

what's nu.?

JANUARY 2025

Nova Scotia
Nurses
Union 



**A BUSY
2025 AHEAD**

Highlights

AGM 2025: April 14-17

Board of Directors:
2025-2027 Elections

Men In Nursing

COURAGE TO LEAD • CONFIDENCE TO CHALLENGE • COMMITMENT TO CARE

Highlights

PRESIDENT'S NOTEBOOK

Sunny Ways & Stormy Days

FEATURES

- 6** In Politics
Healthcare Commitments
- 8** Board of Directors
Acclaimed and Candidates
- 12** AGM & Education Day
Dates, Times, Details to Note
- 15** OH&S: A Nursing Priority
From the Desk of OH&S Advisor
- 22** Winter Escape
Take a break from the cold
- 22** Winter Reading
Curl up with a good book



Contact

LOCATION

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 RNs** and **\$21.48 for LPNs**) 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 online 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 two weeks 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. 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

Sunny Ways & Stormy Days

Justin Trudeau became the leader of the Liberal Party in 2013 and the 23rd prime minister of Canada in 2015. He would win three consecutive elections, all minority victories, and accomplish many more “wins” despite never attaining a majority mandate.

In the beginning, his energy and optimism for tackling climate change, strengthening social programs and helping the middle class engaged young and old alike. His lineage and youth attracted attention from those keen to see him succeed and those quick to point out his shortcomings.

Since the Prime Minister stepped down on January 6th, a now politically notorious date in both the US and Canada, I have been reflecting his healthcare vision and his legacy.

I have had the opportunity to meet with the PM on a few occasions; his charm and easy repartee are not overestimated. He has a genuine knack for connecting with people. He looks you straight in the eye, steadfastly focused on the immediate and informed conversation.



Love him or hate him, admire and disapprove, like so many political figures these days he is a lightning rod in a culture of aggression and divisiveness. Some believe he was too altruistic, privileged, inexperienced and “woke”, while others applauded his aspirations to do things differently, with an eye to the future.

Upon his resignation, Trudeau himself voiced pride in his governments support for Ukraine and their handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. As the leader of a healthcare union that lobbied the federal government numerous times during Trudeau’s tenure, my thoughts turn to his health care initiatives.

In 2023, after meeting with Canada’s premiers, Prime Minister Trudeau promised to increase health care funding to the provinces by \$196.1 billion over 10 years, including \$46.2 billion in new funding.

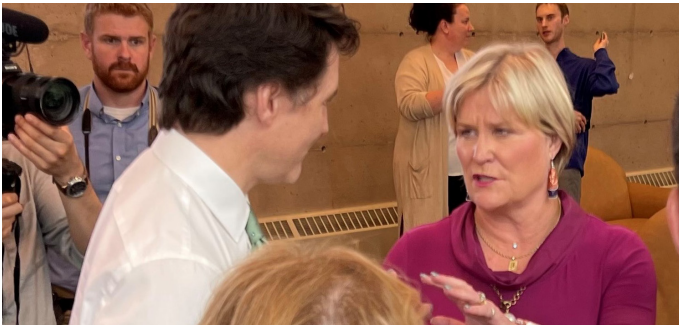
The federal government’s proposal included an immediate, no-strings-attached \$2 billion Canada Health Transfer top-up to address pressures in emergency rooms, operating rooms, and pediatric hospitals, building on previous pandemic top-ups of \$6.5 billion. Government also guaranteed a 5% increase to the Canada Health Transfer for the next five years via additional payments, with the last payment becoming a permanent funding increase.

The federal government promised another \$25 billion through bilateral deals addressing family health services, healthcare workers and backlogs, mental health and substance use, and a modernized healthcare system. This funding also was contingent on continued investments by the provinces on previously targeted funding for mental health, home care, and long-term care.

Janet Hazelton
BScN RN, MPA, ICD.D



The Canadian Dental Care Plan provides dental work for three million seniors, children and Canadians. The program was set to expand early this year for eligible adults aged 19 to 64 – an additional six million people. The Liberals well-intentioned pharmacare legislation covers some contraceptive and diabetes medications but the provinces and territories have not signed on. British Columbia has a memorandum of understanding with the feds on this initiative.



The Prime Minister worked with Indigenous partners to provide additional support for Indigenous health priorities. He also stood up for healthcare improvements in rural and remote areas, supported healthcare professionals, and access to home care and safe long-term care so Canadians can age safely and live in dignity. Ultimately, provinces and territories maintain most of the responsibility for delivering health and other social services, not Ottawa.

It appears too early to determine if his unfinished business regarding pharmacare, the *Canada Health Act* and other federal healthcare goals will be priorities for the next government and party leaders. That said, nurses' unions across the country will continue to demand improvements to health care, regardless of who's in power.

Prime Minister Trudeau was a champion for causes near and dear to unions and the labour movement like Medicare, pharmacare and other social justice causes. Given the struggles Canadians face in this difficult economy where housing is unaffordable and, for many, wages have not kept pace with inflation, he understood that his time was up and that the country needed a new approach under different leadership.

There has been a lot more mud slinging since Justin Trudeau's January 6th announcement, a lot of classless rhetoric. At the end of the day, he was a public servant who sacrificed much of his private life for the good of the country and all Canadians. While PM, he conducted himself in a statesman-like manner, largely avoiding scandal and disgrace. Politics is not for the weak of heart, and as decent Canadians we should appreciate the contributions of those who run for office – regardless of our political stripes.

Trudeau was fond of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's guiding philosophy of sunny ways, a metaphor for a diplomatic and pragmatic path to problem solving. Based on Aesop's fable in which the sun and the wind hold a contest to see who can remove a traveler's coat, the sun's warm rays prove more effective than the wind's might. Thus, sunny ways became a mantra. Like Laurier, Justin Trudeau felt that politics can be a positive and powerful force for change.

Whoever wins the next federal election, let's hope they support a robust publicly funded, publicly delivered healthcare system – care that's accessible, timely, and equitable – that continues to move forward in a positive direction. A system that puts the wellbeing of Canadians and healthcare workers first.

