

50 Years Strong

what's
JUNE 2026 **nu.?**



highlights

ELS 2026

Nurse-Patient Ratios

Labour Relations Representatives

COURAGE TO *lead* • CONFIDENCE TO *challenge* • COMMITMENT TO *care*

Highlights



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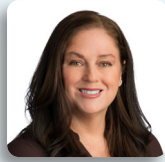
The NSNU wishes everyone a happy and safe summer!

The image on the cover has been **AI-GENERATED**

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Land Acknowledgement

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union 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.



[NSNU.CA/INDIGENOUS-RESOURCE-CENTRE](https://nsnu.ca/indigenous-resource-centre)

Member Profiles

To update contact information and union status, go to nsnu.ca/MembersOnly (login credentials required) and locate **Update Profile Info**. This includes changes of names, addresses, emails, phone numbers, place of employment, work status and designations.

New members to the NSNU will continue to complete an online form located at nsnu.ca/education/orientation.

Locals are encouraged to remind new grads and new members to complete the form so they will receive notices, promotions and other information.

President's Notebook

Importance of slowing down for summer

It's that time again, marked by the blooms of rhododendrons, black flies and the irresistible aroma of barbecued cuisine. It's also the time of year we want to be outdoors spending time alone, or with family, friends and pets, making the most of the approximately 90 days we Nova Scotians call summer. In short, no one really wants to be inside, working.

For nurses navigating the enormous demands of healthcare within all sectors, taking time off this summer is not a luxury, it is a wellness necessity. Though some of our early career nurses may not enjoy a true vacation period this summer, making every minute count while not at work is extremely important.

Stepping back from the bedside to truly disconnect can help recharge your batteries, restore emotional resilience, and help prevent the realities of compassion fatigue and burnout.

The nursing profession can be deeply satisfying, but it is also physically taxing and emotionally draining. Like

the air we breathe, nurses seemingly inhale the stress, trauma, and suffering of others daily, putting ourselves at a high risk for multi-system exhaustion.

Studies continually show that the majority of nurses experience mental and physical depletion on a regular basis. CFNU studies and everyday conversations with nurses can attest to that fact. With staffing shortages exacerbating workloads, it is incredibly common for nurses to feel guilty about leaving their units or to skip their scheduled breaks altogether. However, we all know this relentless cycle of giving without replenishing eventually takes its toll.

In 2020, in the first month of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSNU developed a webpage called Escape. It offered nurses the chance to take a virtual mini vacation, access to videos to faraway places when travel was prohibited. The webpage listed games, resources, and other opportunities to step away, if only momentarily, from the devastation that the outbreak created.

Janet Hazelton
BScN RN, MPA, ICD.D



That webpage, nsnu.ca/Escape still exists and is updated seasonally. It still provides nurses and others (many non-nurses visit the page regularly) an escape from troubles and mind clutter. A break can be the distraction or shift in thinking that takes you from spiralling into the abyss to landing on stable ground.

When you don't take time to reset, your personal life can suffer, and your overall job satisfaction may plummet. This is where the true value of a summer rejuvenation comes into play. Taking a dedicated vacation, and making the most of your days off, allows you to achieve psychological detachment, the vital process of completely disconnecting from work-related roles and responsibilities.

I'm no expert in this area, but I have worked at the bedside, and I understand the impact nursing can have on you – the human who also happens to be a nurse. Recharging offers profound physiological benefits, including better sleep habits, stress reduction, and the

prevention of chronic illness. By participating in restorative, active leisure, or simply relaxing with family and friends, you give your brain and body the space to heal.

Nova Scotia is surrounded by beauty and nature and bodies of water – perfect places for meditation, meals, and movement. It's a form of medication you can't buy at Shoppers.

As nurses, we're not good at self-care and rest. We tend to push the limits of healthy boundaries and often lack the ability to say NO.

Make your well-being the priority this summer. Whether you are heading out on a getaway, enjoying a local staycation, or simply taking a few well-deserved days off, be sure to unplug. Take this time to unwind from work and reconnect with your favourite people in your favourite Nova Scotia places.

Janet Hazelton
BScN RN, MPA, ICD.D



New Report Outlines the Economic Benefits of Canada's Public Health Care System

In the face of worsening trade and economic threats from the United States, the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) released a new report earlier this year outlining the economic benefits of Canada's public health care system.

Authored by economist Jim Stanford, the report explores and documents the multi-faceted contributions that public health care makes to Canada's economy, including growth, jobs, investment, innovation and equality. The Economic Benefits of Canada's Public Health Care System demonstrates the importance of strengthening public health care as one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors in the national economy.

"The growth of public health care is commonly interpreted as a problem to be solved, but there is another side to the story," said Stanford. "Health care is one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors in the national economy. Its continued growth can help to stabilize the national economy at a moment when export industries are disrupted by international chaos."

The broader health care sector created almost 450,000 jobs over the last decade – far more than any other sector. The health care sector employs more than 2 million people in Canada, and health care workers earn \$120 billion per year in wages and salaries. Health care accounts for over \$7 billion in annual research spending – the second highest of any Canadian industry.

From direct to indirect job creation to contributing a substantial proportion to our GDP, Canada's public health care system deserves recognition for the significant role it plays in anchoring and building our economy.

"Public health care is not only vital to Canadians' well-being – it is also foundational to our economy," explains CFNU President Linda Silas. "It is long past time for governments to view health care through the lens of economic contribution. When we talk about nation building, our public health care system is the foundation that we need to build upon for a strong economy that is more protected from international trade disruptions."



To view the report go to nursesunions.ca/new-report-outlines-the-economic-benefits-of-canadas-public-health-care-system/ and click the link.



CFNU Group Explores Denmark's Renowned LTC System

Study tours to Denmark are a powerful way for Canadian nursing and long-term care (LTC) leaders to explore innovative Danish eldercare.

A group from the National Executive Board of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, including NSNU president, Janet Hazelton, was granted the opportunity to see firsthand how the Danes value and care for their senior population.

The tour offers delegates a rare, first-hand look at one of the world's most respected eldercare systems. Through meetings with the Danish Health Authority, participants gain insight into how Denmark funds, governs, and continuously evolves its eldercare model.

