the nursing workforce in Canada, which includes exploring the availability of existing data sources, identifying gaps across all data sources and providing recommendations for future data needs. This project is funded by Health Canada and the results will be presented in a report to the Principal Nursing Advisors Task Force (PNATF) and the Committee on Health Workforce (CHW).

Overall, nursing workforce data at the federal, provincial/territorial, and regional levels are collected

by a complex network of nursing workforce organizations, including regulatory authorities, CIHI and Stats Canada. A central and accessible office that offers transparent information across a broad spectrum of touchpoints might lessen the proliferation of misinformation.

In short, the Montreal Economic Institute is a pro-business think tank, quick to defend any perceived attack on a for-profit company, like a travel nurse agency. To support their position, they quoted inflated stats on young-nurse employment, attributed the cause to a mismanaged public healthcare system and concluded that travel nursing is a panacea, not a drain on resources.

Numbers don't usually lie but do large numbers always imply a significant trend, especially without providing context? When we look towards studies and reports to guide policy and impact change, we must import due diligence by considering bias, correlation and causation before jumping to conclusions.



CROSSING THE CAUSEWAY

The NSNU Board of Directors “Crossed the Causeway” on Monday, October 28th for a fabulous evening on beautiful Cape Breton Island.

President Janet Hazelton and the Board of Directors were in Sydney for a meet-and-greet with NSNU members which took place from 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm at The Holiday Inn.

Attendees enjoyed light refreshments as representatives of the Nurses’ Union answered questions, listened to concerns and provided support for Locals in that region.

The Board of Directors held their regular Board meeting in Sydney the next day before returning home later that evening.

The NSNU hopes to schedule additional Meet and Greet gatherings throughout the province in the coming year. Watch the NSNU calendar for events (nsnu.ca/event-calendar) like these and other union meetings and activities.



MANAGING LOCAL FACEBOOK GROUPS

Risks, Precautions, Best Practices

Social media has opened up new avenues for communication and community building. Many Locals within the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union have created Facebook groups to connect, share information, and support one another. Alongside the advantages of these platforms, there are also various risks and responsibilities that need to be managed thoughtfully to maintain safety, respect, and professionalism within these spaces.

Social media can sometimes encourage behaviors that wouldn't be acceptable in face-to-face interactions. Unchecked comments may lead to unprofessional conduct, which can tarnish the image of both individuals, the Local or nursing as a whole.

A successful Facebook group should foster a culture of respect and professionalism. Encourage members to engage positively and supportively, reminding them that they are representatives of the nursing profession. By taking precautions, NSNU Locals can utilize Facebook groups effectively.

CLEAR GUIDELINES

Establish clear rules and guidelines for group participation. This should include what is considered appropriate content, how to engage respectfully, and the consequences of violating these rules.

MODERATING

Assign dedicated moderators who can oversee the group's activity, ensuring that all posts and comments adhere to the established guidelines. Moderators should act swiftly to address any issues of misinformation or unprofessional behavior.

TURNING OFF COMMENTS

To maintain a professional environment, we advise admins to turn off comments when deemed necessary. This reduces the risk of inappropriate interactions and helps focus the group's purpose on disseminating accurate and valuable information.

REGULAR REVIEWS

Conduct regular assessments of the group's activity to ensure compliance with guidelines and to update any protocols as necessary.

New Position Created at NSNU

Occupational Health & Safety Advisor

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union is very pleased to announce that the organization has created a new staff position dedicated exclusively to occupational health and safety.

Heather Matthews has been hired to fill the position of OHS Advisor. She has been an OHS professional for many years, formerly employed as a Manager of Health & Safety with GEM Health Care Group and as a Safety Specialist, then Safety Manager, with Aware-NS.



She holds a Bachelor of Human Ecology, with a major in Facility Management from Mount Saint Vincent University and a Certificate in Occupational Health & Safety from Ryerson University.

Heather brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to the Nurses' Union. Her start date was November 25th.

Please join us in welcoming Heather to the NSNU team.

Canadian Blood Services Members Ratify Agreement

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union is pleased to announce that registered nurses employed by Canadian Blood Services voted in favour of a recent tentative agreement.