Support for Canada's Health Services Policy

Silas: Amidst nurse and physician shortages and long wait times, this is a win for everyone in Canada

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) applauds Minister of Health Mark Holland's decision to ensure medically necessary services are included in provincial and territorial health plans, whether they're provided by a physician or physician-equivalent. This means services provided by nurse practitioners will no longer cost people service fees and will be covered by Canada's public health care system.

"The *Canada Health Act Services Policy* is a critical step in the right direction. Nurse practitioners are a growing workforce with the potential to ease the primary care crisis. Their inclusion in the *Canada Health Act* is key to ensuring everyone in Canada has equitable access to the care they need," explains CFNU President Linda Silas.

Silas emphasizes the importance of protecting Canada's cherished public healthcare system to meet the evolving health needs of Canadians.

"With more ways to serve patients within the public system, we can increase access to care from coast to coast to coast. Amidst nurse and physician shortages and long wait times, this is a win for everyone in Canada," says Silas. "Nurses and health care workers have expanded their roles over the last 40 years to provide Canadians with the care they need. This key addition to the *Canada Health Act* is the kind of innovation and growth Canada's health care system needs."

IN POLITICS *Healthcare Commitments*

Tim Houston's Progressive Conservatives formed a supermajority last November which required at least two-thirds of the House of Assembly's 55 seats. His government won 43 seats after previously holding 31, surpassing the 37-seat threshold for a supermajority.

Premier Houston ran on several platforms including economic growth and the housing crisis. On health care, Houston said his government would continue its efforts to attract and retain more workers through expanded scope of practice, more training capacity, and streamlining credentialing.

He believed his government made progress on its original commitment to "fix health care," saying much of the heavy lifting has been done to stabilize the system, setting the stage for further improvements. Tory commitments included money to cover the cost of the shingles vaccines for seniors, offer free parking at health-care sites, create a provincial travel nurse program within the next four years to alleviate the need to use costly private agencies, and establish a menopause centre of excellence to enhance health care for women.

In 2021, Tim Houston ran on a platform to "fix health care," saying, under his leadership he could put Nova

Scotia on the path to sustainability. Government data show the Tories made some progress during their first term but fell far short of repairing a system plagued by shortages of doctors and nurses and long wait times for ambulance and emergency room services. Close to 150,000 people are still without a family doctor or nurse practitioner.

Between April 2022 and March 31, 2023, unscheduled closures of emergency rooms reached 41,923 hours, a 32 per cent increase from 2022. Most of those closures were the result of a lack of staff. Only 56 per cent of ambulance response times were within the government's benchmark for 2024, but down from 71 per cent in the summer of 2021.

On the plus side, 196 net-new nurses were recruited in 2021 up to 692 recruited in 2024. Still, the vacancy rate for registered nursing jobs remains at approximately 15 per cent, more than double the government's target at seven per cent.

Last fall, the Tory government spent \$158,000 to distribute 480,000 pamphlets across the province outlining its latest health-care initiatives, including the province's new YourHealthNS app and ActionForHealth.ca website. The publication applauded the hiring of 300 doctors and specialists, as well as 2,000 nurses.

Duty to Accommodate

Legal Obligations of Employers and Employees Under the New Legislation

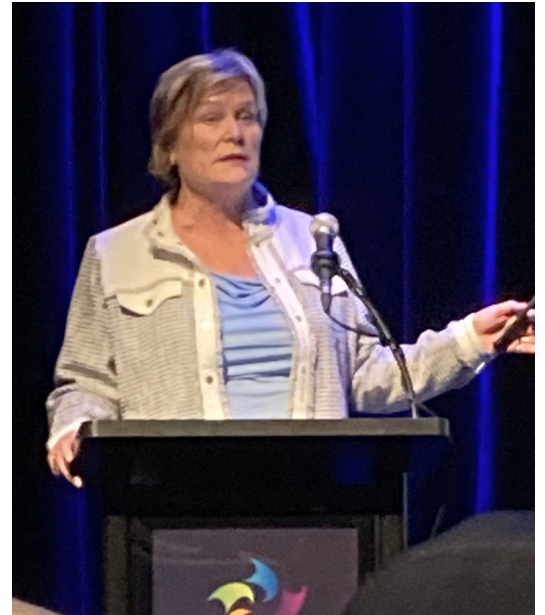
On January 20th, NSNU president Janet Hazelton participated in a panel discussion at a WCB CEO Charter Lunch & Learn on the subject of duty to accommodate.

Janet reminded the room of over 100 attendees that the Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that the duty to accommodate is the shared responsibility of the employer, employee and the union.

In her presentation, Janet emphasized the need for employees to play an active role in the process. Employees must actively engage by attending meetings, providing feedback and collaborating in good faith.

Employees must also be open to a reasonable solution, even if it is not exactly what they requested. It is the union's responsibility to facilitate and allow the accommodation up to the point of undue hardship; the union cannot insist rigidly on the collect agreement if it results in discrimination.

Upholding this duty not only ensures compliance with legal standards but also strengthens the core values of solidarity and fairness that define the nursing profession.



The Premier also made the creation of an internal travel nurse program one of his campaign promises in the 2024 election, a program nurses unions are happy to take credit for.

The government pamphlet also pointed to initiatives aimed at establishing a medical school in Cape Breton; increasing opportunities for nurse training; providing free tuition for paramedics; adding more long-term-care rooms; expanding a major hospital in Halifax; and fast-tracking accreditation for out-of-province doctors.

On December 12th, the Premier announced his cabinet, retaining Michelle Thompson, MLA for Antigonish as Minister of Health responsible for the Office of Health-Care Professionals Recruitment, and health-care redevelopment.

Barb Adams retains her responsibilities for seniors and long-term care and military relations. She was also named deputy premier.

On January 15th, Claudia Chender, Leader of Nova Scotia's New Democrats and the Official Opposition, announced her Shadow Cabinet. She named Dr. Rod Wilson, newly elected MLA for Halifax Armdale, as critic for Health and Wellness, Emergency Management, and Seniors and Long-Term Care.



2025 | NSNU Board Candidates and Acclaimed Nominees

- » In April, elections for NSNU Board of Directors will take place, selecting representatives for a two-year term, 2025-2027.
- » Candidates for the upcoming elections are presented as follows in alphabetical order (last name) according to the category in which they are nominated.
- » An uncontested nominee(s) is deemed acclaimed to the slate. Elections for the remaining candidates will take place at the Annual General Meeting in April.
- » This information can also be found online at nsnu.ca/AGM2025. You will require your login credentials to view the webpage.