Exchanges with the Danish Nurses' Organization provide practical lessons on workforce sustainability, safe staffing, and collective bargaining, while site visits showcase how municipalities deliver integrated homecare, nursing homes, and preventive services.

CFNU delegates explored innovative housing solutions, including modern seniors' living communities and the pioneering *House of Generations*, where intergenerational living strengthens social cohesion and reduces loneliness.

Their groundbreaking preventive home-visit program demonstrates how proactive outreach reduces hospitalizations and extends independence.

Denmark is widely recognized for its exceptional elder care due to a universal, citizen-centered philosophy that prioritizes autonomy, independence, and "adding life to remaining years." The system shifts away from institutionalizing seniors, focusing instead on keeping them active and living at home with robust, proactive support.

Study delegations consistently highlight the following elements of the Danish system:

- ▶ **Prevention & Home Care:** Proactive motivational visits start at age 65 to spot early cognitive or physical issues, keeping seniors independent and out of LTC facilities longer.
- ▶ **Dementia Care Models:** Delegations frequently visit specialized facilities like Denmark's first dementia village.
- ▶ **Assistive Technologies:** Denmark continuously innovates its care by utilizing smart digital tools (like smart-lock systems and AI-supported lifting solutions) that foster independence while easing the physical toll on caregivers

Given that many of these tours target health care leaders, operational directors, and care nurses, these events bring transformative, human-centered ideas back to the Canadian context.

CFNU will be presenting a report to policy makers here in Canada on how we can and should do better for our seniors in long term care before year end.



CFNU NEB MEMBERS WITH CANADA'S AMBASSADOR TO DENMARK, CAROLYN BENNETT

ELS: Exceptional Education

Another Eastern Labour School (ELS) 2026 has come to a close, and what a time it was!

Hosted by the New Brunswick Nurses Union, close to 300 nurses from across the Atlantic provinces gathered in Fredericton for three days of networking and education.

NSNU president, Janet Hazelton wishes to thank the 100-plus Nova Scotia nurses from all sectors of care who attended. In addition, several NSNU staff including Chris Albrecht, Chad O'Brien, Heather Matthews, Kaitlyn MacLean and Coleen Logan shared their expertise as instructors for these sessions which promote education in leadership skills, the negotiating process, OH&S, duty to accommodate, nursing and the law, digital professionalism and nursing practice, communications and more.

ELS is a biennial event designed for nursing union members in Atlantic Canada. The school rotates among the four provincial nursing unions (NSNU, NBNU, PEINU, RNUNL) offering Atlantic Canadian nurses essential training in union dynamics, general labour relations, and workplace advocacy.

As Janet Hazelton says, ELS provides an opportunity for nurses to learn from experts in their fields and from each other in a welcoming environment.

If all goes to plan, the next ELS will be held in St. John's, NL in June 2027. You won't want to miss that one either!

Congratulations to New Brunswick Nurses Union (NBNU-SIINB) on an exceptional ELS and to the receptive and supportive participants.



Code White Simulation Learning Framework: STRENGTHENING SAFETY THROUGH COLLABORATION & COMPASSION

Submitted by Nova Scotia Health

In acute psychiatry, safety and compassion are inseparable. Every Code White response reflects not only how we protect, but how we care – for our patients, for one another, and for the integrity of our therapeutic environment.

The Code White Simulation Learning Framework represents our shared commitment to continuous learning, teamwork, and trauma-informed practice. Through scenario-based training, reflective debriefing, and the application of Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVC) principles, we strengthen our ability to recognize early signs of escalation, respond with professionalism and empathy, and recover together as a unified team.

Our goal is not perfection, but progress – to foster a culture where staff feel confident, supported, and psychologically safe while navigating the complexities of mental health care. This work ensures that patient care remains both safe and deeply human.

A COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE ACROSS WESTERN NOVA SCOTIA

The Acute Inpatient Unit at Valley Regional Hospital has initiated an innovative and collaborative approach to Code White preparedness in partnership with Nova Scotia Health Security Services and Paladin Security, including both mental health officers and tactical officers. This initiative reflects a shared understanding that effective crisis response in mental health settings requires strong interdisciplinary coordination, mutual respect, and consistent training.

Following its success at Valley Regional Hospital, this framework has now been shared with the Inpatient Mental Health Unit at South Shore Regional Hospital in Bridgewater and is being introduced to the Inpatient Mental Health Unit at Yarmouth Regional Hospital in May, supporting a broader, zone-wide approach to safety and preparedness.

PURPOSE & OVERVIEW

This approach supports the delivery, evaluation, and continuous improvement of Code White simulation learning and tabletop exercises within acute inpatient psychiatry. Its objectives are to:

- ▶ *Strengthen team confidence and role clarity*
- ▶ *Reinforce early intervention and trauma-informed care principles*
- ▶ *Ensure safe, consistent, and policy-aligned responses*
- ▶ *Promote reflective learning and continuous improvement*

BUILDING A CULTURE OF SAFETY AND SUPPORT

At its core, this initiative is about more than simulation – it is about culture. By creating structured opportunities to practice, reflect, and learn together, teams are better equipped to respond effectively while maintaining therapeutic relationships and personal safety.

Equally important is the emphasis on psychological safety for staff. The simulation learning encourages open dialogue, shared learning, and a just-culture approach to performance, ensuring that every team member feels supported in their professional growth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not be possible without the dedication and collaboration of many contributors. Sincere appreciation is extended to the clinical nurse educators, frontline nursing and interdisciplinary staff, psychiatry teams, and senior leadership with the Nova Scotia Health Mental Health and Addictions Program, as well as Security Leadership, Paladin Security leadership and officers, Occupational Health & Safety, the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union, and most importantly, the patients and families whose experiences continue to shape and inform this work.

Through collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to compassionate care, this initiative helps to strengthen both safety and trust across inpatient mental health services in Western Nova Scotia.

RNUNL Nurse-Patient Ratios Breakfast

SAFE STAFFING SAVES: PATIENTS. NURSES. HEALTHCARE

On May 26th, the Registered Nurses Union of Newfoundland and Labrador hosted a **Safe Staffing Saves Member of the House of Assembly (MHA) Breakfast** with strong support from all sides of the House for action to protect patients, support nurses, and strengthen public healthcare.