Face-to-face bargaining between representatives of CBS and the Nurses' Union began May 30th, 2024, and concluded on October 30th. Voting on the agreement was conducted between November 7th and 12th.

Members accepted the ten-year contract that will see improvements in wages, premiums, benefits, and work-life balance. Aside from a competitive wage package that should help retain nurses in this sector of community care, the agreement addresses numerous issues of concern.

New language and language improvements were achieved during this round of negotiations thanks to the advocacy and dedication of the bargaining teams. The bargaining committee appreciates the patience and support CBS nurses have shown throughout this process. The bargaining committee includes:

NSNU Executive Director, Chief Negotiator - Chris Albrecht
Vice-President Community Care - Kim Williams
Labour Relations Representatives - Bev Strachan & Wendy Johnson
CBS PNC Member Representatives - Matilda Fenech & Lianne Lenihan

CBS nurses work in Halifax and Sydney; approximately 18 registered nurses in total.

The new collective agreement will expire on October 31st, 2030, and is retroactive to November 1st, 2020. The length of the agreement enables the NSNU to secure existing benefits while maintaining wage parity throughout the lifetime of the agreement.

We thank those who participated in the information session and voting process and thank all CBS members for their continued dedication to the nursing profession and the communities they serve.



INTRODUCING, *Nurses' Nook*

After 8 years without a trademark we are happy to announce the perfect name for the NSNU Boutique! After receiving an overwhelming response to our poll, we are excited to reveal that the winning name (with a majority of votes) is "*Nurses' Nook*."

This name captures the warm and welcoming atmosphere of our boutique, while paying homage to the incredible

nurses who shop there. We want to thank members who participated in the naming process and shared their ideas with us. Your engagement and passion for our community are what make the Nurses' Nook a special place.

Congratulations to Michelle Lowe, who was chosen from a pool of the Boutique Naming participants on winning a \$200 gift card to shop the Nook!



ENCOURAGING NOVA SCOTIANS TO FIGHT THE FLU

For six months of every year – typically November through April – that coughing, sneezing, sniffing, aching, feverish feeling is a sign that the flu has caught you!

With more people unmasked and emergency departments already overflowing, getting vaccinated against the seasonal flu and COVID-19 is an important step to protect yourself and others this flu season.

The NSNU understands that nurses are already aware of the significance of immunization and the risks the flu poses to vulnerable groups—such as seniors, children, pregnant individuals, and those who are immunocompromised. Nurses know the facts.

Each year, NSNU shares an Influenza Immunization campaign aimed at educating the public, easing the strain on health practitioners as they continue their vital work.

Once again, we're encouraging all Nova Scotians to do their part to alleviate the pressures healthcare workers face every day. Show a little muscle in the fight against the flu!

Our campaign to Fight the Flu is communicated through various channels, including television commercials, a dedicated webpage, video messaging and social media promotions. Additionally, on November 5th, NSNU President Janet Hazelton spoke directly to Nova Scotians during her appearances with Paul Brothers from Global News and Crystal Garrett from CTV Morning Live.

Learn more at nsnu.ca/flu.



CTV's Crystal Garrett & Janet Hazelton



Janet Hazelton & Global's Paul Brothers



Office of the Worker Counsellor

For workers in Nova Scotia facing challenges with the workers' compensation system or occupational health and safety issues, the Office of the Worker Counsellor provides an invaluable service. The program offers free information, advice, and support - a crucial resource for those navigating the system's complex processes and fighting for their rights.

Since 2009, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour has received funding from the Workers' Compensation Board to operate the program. Over the years, the Office has earned an excellent reputation for professionalism, balance, and fairness.

At the core of the Office of the Worker Counsellor's mission is a deep commitment to advocating for injured and vulnerable workers. Whether it's guiding someone through the WCB claim process, helping them understand their right to refuse unsafe work, or teaching free courses across the province, Counsellors are steadfast allies. Their expertise empowers workers to exercise their right to be safe at work and to access fair benefits if the safety system fails.