JANET HAZELTON

President
ACCLAIMED



DONNA GILLIS

1st Vice-President
ACCLAIMED



DENISE ELMS

Northern VP
ACCLAIMED



JAMIE STEWART

VP Finance
ACCLAIMED



GLENDA SABINE

VP Long Term Care
ACCLAIMED



LAURIE FORREST

Eastern VP
ACCLAIMED



KIM WILLIAMS

VP Community Care
ACCLAIMED



ANNE BOUTILIER

Central VP
ACCLAIMED



NATALIE NYMARK

IWK VP
ACCLAIMED

Candidates for Vice-President Licensed Practical Nurses



TRACY D'ENTREMONT

Candidate for
Vice-President LPNs

Nursing Experience

Tracy began her nursing career in 1990 working in long-term care for a short time, private duty hospital/in-home and now as a community nurse for 32-years. She volunteered to be deployed to Northwood nursing home in May 2020 to aid in pandemic relief, report back effectively, and ensure deployed staff had proper PPE and followed procedures. She briefly worked with NSHA as an immunizer during the pandemic. She participated in accreditation within her Local and is a member of the Quality Service and Risk Committee and JOH&S Local and provincial committees. She has led her peers in training for CPR, PACE safe handling and mobility and now her focus is union activism at the board level. She was a front-line worker representative on the Board of Aware-NS from 2016-2021.

Union Activism

Tracy has been a member of the PNC and bargained in the last two collective agreements with VON. Throughout her career, she has been very involved at her branch as a Local president from 2008-2021. She was VP of Community Care on the Board of Directors from 2018-2021. She participated in many talent-calls within NSNU participating in a TV commercial on nurse violence and two O' Canada videos and photoshoots, proudly representing the nursing profession and LPNs.

As Western VP since 2023, she attended ZLMC meetings and all board meetings. Within the NSFL she sits on the Education/Bursary Committee. In 2024 she chaired the AGM Education Day and looks forward to chairing that same event this year.

She is a volunteer member-at-large for the Nova Scotia Health Coalition as they advocate to preserve, promote, and enhance public healthcare. Over the past ten years, she has rallied and supported efforts to strengthen Medicare, resist privatization, and have universal single payer pharmacare.

Labour Education

Tracy has attended sixteen AGMs, four CFNU biennial conventions, and seven Eastern Labour School events. She participated in board governance education sessions in 2019 at a BCNU conference in British Columbia. She completed 3/12 requirements towards McMaster University labour studies certification in 2020-2021.

Personal Statement

I hope to continue to support all nurses in our shared professional labour struggles no matter the designation or place of employment. I am very confident that my union activism, experience and education will continue to allow my career to include board involvement at a provincial level representing the LPN component. I feel my involvement in the Board and Union has been very diverse, challenging and rewarding. If successful in this election I will increase support and promote the LPNs of NSNU across all the sectors.

Aims & Objectives for Board Involvement

I want to foster an increased connection of the LPNs within NSNU on a more personal level, not relying on social media groups. I would be available for the LPN designation to advocate for our scope of practice as scope of employment and ability to practice within our nursing scope has many deficiencies, depending on what part of the province you reside. I will network with LPNs to ensure all concerns are brought forth and discussed within all zones, facilities or community nursing.



ALAINE HALLIDAY

Candidate for
Vice-President LPNs

Nursing Experience

Alaine has 39 years of nursing experience in acute care, VON, and long-term care. She is employed at the Aberdeen Hospital as the Charge Nurse on Transitional Care and Palliative Care and works at the NSCC as a clinical faculty member for PN students.

Union Activism

Alaine is a union activist of 25-plus years and has held many positions at the Local level: Shop Steward and Secretary/Treasurer. As Chief Shop Steward she has been involved in the grievance process defending the collective agreement while ensuring a better work life for members. She was the president at the Aberdeen Local, a position she held with privilege for 23 years, and is now the vice president. She sat as Chair of BUGLM supporting the Aberdeen and Sutherland Harris locals and now sits on the ZUGLM for the Northern Zone.

At the provincial level, she is currently the LPN component rep on the Board of Directors. She sat on the Provincial Negotiation Committee, negotiating the first collective agreement for nurses within the Nova Scotia Council of Nursing Unions. Before that, she was on negotiating committees for acute care, long-term care, VON, and Canadian Blood Services.

Labour Education

Alaine has attended several Eastern Labour School events, CFNU Biennial Conventions, NSNU AGM and Education Days, as well as CLC and NSFL conferences. She attained a vast knowledge of union rights and has learned how to apply that knowledge to improve the work life balance for nurses.

Personal Statement

I am a dedicated worker who takes this position seriously, striving to find a resolution to issues that arise and tasks that need to be completed. I am a team player who works collaboratively with other professions, and I manage my time very well.

Aims & Objectives for Board Involvement

As we all know, there are many issues in this province that are difficult. But united, we can work to face these challenges together. We can create a better working environment for LPNs so that we can work safely, work happier and continue to provide, ALWAYS, the highest quality and commitment-to-care for our patients.

If I am re-elected VP of LPNs, given the opportunity, I will always work to the best of my ability with other board members to serve LPNs on arising issues. Our evolving scope of practice provides LPNs with more opportunities, which is wonderful. I fully support these opportunities. I will work endlessly to ensure that LPNs are treated equally, with dignity and respect in our ever-changing work environments.

Candidates for Western Vice-President



TRACY D'ENTREMONT

Candidate for
Western Vice-President

Please see page 9 for Tracy's biography and other nominee information

Personal Statement

Early in my nursing career I knew I was driven to advocate for my peers. Over decades of union activism, I have learned that throughout every sector we all have similar challenges such as management adhering to our contracts, striving to achieve safe staffing levels, nurse safety, and advocacy to ensure nurses report situations that arise. I feel I am the best nurse for this position. I come to this zone with a fresh lens and my knowledge of labour and OH&S is serving this zone very well. Given the opportunity to continue, my knowledge and union activism will have a positive impact on this zone.