The event brought together MHAs (Nova Scotia equivalent to MLAs) from across Newfoundland and Labrador for a focused discussion on safe staffing, nurse retention, and practical solutions to help stabilize healthcare services.

Yvette Coffey, President of RNU said, “Safe staffing is not a partisan issue. It is a patient safety issue, a nurse retention issue, and a public healthcare issue. Every MHA represents patients, families, nurses, and communities affected when staffing is unsafe.”

The breakfast included presentations from nursing union leaders who shared safe staffing progress and lessons from other provinces. Presenters included

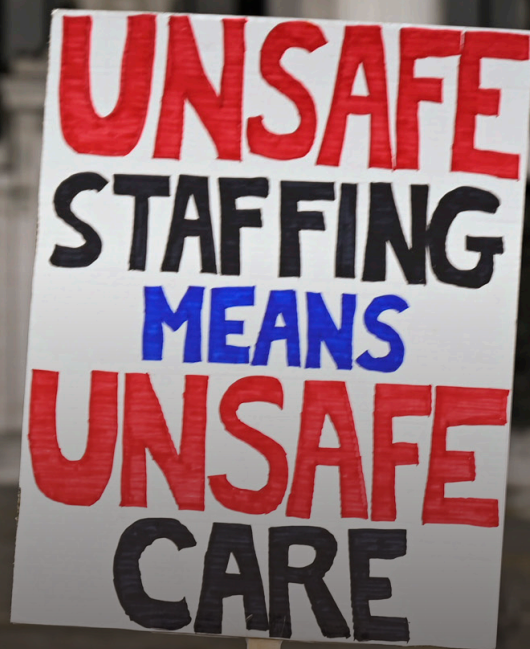
Adriane Gear, President of the British Columbia Nurses’ Union; Darlene Jackson, President of the Manitoba Nurses Union; **Janet Hazelton, President of the Nova Scotia Nurses’ Union**; and Yvette Coffey, President of the Registered Nurses’ Union Newfoundland & Labrador. The session was facilitated by Linda Silas, President of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, who also led a Q&A with the provincial nursing union presidents.

RNU is calling for six practical, province-wide safe staffing solutions: public travel teams and travel locums; a comprehensive core staffing review; investment in nursing students; sustainable publicly funded NP-led care; meaningful retention incentives; and an independent health sector safety council. These solutions must be supported by safe staffing legislation, dedicated investment, and public accountability.

“We were encouraged to hear MHAs recognize that we cannot keep recruiting nurses into unsafe conditions and expect them to stay,” said Coffey. “Safe staffing means having the right number and mix of healthcare professionals to provide safe, quality care. It also means creating workplaces where nurses can stay, build their careers, and continue serving their communities.”

RNUNL PRESIDENT YVETTE COFFEY, MNU PRESIDENT DARLENE JACKSON AND NSNU PRESIDENT JANET HAZELTON AT RNUNL’S SAFE STAFFING SAVES MHA BREAKFAST MAY 2026





MANITOBA GOVERNMENT PASSES NURSE-TO-PATIENT RATIOS LEGISLATION

Safer Staffing Framework Developed with Front-line Nurses & Manitoba Nurses Union

On June 5th, 2026 the Manitoba government passed Canada's first nurse-to-patient ratio legislation and has released recommendations, marking the next step in improving patient safety, supporting nurses and strengthening health-care staffing in that province.

The legislation is informed by recommendations submitted earlier this year by the Nurse-Patient Ratio Subcommittee of the Joint Nursing Council, a collaborative table that brought together government, health-system employers and the Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU). The recommendations were shaped by input from more than 4,800 nurses and developed collaboratively with nurses, employers and Manitoba government partners.

"We are incredibly proud of the work done by those nurses who were involved in this very important initiative. It's been a long time coming, but it's hopeful to see that we are closer to implementation," said Darlene Jackson, president, Manitoba Nurses Union. "Nurse-to-patient ratios are something the MNU has been advocating for a very long time. If we can get these guardrails in place, we

are confident many of the other issues impacting nurse wellness will be addressed."

The recommendations are the first step in a phased approach to introducing nurse-to-patient ratios in priority care settings and identify key actions to support implementation, including workforce planning, recruitment and retention initiatives, and ongoing engagement with front-line nurses.

"Manitoba is showing leadership by becoming the first jurisdiction in Canada to pass nurse-to-patient ratios legislation," said Linda Silas, president, Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. "Congratulations to the nurses, union leaders, employers and government partners who helped make this milestone possible. It demonstrates what can be achieved when governments, employers and nurses work together toward a common goal."

NSNU wishes to congratulate MNU and the province of Manitoba on this inspiring legislation.



The Manitoba nurse-to-patient ratio executive summary is available online at:
manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/proactive/20262027/nurse-patient-ratios.pdf

CUPE Long-Term Care Strike Ends

On Sunday, June 7th, CUPE – representing roughly 3,600 striking long-term care workers across Nova Scotia – announced that a tentative agreement had been reached.

Since taking to the picket lines on April 13, CUPE members demonstrated their commitment and brought attention to the challenges facing long-term care workers.

Workers at St. Vincent's Nursing Home in Halifax,

CUPE's lead bargaining unit, voted to ratify the tentative agreement. Following nearly 12 hours of intensive negotiations, the agreement effectively brought an end to eight weeks of strike action.

The NSNU would like to thank the nurses who worked alongside CUPE's striking members throughout this challenging period. We recognize that the strike created difficulties for everyone involved. Thank you for being supportive, respectful and compassionate.

Are You Receiving NSNU Emails?

Campaigner is the secure email service that enables the NSNU to share information with members en masse, or with specific groups of members, in an efficient and timely manner.