But the role of the Office of the Worker Counsellor goes beyond individual cases. They are also tireless champions for systemic change, working to improve the overall workers' compensation and occupational health and safety systems. By maintaining relationships with key government bodies and labor organizations, they work to ensure the perspectives and experiences of workers are heard.

Workers' compensation and workplace safety are not just administrative hurdles - they profoundly impact the lives and livelihoods of Nova Scotians. When someone is injured on the job, the consequences can be devastating, both financially and emotionally. A large proportion of workers don't receive any education on the complexities of workers' compensation until after they're injured. At that point, navigating the systems can feel almost impossible.

That's where the Office of the Worker Counsellor steps in. Through educational workshops and customized

presentations, they equip workers and their representatives with the knowledge to navigate complex systems and assert their rights. And by elevating workers' stories, they strive to give a voice to those who may otherwise be marginalized or overlooked.

Some of the most vulnerable workers are those struggling with psychological injuries. For too long, the system ignored the consequences of work on mental health and discriminated against those who were emotionally scarred by events at work. Together with the labour movement, the Office of the Worker Counsellor fought for change to these unfair laws. Together, they were successful.

On September 1, 2024 workers who develop psychological injuries because of cumulative stress in the workplace, such as harassment and bullying, became eligible for benefits. These changes weren't perfect, and it remains to be seen how much of an impact they'll have on the lives of workers, but this is a step forward.

The Office has made progress in health and safety, too. Next year, starting on September 1, 2025, employers will be responsible for ensuring their employees are safe from psychological hazards in the same way they must protect workers from physical hazards.

Positive change in the law is meaningless if there is no one to ensure the law is enforced. It's up to every worker to demand a safe workplace and fair compensation.

In a world that can sometimes feel stacked against workers, the Office of the Worker Counsellor stands for fairness, dignity, and justice. Through unwavering advocacy and dedicated service, the Office of the Worker Counsellor ensures that no worker has to face workplace challenges alone.

If you or anyone you know has questions or needs help with workplace safety or compensation issues, the Office of the Worker Counsellor is here. The services are free and confidential and are provided by a professional, knowledgeable, and compassionate team.

Don't hesitate to reach out at 902-455-5455, 1-877-220-2722, or info@workercounsellor.ca.

Winnie Kettleson

Eastern Labour School Scholarship

Winnie Kettleson was a long-time member and former employee of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union. Before her passing, it was her wish to establish a scholarship in her name.

The scholarship is to be awarded to a member of the NSNU attending Eastern Labour School (ELS) for the first time.

The scholarship will be granted to a member participating in the General Labour Relations course at ELS. ELS is held every two years, hosted on a rotational basis by one of the four Atlantic nurse unions (NSNU, PEINI, NBNU, RNUNL).

The \$1000.00 scholarship will be awarded over the next 20 years to develop new nurse-union activists and continue Winnie's legacy as a staunch and formidable champion of the NSNU.

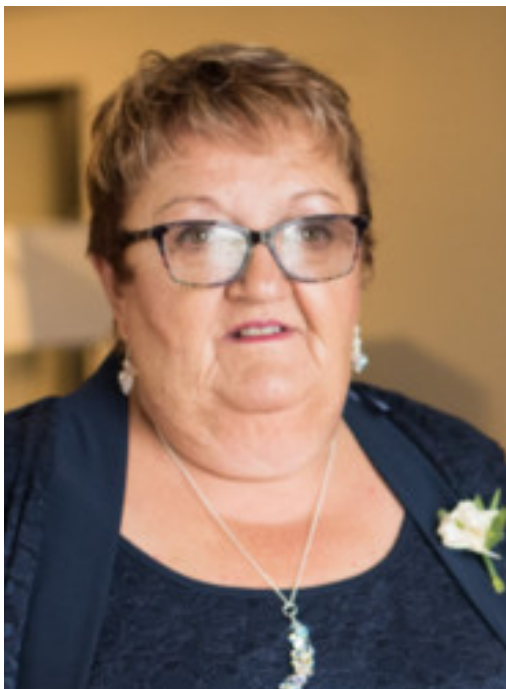
Born in Alberta, Winnie considered herself a proud member of the nursing profession. She served as President of Nova Scotia Nurses' Union for two terms before taking on the staff role of Labour Relations Representative.