CONTINUED

Aims & Objectives for Board Involvement

If successful in this election I plan to ensure each local has an active executive within the western zone. I will continue to network and support members to step up to become active within NSNU. I want to ensure OH&S concerns are not only addressed but positive change is the driving force. The

challenge of working short-staffed in old or poorly designed facilities is why we cannot stop pressing for improvements. These last two years of learning the role has prepared me to continue to support the nurses of the western zone.



SARAH LACE

Candidate for
Western Vice-President

Nursing Experience

Sarah Lace graduated from St. Francis Xavier School of Nursing in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She worked at South Shore Regional Hospital from 2008-2010 and has worked at Valley Regional Hospital for the last 14 years. Over the last 16 years Sarah has worked in rural hospitals on Medical, ICU and PACU units until finding her passion in 2018 in Oncology.

She obtained her Certification in Critical Care through the CNA in 2015. She completed Chemo-therapy Certification in 2018. Since 2018, Sarah has been a staff nurse in oncology, Clinical Practice Leader and is currently the Clinical Nurse Educator for the oncology departments at South Shore Regional Hospital and Valley Regional Hospital. In 2024, she obtained national Certification in Oncology through the CNA.

Union Activism

She has been a union activist since 2011, starting out as shop steward in ICU. Over time, she has taken on roles as Vice President of her Local at Valley Regional Hospital and is now President. Sarah was a Provincial Negotiating Committee member for the last contract representing the Western Zone.

She feels there is always more to learn and thinks that involvement starts with a simple question and answer

session. She is passionate about staff and patient safety and has been on the Local JOHS committee at VRH for eight years.

Sarah encourages others to become involved often by showing them the tools we have at our disposal and giving them connections with others who can help.

Sarah is involved in her community as a Girl Guide of Canada Leader at the local Embers unit in Berwick. She also volunteers with her daughter's Ringette team.

Labour Education

Sarah has attended several Eastern Labor School events over the last 12 years, attended a CFNU conference and many union-based workshops. She also attended all but one AGM since her involvement in NSNU.

Personal Statement

I believe that if you have a question, you must take the initiative to find the answer which has led me to this progressive journey in the union. I believe in setting an example through 'practicing what you preach.'

It is important to be open and transparent, even when it is tough. I will strive to be the best representative I can for my fellow NSNU members in Western Zone. I try to set a positive example for my daughter - that you can have a career, family and still care about being involved in volunteering for things you are passionate about.

Aims & Objectives for Board Involvement

I hope to learn more about other locals in the Western Zone and build connections with them. I plan to have a better understanding of how the union runs and makes decisions. If elected, I will represent the best interests of the union members in my zone and bring concerns forward as needed.

DREAM, DARE, DELIVER!

NSNU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

The 48th NSNU AGM will take place in Truro **April 14-17**, promising to be an enlightening and educational experience for all our attendees, familiar and new.

The AGM offers a face-to-face platform for members to inform and direct leaders and activists on matters of importance to the frontline.

The AGM also provides an opportunity for members to review constitutional language and, through the Resolution process, enact change and introduce new articles to better serve union members and the organization.

Once again, the NSNU will invite leaders and labour representatives from across the province and Canada to participate. They will bring greetings and share their struggles, strategies, and victories.

Over the course of the meetings, delegates and observers will hear from Linda Silas, the president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, friends from affiliate organizations, and government officials.

We welcome nursing students from campuses across the province, and NSNU members from close to 100 of our 124 locals, representing all three sectors.

There are many opportunities to meet with colleagues, both socially and while conducting union business in Truro, Nova Scotia's Hub.

More information is available on the Members Only portal of nsnu.ca/AGM2025. Information is added regularly to the AGM pages. E-memos will also be sent to table officers to ensure everyone is prepared and apprised of any changes to ongoing preparations.

DATES, TIMES, DETAILS TO NOTE

- » Registration for the AGM/Education Day closes on March 3rd - registration is by Local.
- » Those attending only the April 15th Education Day are reminded there is a separate registration form with Eventbrite. That link can be found at nsnu.ca/AGM2025. Payment is \$50.
- » No group meals will be served at the Glengarry on Monday, April 14.
- » Breakfast will be served at your respective hotel dining room. Dining space will be available in the MacDonald Rooms at the Best Western Glengarry Hotel for lunch.
- » Please bring your door prizes directly to the Hospitality Meet and Greet. Do not leave them with NSNU or the venue staff. We will be selling 50/50 tickets at the event in aid of our charities.
- » The Charity Draw is still an important activity at the AGM. Locals are asked to donate items and buy tickets in support of Marguerite Centre and Hope House. Items are to be left with NSNU staff until 3:00 pm, April 15th.
- » The theme for the banquet is **1950s Sock Hop** (dance). Be prepared to bop, hop, boogie, woogie, twist, jive and shimmy the night away.
- » NSNU merchandise will be sold in the MacLeod Rooms. The NSNU accepts cash, credit and debit card payments.
- » Deadline for Scholarship submissions is March 15th.
- » Please consider donating menstrual health products for our Colchester Community Support Society drive. The deadline to donate is end of day, Wednesday, April 16th.
- » Keltic Clothing will be onsite at the Glengarry Hotel from April 14-16 to sell uniforms and accessories.



EDUCATION DAY 2025

Plan now to attend the NSNU 2025 Education Day in Truro on **Tuesday, April 15th** where nurses exchange knowledge, discuss current trends, share best practices, and leave informed and entertained!

Nurses from across the province and nursing sectors who share a passion for education and learning will enjoy three interactive and inspiring sessions, as well as networking opportunities to help build union solidarity.

They'll engage in round table and open forum discussions and hear from experts in various fields, capped off with a little lighthearted nursing humour.

The 2025 NSNU Education Day is not to be missed as we

focus on critical issues facing healthcare and nursing, better preparing nurses and labour leaders for the realities of the workplace.

Watch for a detailed e-memo in your inbox that will include a final agenda, speaker bios, and more.

Members attending the AGM and Education Day must be registered by a Local Table Officer. For members attending **only the Education Day event** on April 15, the cost is \$50; the registration link can be found at nsnu.ca/AGM2025. You will require your login credentials to access the Eventbrite link.