Often, when a member reaches out looking for missing emails – they have unknowingly unsubscribed to our email service. If you believe you have unsubscribed and would like to opt in to NSNU's emails again, you will need to go through the resubscription process:

1. Visit the following link or scan the QR code

secure.campaigner.com/CSB/Public/Form.aspx?fid=1003060&ac=9k10



2. Fill in your information, and standby for a confirmation email

- If you have not received your confirmation email, check your spam/junk folder
- This email may take a few minutes to arrive

3. Follow the link in your confirmation email to complete the subscription process

- You will not receive emails until this step is finalized



Internal travel nurses support OPOR rollout in first major development

Excerpted from NSH News & Notices

Nova Scotia Health's internal travel nurse team is taking on a major task supporting the rollout of the province's new clinical information system, One Person, One Record (OPOR).

It will mark the first time the year-old program is deployed in Central Zone, an area that takes in Halifax, Eastern Shore and West Hants. The team was created to reduce reliance on costly external agency nurses and stabilize emergency departments. Nurses will help maintain continuity of care as they and their colleagues become more familiar with the new system.

The internal travel nurse team launched in April 2025 after a contractual agreement was reached between Nova Scotia Health and its union partners. Both sides wanted to curb the growing dependence on external travel nurses, a trend each side agreed had driven up costs and strained staff who were repeatedly asked to onboard new agency nurses.

The internal travel nurse program was closely modelled on Manitoba's program, with additional insights from Newfoundland and Labrador. The goal: create a flexible, mobile workforce of Nova Scotia Health employees who can support short-staffed emergency depart-

ments while receiving competitive compensation and the ability to travel within the province.

The team spent its first year in Northern Zone, encompassing Colchester-East Hants, Cumberland and Pictou. Some nurses will stay in that zone to avoid destabilizing services in Colchester and Cumberland counties, but most will head to Halifax for OPOR training.

The program has also become a recruitment tool. Nurses from the United States and from other provinces have applied, including Nova Scotians working as external travel nurses who want to return home. One recent hire brought a two-for-one benefit: a travel nurse joined the team, and his spouse accepted a permanent position at St. Martha's Regional Hospital in Antigonish.

Patients likely won't notice the transition. Internal travel nurses wear the standard black and white uniform, and they are familiar with Nova Scotia Health equipment, such as pumps, defibrillators and glucometers, in addition to organizational policies and procedures.

NSNU Replaces App with LMS

As part of our ongoing work to simplify and strengthen the digital tools available to members, NSNU will be streamlining iTacit so that it functions exclusively as a learning platform. Going forward, members will use iTacit only to access online courses, learning resources, and certificates associated with completed courses.

This means that when members log in, they will see the course library and certificate access. Other platform features, including messaging, document sharing, bulletin board postings, and related communication tools, will be removed.

In addition, NSNU will be retiring the NSNU App. The app is no longer required because iTacit is fully responsive and can be accessed easily from a

computer, tablet, or mobile device through a web browser. Members will continue to access the learning platform on any device directly at: nsnu.itacit.com

These changes are being made to create a simpler, more focused digital experience for members. By removing unnecessary platform functions and retiring the app, NSNU will reduce costs, limit duplication across systems, and maintain a more robust and sustainable digital structure.



Thank You, Patti

Patti Humphries began her nursing career in 1984 following her graduation from Victoria General's RN program. She later went on to receive her BScN from St. Francis Xavier University.

After spending her early days working in a small cottage hospital setting in Neils Harbour, Cape Breton, the Dartmouth General ICU, and the Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service, Patti safely landed in the outstretched arms of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union. A lucky day for NSNU and its members.

In July of 2006, Patti accepted a labour relations representative position with the NSNU, later to become our LRR and Professional Practice Advisor.

Known for her humour, exceptional Halloween costumes and barbequing skills, she is also one of the finest LRRs the Nurses' Union has ever employed. Her no nonsense but kindhearted approach to working with members on their employment, professional practice and collective agreement issues have earned her a reputation for being a fair and fun (when appropriate) advocate for nurses.

To say that Patti will be missed is a gross understatement. Aside from her easy rapport with members and employers alike, she is also a staff treasure - and Treasurer of the staff union! Patti has played Santa Claus at staff functions, Hulk the MC at the NSNU Superhero fashion extravaganza, and a go-to "Let's Get This Party Started" co-worker.

For twenty years at the NSNU, Patti has helped improve the working and personal lives of nurses while generously sharing her abundance of knowledge, all with proficiency and levity.

It's with mixed emotions that the NSNU bids farewell on her well-deserved retirement. Those missing their Patti-fix will likely find her at the beach, floating carefree and soaking up the sun.

Patti's tenure at the NSNU ends on Friday, July 31st. Be sure to send best wishes to patti.humphries@nsnu.ca before that date.



Welcome Back, Dwayne!

As luck would have it, an experienced labour relations rep (LRR) who was once employed by the NSNU and worked closely with outgoing LRR, Patti Humphries, is set to return.

Dwayne MacKinnon is a familiar face to many. The former human resources staff member with Capital Health was warmly welcomed as a labour relations representative by the NSNU in mid-2013. He worked primarily in districts 4, 5, and 7, now known as Zones, inclusive of long-term care facilities, and was eventually assigned the additional role of NSNU Diversity and Equity Consultant.

Dwayne relocated to Calgary in 2016 as a labour relations officer (LRO) with the United Nurses of Alberta before moving further west to Vancouver where he has been employed as an LRO and human resources consultant with the British Columbia Nurses' Union.

His professional experience includes labour relations, collective bargaining, complex mediation, facilitation and alternative dispute resolution processes, and health human resources. This ultimate team player prides himself on working with others in a way that is collaborative and builds trust.

He is looking forward to reconnecting with NSNU staff and members from back-in-the-day and is eager to make new acquaintances while supporting nurses in his position with the Nurses' Union.

Dwayne will return to the NSNU as an LRR in mid-August. Welcome back, Dwayne!



Patti & Dwayne 2014

LRR Assignments

Whenever there is a change in the labour relations representative (LRR) staffing complement, whether by retirement, resignation, etc., the NSNU takes a comprehensive look at opportunities to make adjustments or maintain the status quo.

With Patti Humphries's retirement and the addition of Dwayne MacKinnon, NSNU's Executive Director, Chris Albrecht will determine if it's advantageous to reassign reps in some or all areas.