Winnie passed away on December 29, 2023, at the age of 89.



Shirley Farrell

Memorial Solidarity & Wellness Grant



In keeping with the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union's mission, vision and values the **Shirley Farrell Memorial Solidarity and Wellness Grant** was developed, a sum of \$2000 (all of or part of), to be awarded annually to a Local(s) for an event(s) to promote Union activism.

Shirley's dedication to nursing and her pursuit of justice for her colleagues led her to many positions within the NSNU including shop steward and local president. Her nursing career and her union involvement brought her great joy; she formed many friendships and loved representing her members.

A fixture at NSNU gatherings and events, she was known for her outspoken demeanour and strongly held beliefs.

This Grant will provide funding to NSNU locals in good standing to support projects, events or activities that encourage union growth, participation, and solidarity.

To learn more, go to nsnu.ca/resources/education/scholarships/nsnu.

The deadline for applications is January 31st, annually. The successful Local(s) will be announced at the AGM of the same year.

I'M JUST NOT BETTER YET

A familiar face to many and former NSNU member, Duana d'Entremont, NP has added to her repertoire of talents – author. Duana's children's book is now published in both paperback and e-book format.

She says it wrote itself in her heart many years ago, when her own child was born with and lived through years of challenging health issues. He grew and triumphed with the simple messages and images of hope and the belief he could do and be anything.

This book is written for children who are living with illness to see they are not alone, to feel hope for brighter days ahead and that anything is possible. The book has been reviewed by child psychology, oncology and primary health care professionals who support its messaging for ages 2 to 9. Duana's niece, Sienna Potter illustrated the book, and all proceeds go to the IWK.

Think of gifting **I'm Just Not Better Yet** to any child or family who might be living through their own challenges, and by doing so you'll also help IWK children and their families.

**CONGRATULATIONS
DUANA!**



NSNU President Visits St. FX

Meeting with nursing students stands out as one of the many highlights of the job for NSNU President, Janet Hazelton. On October 30th, Janet had the opportunity to return to her hometown and alma mater, St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish.

During her visit, Janet discussed post-graduation career paths and the significance of union activism with the nursing students. Key topics included professional practice concerns, the role of the union, the structure of the Nurses' Union, and the importance of participating in Union activities at the grassroots level after graduation.

She facilitated a meaningful dialogue with these future nurses, sharing insights from her dual perspective as a union leader and an experienced registered nurse.

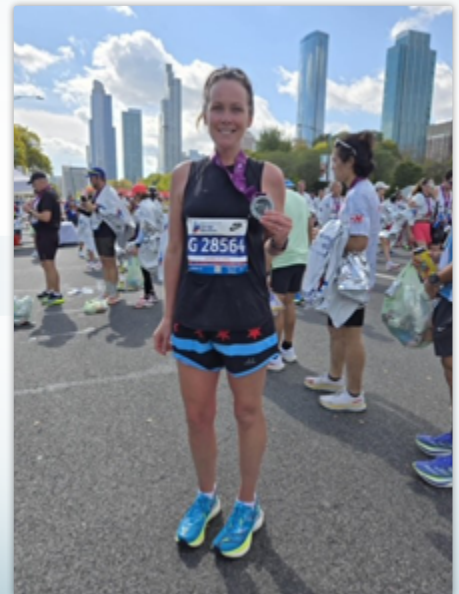
We thank St. FX for inviting Janet to speak with their nursing class, and we look forward to welcoming many of these students as members of the Nurses' Union in the near future.





DGH Professional Development

On October 8th, nurses employed at Dartmouth General Hospital participated in general member training at the Nurses' Union Office in Burnside, facilitated by NSNU's Education & Technology Officer, Chad O'Brien. Attendees gained an understanding of unions in the Local, provincial, and federal context, as well as how to apply Union activist concepts to situations in their workplace.



Stacy Elliot, CNA, Runs Marathon

We would like to extend congratulations to Stacy Elliot on her achievement. Stacy recently participated in the Chicago Marathon this October. The Windy City hosted the event on October 13th with over 52,000 marathoners crossing the finish line.