CFNU 2025 Biennial Convention

📍 Niagara Falls

CFNU president, Linda Silas has been called a force of nature, but even she has stiff competition at the 2025 biennial convention, hosted at the mighty **Niagara Falls!**

The landscape at this convention will be breathtaking and the event promises to be energized.

Here are some fun facts about Niagara Falls:

- » Niagara Falls is an enormously popular tourist destination, and it also serves as a major source of electricity for Ontario
- » The word Niagara comes from the Iroquoian word "onguiaahra" meaning "a thundering noise"
- » The Niagara River flows at approximately 56.3 kilometers per hour

The CFNU Biennial Convention will take place **June 2-6, 2025**, at the Niagara Falls Convention Centre overlooking the spectacular natural wonder.

The Biennium features knowledgeable keynote speakers as well as interactive workshops and plenary sessions designed specifically for nurses working in today's healthcare environments. Attendees also take part in determining policy and priorities for CFNU and its member organizations.

Make plans to attend the 2025 CFNU Biennial Convention hosted by the Ontario Nurses' Association.

For more information, go to nursesunions.ca/convention2025. Registration starts on **February 13th** and closes on **May 5th**. If you have questions, please contact debbie.grady@nsnu.ca.

When life gives you waterfalls, just go with the flow!



Personal Health Information *Protecting Your Patients & Yourself*

Employers are increasingly taking a hard line on discipline of healthcare workers for privacy breaches, up to and including termination of employment. This is happening not just in cases of “snooping” in patient records, but other cases where an employee is acting with good intentions but may be in breach of policy.

This article provides a reminder of your role in handling personal health information and potential pitfalls.

Your Access of Patient Records

Access to patient records is critical for providing care, but it must be limited to professional purposes. You should only access the minimum amount of information necessary for you to provide care.

Nurses should also refrain from accessing their own medical records and the records of family and friends – even if you are doing so at their request and with consent.

Auditing and Electronic Tracking

With the introduction of new electronic health record systems, your access is closely tracked. These systems log details such as:

- » When you accessed a record,
- » Which specific document you viewed, and
- » How long you spent reviewing the information.

Employers conduct audits of their systems and review information in response to complaints. You should always assume that your actions within these systems are being tracked and reviewed.

Protect Your Login Credentials

Your login credentials are your digital identity and are unique to you. Protecting them is important for maintaining the security of personal health information. To avoid breaches:

- » Never share your login or password with anyone, even trusted colleagues,
- » Log out when you step away from your workstation, and
- » Report any suspected compromise of your login credentials immediately.

Your employer may try to hold you responsible for activity performed under your login, even if someone used your credentials without your permission. Protecting your login is an important way to protect yourself from discipline.

Best Practices for Protecting Patient Privacy

To maintain compliance and protect yourself:

1. Access only what you need for patient care.
2. Protect your login credentials and never share your password.
3. Log out when not using the system.
4. Avoid discussing personal health information in public areas or where unauthorized individuals can overhear.
5. If you are unsure whether an action is appropriate, consult your employer or the NSNU.



Occupational Health & Safety: A Nursing Priority

FROM THE DESK OF **HEATHER MATTHEWS**, NSNU OH&S ADVISOR

What are the hot button OH&S issues facing nurses in the workplace?

There are two topics that come up most often when discussing health and safety and nurses. They are sprains and strains and exposure to workplace violence. Repetitive sprains and strains injuries are the largest injury driver in the health care sector and account for 63% of the injuries reported to WCBNS across all industries.

Incidents of workplace violence are on the rise and much more complicated. Nurses are feeling the impact of physical and psychological abuse. Underreporting is a concern because situations can escalate quickly. If nurses don't report them, the employer cannot fix the issue. I understand reporting takes time; time that's in short supply. The good news for the acute care sector is that a fund has been established to invest in programs, training and equipment intended to reduce the exposure to workplace violence.

As NSNU's OH&S Advisor, what are your priorities for 2025?

My main priority is to connect with as many members as possible and be available to support them when they have questions regarding health and safety. Being there to help them navigate the legislation and understand how to use the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) is vital. The IRS is the one way we can collaborate with the employer and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee to find solutions.

In your opinion, what OH&S issues should employers focus their attention on?

Employers should foster a more collaborative culture. They need to make it easier for employees to report and, most

importantly, managers and supervisors need to circle back to employees who bring incidents or safety concerns forward. Nurses are less likely to report future incidents if communication is not reciprocated. I encourage nurses to report incidents and hazards and, if the follow-through doesn't happen, the next step in the IRS is to take it to the JOHS committee.

What can nurses do to protect themselves and be proactive where OH&S is concerned?

The biggest thing nurses can do is report hazards, even if they feel nothing will happen. If it is not resolved to the nurse's satisfaction, take it to the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee. Following the IRS is key to the success of any Occupational Health and Safety program in the workplace.

What are your long-term goals?

My long-term goal in my role as OH&S Advisor for NSNU is to reduce the number of workplace incidents and create a safer working environment for nurses. Together, we can make a difference.



Support for Striking Postal Workers

The NSNU Board of Directors visited the CUPW picket in Dartmouth on December 12th to offer solidarity and financial support.

The Board presented the Local with a financial contribution to their strike fund, while NSNU also posted online messages to bolster CUPW's initiatives.

After 30 days on strike, tens of thousands of Canada Post employees across the country were ordered back to work by the Canada Industrial Relations Board with-

out an agreement in place. 55,000-plus postal workers walked off the job over wages, working conditions and other issues on November 15th, 2024.

Canada Post operations resumed on December 17, 2024.

Instead of reaching a deal on a new contract, union workers' existing contract has been extended until this coming May.

VON/NSNU Multi-Site Labour Management Meeting



On Wednesday, January 22nd representatives of all twelve Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) Locals from across the province, essential union staff and board representation, and the VON management team participated in a VON/NSNU Multi-Site Labour Management Meeting held at the NSNU office. The groups convene up to three times each year.

These meetings allow all parties – the Union, employer and nurses – the opportunity to discuss operations and initiatives that impact care delivery and present challenges.

VON nurses face similar issues to those working in hospitals and other facilities related to short staffing, unrealistic expectations and workloads, and violence in the workplace, but they also experience unique struggles.