NSNU LRRs answer your questions and provide assistance on grievances, contract language and enforcement, and legal matters. NSNU Labour Relations staff, who typically have nursing, labour and human resources backgrounds, regularly travel to communities throughout the province to connect with Locals and build professional relationships with members.

If changes in assignments are required, members will be notified via a Campaigner e-memo this summer. That information will also be updated on the webpage found at nsnu.ca/WholsMyLRR.

Nurse Peer Support Program Focuses on Recruitment & Retention

Originally Published by NSH

When registered nurse (and NSNU activist) Jackie Pratt looks around the Aberdeen Hospital in New Glasgow, she sees new nurses arriving eager and hopeful, only to become overwhelmed, anxious and, in some cases, ready to leave the profession.

“I’ve done orientation for every new nurse who has come through our doors for the last two years,” said Pratt, a clinical nurse educator at the hospital. “Many of them are excited on day one, but once they’re out on the floor, sometimes they don’t feel as supported as they should. We don’t want to lose them.”

Earlier this year, Pratt began the “Aberdeen Family Tree”, an in-person peer support program designed specifically for nurses in their first year of practice. Funded through a \$5,000 Nova Scotia Health nurse-led innovation grant, the program focuses on retention, emotional wellbeing and building confidence.

The program blends supportive education with structured peer debriefing. Each one-hour session includes a 30-minute teaching component on topics such as stress management and time management, followed by 30 minutes of facilitated peer discussion.

“The goal isn’t to lecture, it’s to give nurses tools, language and reassurance,” Pratt said. “This creates a safe space where they can talk openly about what they’re experiencing.”

The “Aberdeen Family Tree” offers consistent, human-centered support. Participants can join at any

time. They graduate with a certificate after completing 10 sessions and receive a necklace symbolizing “roots, growth, connection and belonging.”

Each participant receives a welcome kit that includes a “Be Kind” lanyard, sensory and fidget tools, a journal, along with access to program resources.

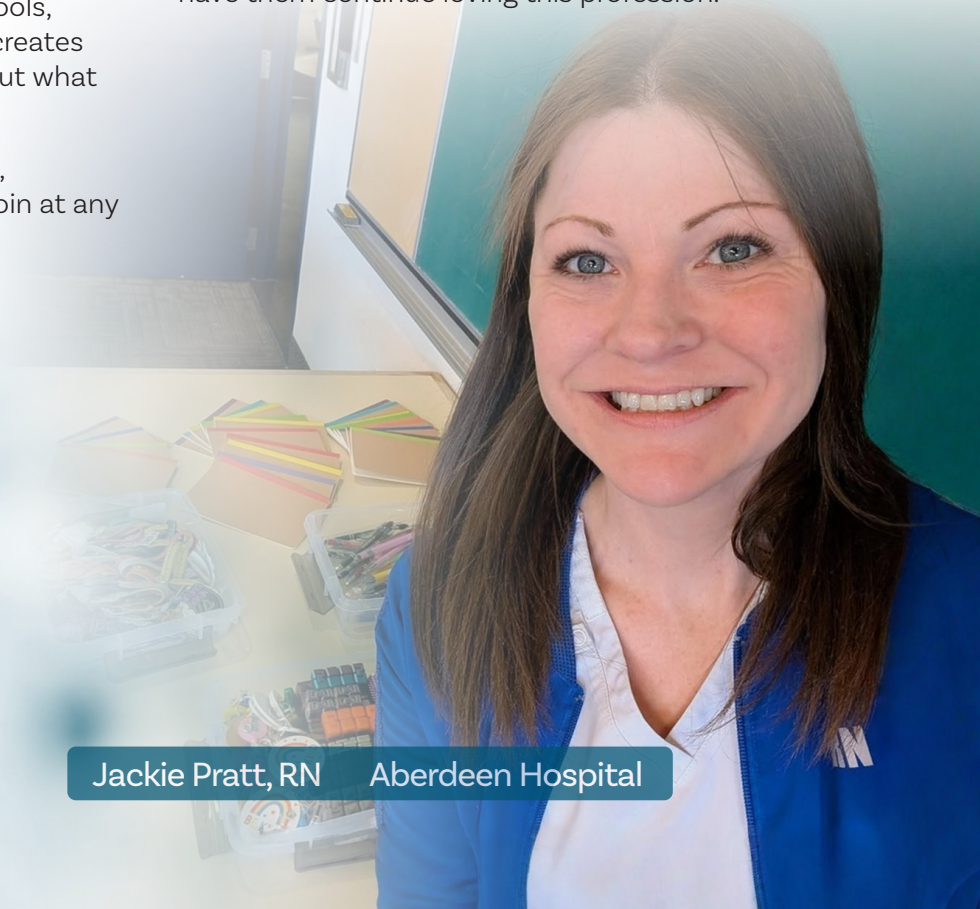
Although early attendance has been small, Pratt expects numbers to grow as new nurses join the ranks.

“If someone is scared about their first year, knowing they’ll have a full year of support could be the thing that brings them here and, ultimately, keeps them here,” she said.

This project is deeply personal for Pratt. After 15 years in nursing, she knows the strains of the job. “I want this generation to learn that you can be an excellent nurse without over-extending yourself.”

She hopes the “Aberdeen Family Tree” becomes a model for other rural hospitals.

“Transition can be hard and support matters,” Pratt said. “If we can walk alongside them, we can retain them and have them continue loving this profession.”



Jackie Pratt, RN Aberdeen Hospital



New Coaching Program to Support Nurses in High-Stress Work

Resilience InsideOut Coaching Program

In late May, the NSNU shared information about Nova Scotia Health partnering with AIR (Atlantic Institute of Resilience) to offer the **Resilience InsideOut Coaching Program**. Part of the acute care Recruitment and Retention Innovation Fund commitment, the program supports participants to stay calm and confident during stressful moments, manage emotional overload from difficult shifts, and regain a sense of balance and control at work.

The response to NSNU's e-memo has been outstanding. Feedback from AIR's founder, Dr. Jackie Kinley, indicates that following NSNU's communication on May 27th, within 48 hours more than 30 NSNU members reached out seeking support, which speaks both to the need and willingness of members to engage when they receive information through channels of trust, such as the Nurses' Union.