Brushing Up on Digital Professionalism

In a double-feature, the NSNU offered the *Digital Professionalism: Social Media & Your Nursing Practice* course on October 16th and 25th.

Over 200 nurses took the opportunity to brush up on their digital professionalism skills and earn some professional practice points ahead of the October 31st deadline.

Be aware of what you share

- ▶ Have you read it?
- ▶ Is it coming from a reputable source?
- ▶ Is it relevant to the date and location?
- ▶ Why are you sharing it?



To share what you or your Local is up to, send a photo & description to communications@nsnu.ca

President Hazelton Attends NBNU's 50th

From October 21st to 24th, the New Brunswick Nurses' Union held their AGM, celebrating 50 years of representing nurses in New Brunswick. NSNU President Janet Hazelton was pleased to attend, bringing congratulations for this milestone on behalf of the NSNU Board, staff and members.

Congratulations, Felicitacións NBNU!



NSNU Office Gets Spooky

NSNU Staff enjoyed a spooky lunchtime potluck to celebrate Halloween. Lots of spirit was on display, with a prize awarded to Bob Ross for the artistic costume!

Celebrating Halloween at the South Shore Regional Hospital

Cauldrons, brooms and spell books, oh my! The Oncology Clinic at South Shore Regional Hospital had witches, a butterfly and even a Ninja Turtle spreading the festive spirit this Halloween. Special thanks to Michelle Lowe for sharing this photo!





President Hazelton Attends RNUNL's 50th

On November 18th, the Registered Nurses Union of Newfoundland & Labrador kicked off their 50th Anniversary Biennial Convention - celebrating 50 years of solidarity, advocacy and progress for the RNs of Newfoundland and Labrador.

NSNU President Janet Hazelton was delighted to be present, extending congratulations on this significant milestone on behalf of the NSNU Board, staff, and members.

Congratulations RNUNL!




NSNU Board of Directors MEETINGS IN 2025

The NSNU Board of Directors holds meetings throughout the year to discuss issues and to conduct Union business.

NSNU members in good standing have the right to attend meetings of the Board.

If you would like to join the NSNU Board of Directors at an upcoming meeting, we ask that you state your intention to attend at least one month in advance by emailing debbie.grady@nsnu.ca.

The NSNU Board will meet on the following dates in 2025:

-  **MONDAY, JANUARY 13** - Virtual Meeting
-  **THURSDAY, MARCH 6** - NSNU Boardroom - 150 Garland Avenue, Burnside
-  **SUNDAY, APRIL 13** - Best Western Glengarry Hotel, Truro

Holiday Office Closure

Please note the NSNU Office in Burnside will be closed to the public from **Tuesday, December 24th** to **Wednesday, January 1st, 2025**, reopening on **January 2nd**.

While the building remains closed, some staff may be working on-site during this time. Labour Relations Representatives will be available on a rotational, on-call schedule during this time.

Watch for a Campaigner e-memo regarding LRR holiday coverage.

Season's Greetings

from the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union is spreading holiday joy through acts of kindness and generosity. Charitable donations are more significant now than ever, while so many struggle to make ends meet.

In observation of this festive time of year, NSNU has given contributions to the Marguerite Centre in Halifax and The Hope Project Foundation in Sydney. Both centres provide long-term residential programs to women who are overcoming addictions. These programs help women return to their families, friends and work, helping them to feel whole again.

The NSNU regularly gives to other charitable and non-profit organizations over the holidays. The Union is grateful for the opportunity to share with deserving causes during this season of giving.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the NSNU, we wish all Nova Scotians, especially our dedicated members and their families, a safe and healthy holiday season, and a Happy New Year!



It pays to be a member!

NSNU members can
receive exclusive home
and car insurance savings
and enhanced coverages.



HAPPY
2025

from the
Nova Scotia Nurses' Union

COMING UP *January* 2025

- AGM & EDUCATION
- MEN IN NURSING
- NEW NURSES
- BOD CANDIDATES
- PROVINCIAL HEALTHCARE PROMISES