During the meeting, the group focused on several relevant matters, including OH&S, inclement weather procedures, overnight safety protocol, virtual visits, vacation waitlisting, and the possibility of RN prescribing with NP oversight.

Members discussed safety issues such as working alone and nighttime on-call. At present, the biggest obstacle facing VON is staffing. And while the sites share similar operational concerns, each also has distinct interests that need to be addressed.

The VON serves thousands of Nova Scotians with medical needs, many requiring daily healthcare services. Registered and Licensed Practical Nurses employed by VON are represented by the NSNU.

Currently, there are hundreds of people on the VON waitlist for homecare in this province and the organization has approximately 100 nurse vacancies. The VON is the only publicly funded source of homecare nursing in Nova Scotia and Ontario.



We're excited to announce that the **Nurses' Nook** merchandise shop at the NSNU Office in Burnside now offers physical gift cards!

These plastic gift cards make the perfect present for colleagues and friends, offering them the flexibility to choose from our wide range of merchandise. Whether it's for a birthday, National Nurses' Week, or just because, gift cards are a thoughtful way to show appreciation.

To explore your gift card options, visit the Nook or email communications@nsnu.ca.



Embracing Opportunities & Growth

Support For New Grads Key to a Successful Transition

The transition from student nurse to professional nurse marks a significant milestone, signalling the completion of years of rigorous education. This pivotal time is both exciting and challenging for newly graduated nurses, as they transition from a structured classroom environment to the dynamic world of clinical practice.

As they embark on their new professional journeys, newly graduated nurses immerse themselves in the unique culture of their healthcare facilities. Each institution has its own norms and expectations, providing a rich landscape for new nurses to learn and grow. Support systems play a vital role in this transformative experience. The guidance of mentors proves invaluable, equipping new nurses with essential skills and increasing their confidence as they navigate their new role.

Research highlights that supportive work environments significantly enhance the transition experience for new nurses. Positive relationships with colleagues and mentors not only boosts confidence but also creates a culture of teamwork, making new nurses feel valued and included. Supportive environments foster a sense of belonging within the professional community, contributing to the overall job satisfaction and retention of new nurses.

As new nurses face the challenges of greater responsibility and patient case loads, they often find that these experiences enhance their resilience. With time and experience, they become more confident in their clinical abilities,

showcasing their capacity for growth. The initial fears they may have had gradually transform into a sense of competence, enabling them to thrive in their careers.

Moreover, the personal qualities of adaptability and effective stress management play crucial roles in how new nurses manage their early careers. The ability to adapt and grow is a testament to the resolve of new nurses, who often rise to challenges with determination and enthusiasm.

While the transition to practice presents its share of challenges, it is also a time filled with opportunities for professional development. By embracing the support around them and viewing challenges as stepping stones, newly graduated nurses can successfully navigate this critical phase of their careers. The journey is not just about overcoming difficulties – it is about celebrating growth, building meaningful relationships and making contributions to the healthcare field.

The future is bright for passionate new nurses, as they embark on fulfilling careers that promise excitement, learning and the chance to make a difference in the lives of Nova Scotians.

Sources

New Nurses' Perceptions on Transition to Practice: A Thematic Analysis

Canadian Journal of Nursing Research 2023

The Experiences of Newly Graduated Nurses During Their First Year of Practice

Healthcare Journal 2023



Men In Nursing *History Repeating Itself*

William James Andrews, Bill or Willie to friends and family, was born in North River, Cape Breton Island in 1913 to Joshua Andrews and Christy Belle MacDonald. Eventually, Joshua and Christie Bell moved with their eight children to nearby Florence, best known for its coal mines.

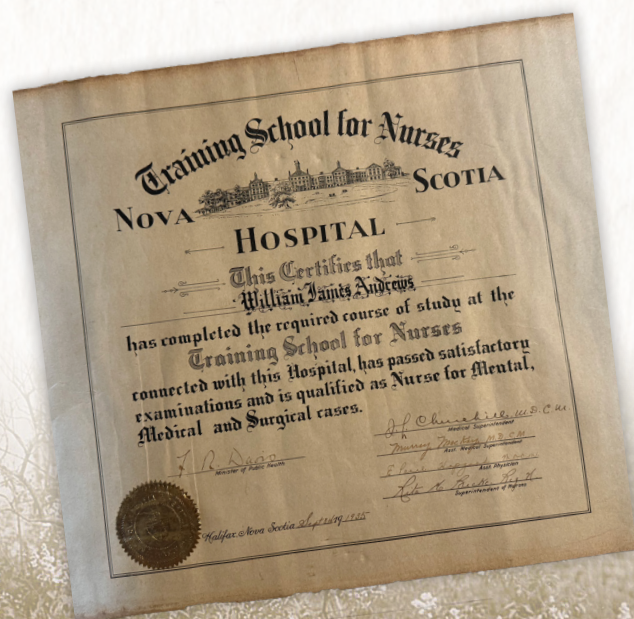
After graduating from high school, young Bill moved to Halifax where he worked at the Nova Scotia Hospital as a handy man. Over time, a nursing instructor convinced him to enroll in courses. He did that while still employed as a jack of all trades at the facility and graduated with his nursing diploma in 1935.

The idea of male nurses is far from new. Despite its modern association as a “female profession,” men have been involved in nursing for centuries. In fact, back in the late 1800s there was less stigma associated with men in nursing and more “training” opportunities for men. The number of men in nursing dropped after the 1940s. Decades later it slowly began to rise again, partly because of changing social and gender norms. But throughout early history, there were probably more men than women caring for the sick in institutions.

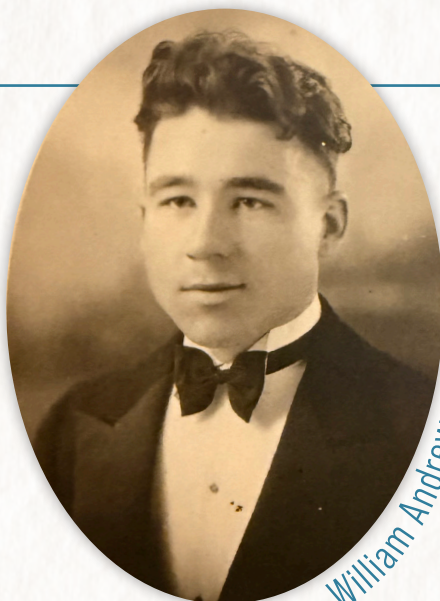
In the 1930s, for Bill and others like him, choosing a career in nursing was as unremarkable as joining the army. One of Bill’s younger brothers, Murray, was also an RN. Murray joined the Navy when the Second World War broke out. Shortly thereafter, he was gravely injured by shrapnel, leaving him incapacitated.