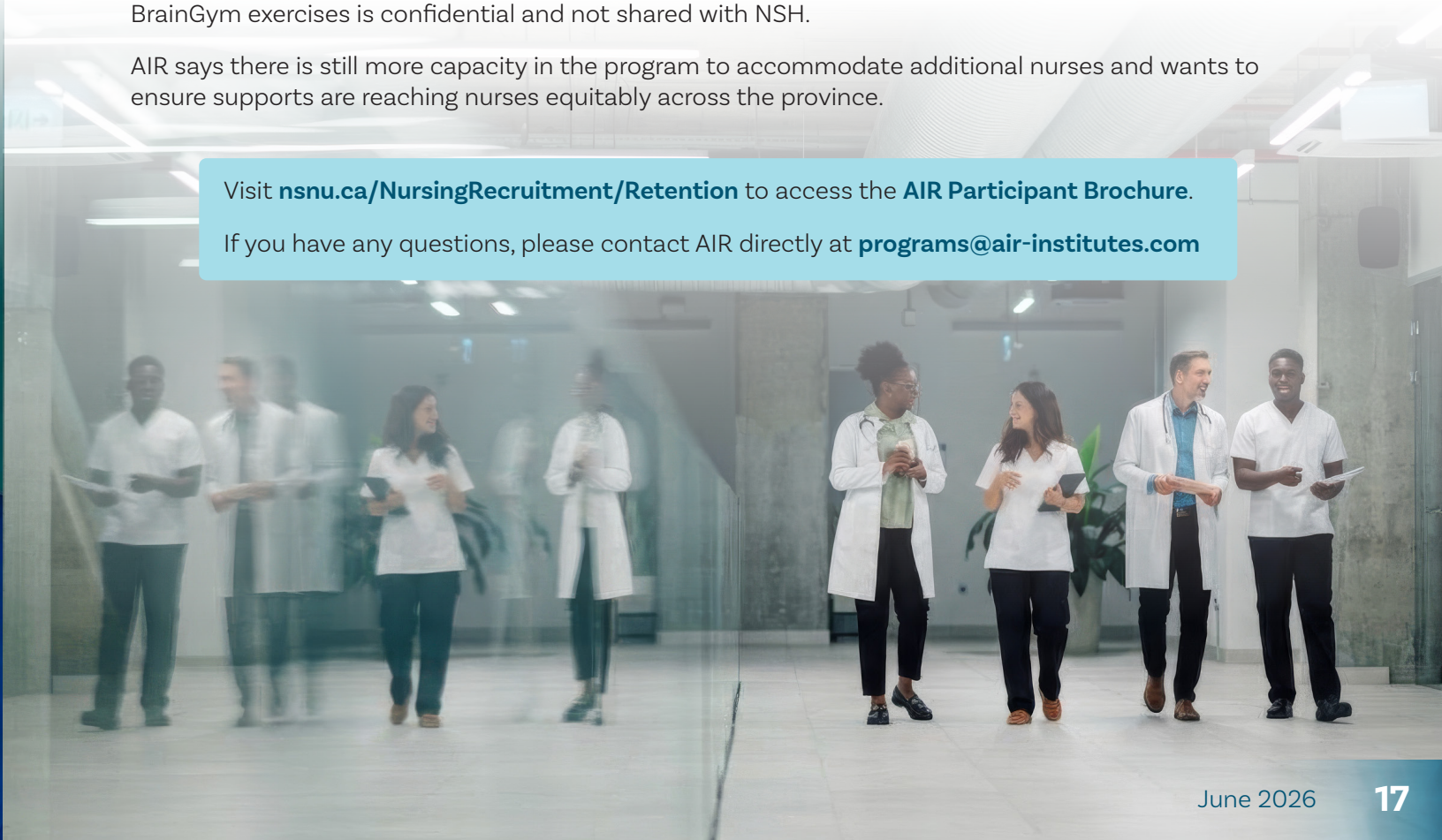
Of the program, some nurses have said, it's exactly what they needed, great insight and a clear direction.

Participation in this program is completely voluntary and is separate from EAP services or other supports nurses may be receiving through NSH. Personal information from assessments, coaching sessions, and BrainGym exercises is confidential and not shared with NSH.

AIR says there is still more capacity in the program to accommodate additional nurses and wants to ensure supports are reaching nurses equitably across the province.

Visit nsnu.ca/NursingRecruitment/Retention to access the **AIR Participant Brochure**.

If you have any questions, please contact AIR directly at programs@air-institutes.com



path is a unique early assistance and support program available to employees who are:

- covered by **Path2Health** (the Health Association Nova Scotia LTD Plan)
- absent, or not worked full days and/or duties, for 7 days or more due to any illness or injury
- not on an approved WCB claim

It is designed to ensure employees receive the assistance, services and treatments they need along their journey to getting well. The program has proven successful in:

- transitioning employees back to good health and gainful employment
- helping employees to transition to Path2Health if needed
- helping to reduce the Path2Health duration

Participation in the program provides access to funding for a range of services and treatments that can assist with your recovery including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Massage Therapy, Counselling Services, Diagnostic Services, Work Conditioning/Hardening, Orthotics, Braces and Supports, Weight Loss Programs, Dietitian Services, Fitness Programs.

Personalized Assistance to Health

Call toll free at **1-888-824-3273** or email path@healthassociation.ns.ca

Visit www.healthassociation.ns.ca/path

Sealed in Solidarity

NSNU Time Capsule 2026-2051

In 2001, some of NSNU's more visionary members filled a time capsule with handwritten notes, documents, photos and more, representing the first 25 years of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union. The intent was to open the vessel a quarter century later at the 2026 Annual General Meeting to reveal its contents and reminisce about an earlier time.

That capsule was opened Thursday, April 16th by Janet Hazelton and the NSNU's founder and first Executive Director, Tom Pattison while at the AGM. Those in attendance heard messages written by voices from the past, learned that some of our battles have been resolved while others remain, and shared a few laughs.

The original time capsule was kept safe in the current ED's office, filled with memories preserved for the 50th anniversary celebration of the NSNU. Mission accomplished.