He was sent from England to Toronto for rehabilitation where he met and married Aleda Moore, also an RN. She too served in England, France and Belgium as a front-line nurse/officer in a mobile hospital doing emergency surgical duties and triage. They both enjoyed nursing careers in Ontario.

*Victoria General Hospital
Training School for Nurses
Class of 1935*



Many nurses, men and women alike, were recruited overseas during WWII, including Bill Andrews who served on the HMCS Stadacona and on the destroyer HMCS Kootenay, crossing the Atlantic fifty-two times. When he returned from service, he briefly worked as a registered nurse in Sydney Mines. He married Isabell Graham, a homemaker, sewing instructor and artist, and raised a family.



William Andrews

Isabell's father was the mine manager at Florence Colliery. He hired Bill to work as a hoist operator, which he did for several decades. Whether he left nursing for opportunities with greater earning potential or if the tides were turning on the perception of male nurses, he never returned to his health care profession.

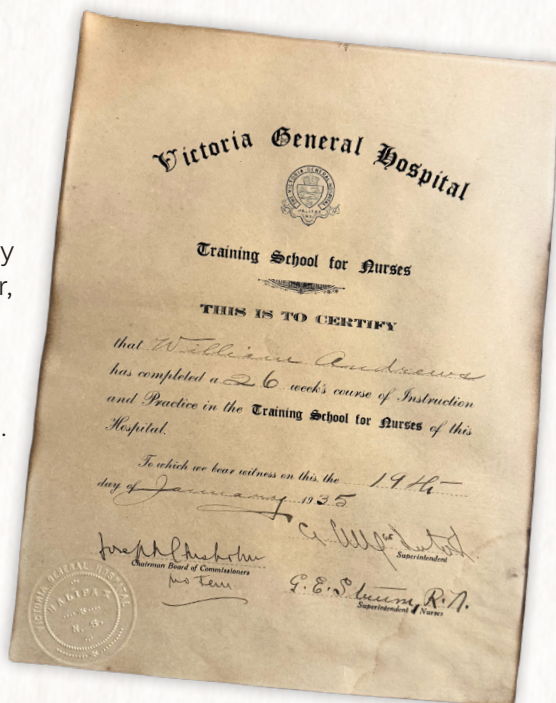
After the war, many more women broke through barriers by working outside the home, mainly as teachers, secretaries, and nurses, occupying many more nursing positions.

Fast forward to today, nearly one in ten registered nurses in Canada is male. The percentage of male nurses has been slowly increasing since 2006, when just 5.5 percent of registered nurses were men. That does not factor in nurses with an LPN designation.

After all these years of awareness, nursing is still viewed as a woman's job or role. Patients prefer female nurses, if allowed to choose, as some feel uncomfortable with male nurses, sometimes saying men are not as empathetic or as caring as women.

With increased demand for qualified nurses combined with good wages and benefits and slowly changing perceptions about gender, hopefully the number of men in nursing will continue to grow, positively contributing to the quality of care provided to patients.

We thank brothers, Bill and Murray Andrews, and all the men who paved the way and still persevere despite prejudice and misconceptions about men in nursing.



SAVINGS FOR NURSES ON THE DISCOUNT LIST!

As an NSNU member, you have access to exclusive discounts from a variety of local vendors and businesses.

From wardrobe updates and weekend getaways to hot yoga, the NSNU Discount List has something for everyone. New offers are added regularly, so be sure to check back often.

To make the most of these discounts, simply view the Discount List in the Members Only section of our website and explore the participating businesses.

To take advantage of these deals, remember to carry your NSNU member card or employee identification and keep in mind some businesses may offer additional discounts for healthcare workers. Should you come across a deal that isn't included in our list, please let us know at communications@nsnu.ca.

If you don't have a member card, please reach out to the Union office at 902-469-1474 or nsnu.office@nsnu.ca.

what's nu. with members + other nurses

Spreading Lots of Holiday Cheer

Every year, the NSNU enjoys posting and publishing the various events hosted by our many Locals during the holiday season.

Whether it's an evening of festive fun, sharing a meal, or creating charcuterie with coworkers, we believe that these moments foster camaraderie, teamwork and holiday cheer. Enjoy these snapshots from some of the NSNU Local Holiday events and check out our socials for more!



Final Board Meeting of 2024

On December 12th, the NSNU Board of Directors met for the final Board meeting of 2024. Board members from across the province representing all regions, sectors and designations gathered to wrap up and bid farewell to a very busy 2024, and prepare for the many initiatives, events and business planned for the year ahead.



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

Engaging with Future Nurses

Twice in January, NSNU President Janet Hazelton had the opportunity to meet virtually with Practical Nursing students at both NSCC's Cumberland Campus and Annapolis Valley, Middleton Campus.

During these sessions, Janet covered a range of topics including professional practice concerns, the significance of union involvement, the realities of nursing, and other workplace issues. These meetings play an important role in students' education - allowing for open conversation while addressing their concerns, Janet not only aids in their academic journey, but also prepares them for the challenges they may face in their future nursing profession.

Janet enjoys creating a dialogue with aspiring nurses, many of whom will become members of the NSNU as they graduate and begin their careers.



A Season of Giving

As the 2024 wrapped up and holidays approached, the NSNU presented a financial donation to Feed Nova Scotia, helping Nova Scotians struggling with food insecurity, as well as a donation of goods for the animals in the care of the Nova Scotia SPCA.

NSNU Locals also give generously during the holiday season. Cape Breton Metro VON continued their holiday tradition by donating to Home Instead, which provides safe and reliable care for older adults in their own homes.

To everyone who supports those in need, remember that your contributions truly make a difference, regardless of their size.



Looking to **escape** the cold?

It's flu season: dark at 5 o'clock; you get out from under the blankets to find a blanket of snow on your car; and there seems to be ice everywhere you go.

We know winter isn't everyone's cup of tea. The weather and the burden some of us experience this time of year makes practicing self-care a top priority.

Booked for the Winter?

If you're not planning to binge watch all your favourite shows this winter, choosing instead to cozy up with a good book, check out the following suggestions from our NSNU book worms.

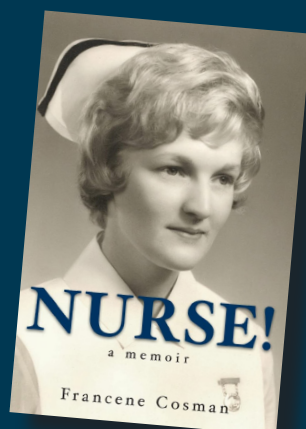
Nurse! A Memoir By Francene Cosman

The summer of 1959 promises to stretch slowly forward, with one exception. The looming deadline, of entering the Saint John General Hospital school of nursing as a probationer student, interrupts the worry-free days with a nagging doubt. Is nursing the right choice? Self-doubt is mingled with preparation in advance of the date of entry while Francene gets more jittery as the day approaches.

This Atlantic Canadian was born to nurse but did not know it yet.

This is a coming-of-age story as a young woman prepares to take on the challenges of a very disciplined profession. Written with humour and compassion, the memoir explores what it takes to learn the art and science of nursing. The demands of work, private life, and study are all described as you follow along in her footsteps.

Nursing prepared Francene for multiple career paths in the decades that followed her graduation.



Self-care RX for Healthcare Professionals

Proven strategies to combat stress & burnout

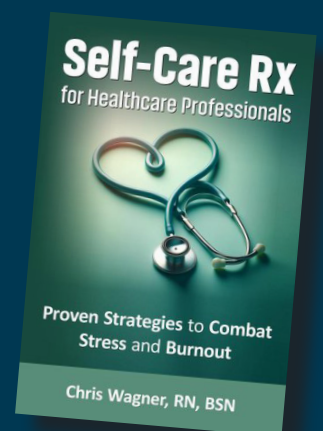
By Chris Wagner

In his nonfiction debut, the author, a nurse, examines the personal experiences of all kinds of caregivers in the health field and details the institutional and behavioral models that all but guarantee they're "perpetually on the cusp of burnout."

Wagner notes that the prevalent approach in the healthcare profession is oriented around putting out fires; in a description that will be immediately recognizable to healthcare providers, he paints a picture of professionals rushing from one emergency to the next.

The author proposes proactive measures designed to anticipate professional stressors and implement care strategies to defuse them. The strategies Wagner describes range from regular cold immersions (which he characterizes as both a physical and mental challenge promoting "learning to remain calm under duress") to better financial planning to spending lots of time out in natural settings, which results in, among other things, "the reduction in the stress hormone, cortisol."

An appealingly thoughtful and comprehensive strategy for combatting burnout.



It is now more vital than ever to decompress and feel the support of those around you. Even if you can only spare one hour, there are tools and resources available to help you make the most of your you-time.

The NSNU Escape webpage is dedicated to giving nurses a break from the rigors of the job during this time of heightened stress, workload and anxiety.

The page is updated seasonally, offering indoor and outdoor activities, seasonal entertainment, a variety of tips and tricks to combat stress and anxiety, and more. Please take a minute to explore the videos, quotes and activities available to you.

[Visit nsnu.ca/escape!](https://nsnu.ca/escape/)

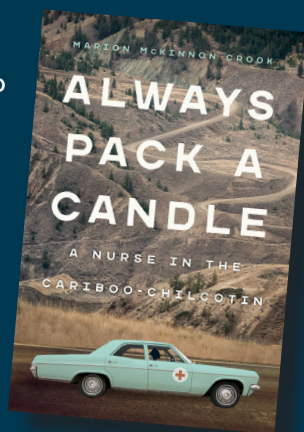
Always Pack a Candle By Marion McKinnon Crook

The true story of an adventurous young nurse who provided much-needed health care to the rural communities of the Cariboo-Chilcotin in the 1960s.

In 1963, newly minted public health nurse Marion McKinnon arrived in the small community of Williams Lake in BC's Cariboo region. Armed with more confidence than experience, she got into her government-issued Chevy—packed with immunization supplies, baby scales, and emergency drugs—and headed out into her 9,300-square-kilometre territory, inhabited by ranchers; mill workers; and many vulnerable men, women, and children who were at risk of falling through the cracks of Canada's social welfare system.

At twenty-two, Marion relied entirely on her academic knowledge and her common sense. She doled out birth control and parenting advice to women who had far more life experience than she. She routinely dealt with condescending doctors and dismissive or openly belligerent patients. She drove out into the vast countryside in freezing temperatures, with only a candle, antifreeze, chains, and chocolate bars as emergency equipment.

In one year, Marion received a rigorous education in the field. She helped countless people, made many mistakes, learned to recognize systemic injustice, and even managed to get into a couple of romantic entanglements.

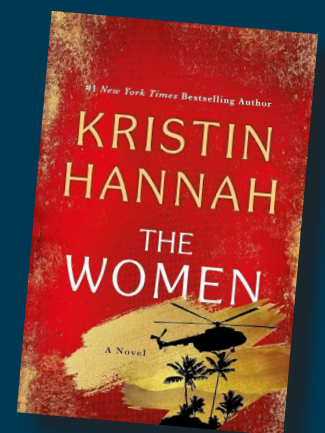


The Women A Novel By Kristin Hannah

From the celebrated author of *The Nightingale* and *The Four Winds* comes *The Women*—at once an intimate portrait of coming of age in a dangerous time and an epic tale of a nation divided.

Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances “Frankie” McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.


The Women is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm's way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, *The Women* is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era.



Look no further for exclusive group savings

Nova Scotia Nurses' Union members can receive exclusive home and car insurance savings and enhanced coverages.



Materials used to produce this document are Forest Stewardship Certified (FSC) 

Return undeliverable Canadian copies to:
Nova Scotia Nurses' Union
150 Garland Avenue, Dartmouth, NS B3B 0A7