A new capsule was filled with artifacts and messages, sealed on **NSNU Day - June 15th**, the date the Nurses' Union was founded. This shiny new capsule will be opened at the NSNU's 2051 AGM and enjoyed by the next generations of nurse activists present at that event.

This exercise, while lighthearted, provides a tangible way for Union members to see how our organization has evolved over decades. It creates sentimental value and leaves a legacy for our industrious successors.



Still Going Strong: Jessie Butts, RN

SUBMITTED BY TRACEY COOMBES, RN CNL

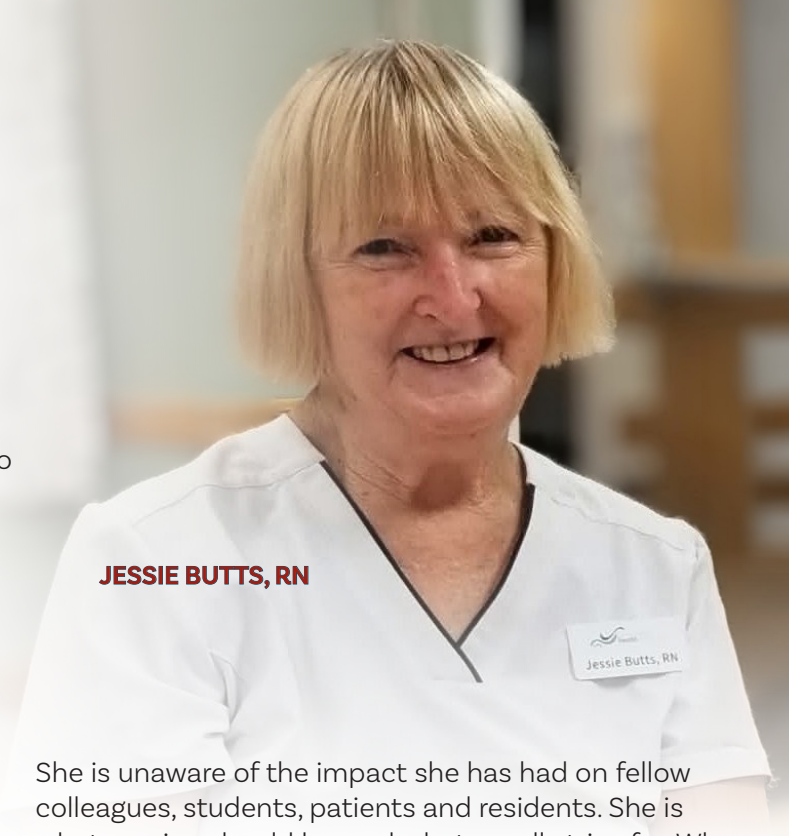
I met Jessie Butts, RN, back in the mid-90s at the Glace Bay General Hospital, where she worked in ICU. I was a new diploma grad – nervous, scared and excited.

Jessie was one of the wonderful ICU staff members who served as a preceptor and mentor for newcomers. To this day, I don't think Jessie realizes how many nurses' lives she has impacted.

Jessie graduated in 1972 as a diploma nurse from City Hospital in Sydney. She worked at the hospital as a casual nurse until she moved with her husband to Prince Edward Island. She later returned with her family to Bathurst for a year before Cape Breton called, and they moved back home.

Most of Jessie's career was spent in ICU at the General Hospital, until she moved to the medical day unit, where she remained for several years. She officially retired 12 years ago, but has worked as a casual nurse in long-term care since then. If we need a nurse for back shift, Jessie is on speed dial – as long as she has no plans for the theatre, the movies or to meet with her fellow 1972 alumni.

Over the years, Jessie's gentle approach has not changed. She remains dedicated, knowledgeable, caring, compassionate, proficient and professional. She has a calmness in chaos, a shoulder to lean on in times of stress, humour when needed and knowledge that is always shared.



JESSIE BUTTS, RN

She is unaware of the impact she has had on fellow colleagues, students, patients and residents. She is what nursing should be, and what we all strive for. When asked why she still works, she says she still finds enjoyment in her career and wants to keep being healthy in body, mind and spirit.

A wife, a mother, a grandmother, a sister, an aunt, a friend and yes, a Registered Nurse. Jessie is proud of her family, especially her grandchildren, who are pursuing careers in healthcare. She loves spending time with her grandkids, walking her two dogs and golfing.

Because of Jessie's nursing career, she was able to raise a family, make lifelong friends and provide the care everyone deserves. Jessie's career has spanned more than **54 years**, and she is still going strong.

Upcoming Meetings of the Board of Directors

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, in person or virtually.

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.

Upcoming board meetings are, as always, subject to change. The following meetings will take place at the NSNU Office in Dartmouth, with a virtual option.

Monday, August 31st
Friday, October 9th
Friday, November 13th
Friday, January 22nd
Friday, March 19th

what's nu? snapshots



LIKE MOTHER, LIKE SON

Tracy Bourdages, a Clinical Leader of Development with the mental health and addictions program at the IWK and an NSNU activist, was all smiles as her son Tristan Bourdages graduated from Dalhousie University's nursing program, Spring 2026.

Tristan, a former recipient of an NSNU scholarship in 2023, has accepted a position with the Emergency Department in Bridgewater where he will be an NSNU member.

NSNU wishes Tristan a long and fulfilling nursing career. And we hope to see mom and son at the next NSNU AGM!

SHIRLEY FARRELL MEMORIAL

On June 20th, members of the St. Martha's NSNU Local were on hand for the unveiling of the Shirley Farrell Memorial Garden. Shirley's family welcomed NSNU President Janet Hazelton and 1st VP Donna Gillis, among other guests for this beautiful dedication in honour of a long-standing activist and leader in the Antigonish nursing community. Shirley passed in early 2022.



IWK ICE CREAM SOCIAL

On Saturday, June 13th, the IWK NSNU Local hosted an ice cream social for nurses in the site's Newman Gardens gazebo. Shore Peddlin' provided the treats for members who stopped by to enjoy.

IWK members Christine Dennis-Pitman and Alana Ferguson, and her furry pal Ozzie, were photographed with Jess Tofflemire of Shore Peddlin'.



ECHOES OF HEALING GARDEN

On June 8th, the Aberdeen Hospital unveiled a beautiful monument, the Echoes of Healing Garden. It's a memorial garden for everyone to enjoy and appreciate as a place of reflection, wellbeing and hopefulness.

The Garden is a nursing-led project that memorializes the impact of the Aberdeen Hospital School of Nursing. The artist who designed and created the stone, Marcus Englis is from Nova Scotia.

Alaine Halliday, NSNU VP of LPNs and Barb Young, a Class of 1965 Aberdeen Nursing Grad and a member of the Aberdeen Archive Society, are seen enjoying the memorial.



GOVERNOR GENERAL'S CANADIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



NSNU president, Janet Hazelton was happy to meet with her colleagues from NSGEU and attendees of the 2026 Governor General's Leadership Conference. These individuals, a combination of labour, NGOs and employer reps from across Canada toured the province in early June. The goal is to have a consensus report on sustainability and prosperity in Nova Scotia. The group discussed the important role unions play in supporting and growing a flourishing province.

HEART ATTACK VICTIM PRAISES NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH NURSES

Two NSH nurses in Toronto for a high school hockey tournament say instinct and frequent CPR training helped them save the life of a referee, George Harrison, who collapsed in cardiac arrest inside a busy multi pad arena earlier this year.

Best friends Terri Arnold and Melissa Hines are colleagues and children's nurses at Kentville's Valley Regional Hospital. The pair was standing in line for coffee inside the arena when they heard shouts for help.

Inside the referees' change room, they saw a man unresponsive on the floor. The two nurses began rotating compressions while arena staff secured an AED.

This summer he plans to meet Hines and Arnold in Nova Scotia, take them out to dinner, and hear more about how they saved him.

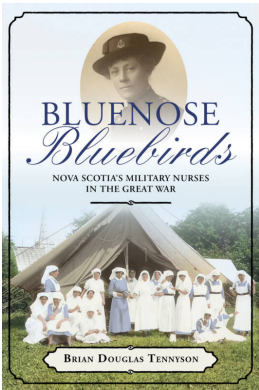


Booked for summer?

If you're hoping to curl up in your favourite reading corner this summer with a book or two, and a cup of hot or iced tea, check out some local fair, suggestions from our NSNU bookworms.

Bluenose Bluebirds: Nova Scotia's Military Nurses in the Great War

Brian Douglas Tennyson



In April 2026, Brian Douglas Tennyson, professor emeritus in the department of history at Cape Breton University, released *Bluenose Bluebirds: Nova Scotia's Military Nurses in the Great War*. The nickname "bluebirds" comes from the uniform worn by the Canadian nurses, which consisted of a blue dress with a white apron.

"*Bluenose Bluebirds* is a thoroughly researched, well-organized book that honours the diligent efforts of these nurses, highlighting in particular those connected to Nova Scotia."

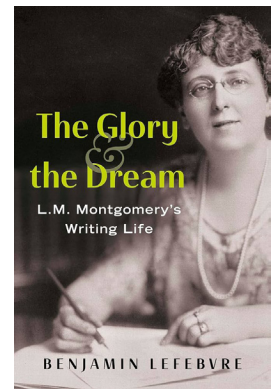
It's an important book that brings to light the history of these women and the significance of their contributions.

The Glory and the Dream: L.M. Montgomery's Writing Life

Benjamin Lefebvre

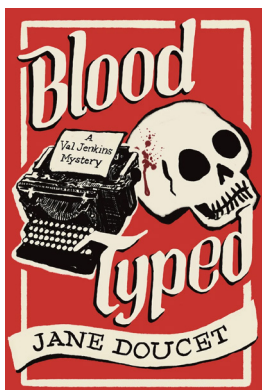
If you like *Anne of Green Gables* and all things L.M. Montgomery, you'll enjoy all *The Glory and the Dream* has to offer. New revelations and insights await about the writing life of the internationally renowned author of *Anne of Green Gables*.

Benjamin Lefebvre offers a never-before-seen look at her writing life, encompassing everything from fans to lawsuits to her creative choices, including an unlikely source of inspiration that enabled her to continue writing about her native Prince Edward Island after she moved to Ontario and her controversial decision to downplay Anne's own writing ambitions.



Blood Typed

Jane Doucet



Welcome to the NOVA Prize gala dinner, where one Nova Scotian author will go home with the \$100,000 grand prize... unless they don't go home at all.

Val Jenkins is stuck. A journalist for the *Halifax Post*, she's been writing a local books column for over a decade. But ever since she was a precocious Nancy Drew wannabe, she's longed to cover the crime beat.

When the gala ceremony approaches, Val anticipates more of the same old thing: authors in various interpretations of "formal" wear, hiding their simmering jealousies while dreaming of the life-changing prize money. But this year, something happens that no one could have expected. Murder.

This newly released thriller from Jane Doucet promises a good summer read!

Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions

Solidarity Fund

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) and its member organizations have a long tradition of support for international and Canadian organizations working for social and economic justice and for reconstruction and development.

When the CFNU launched its International Solidarity Fund over a decade ago, it joined other labour unions which mobilize resources to support initiatives that foster solidarity with the disadvantaged, whether those are disadvantaged by natural disasters or an unfair economic and social order. The CFNU International Solidarity Fund supports worker-to-worker exchanges, provides humanitarian assistance, and strengthens the capacity of workers to advance the right to health.

Humanitarian Assistance

The CFNU funds organizations with expertise in disaster relief, health emergencies, and humanitarian crises like the Red Cross. Their support addresses various emergencies such as Ebola outbreaks, earthquakes and refugee crises.

Capacity Building

As part of its International Solidarity mandate, the CFNU builds partnerships with nurses and health-care unions in developing countries to strengthen health care systems and labour capacity.

Worker Exchanges

The CFNU provides support each year to selected members participating in humanitarian and capacity-building missions abroad, recognizing the benefits these experiences bring to both host communities and participating nurses.



COMING UP

Recapping Pride 2026
Festivals across Nova Scotia

Council of the Federation
takes place July 21-24

Nova Scotia Internationally Educated Nurses Conference
takes place July 23-24

Collective Bargaining
Updates beginning Fall 2026



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