

# what's nu?

January-February 2023

Nova Scotia  
**Nurses  
Union** 



## NSNU Election Candidates

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What to Expect April 24-27

**Bargaining**  
Prep: face-to-face negotiations

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Registration Underway

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

-  Nova Scotia Nurses' Union
-  @NS\_Nurses
-  @NSNursesU
-  NSNursesUnion

## MYNSNU APP

Available in Apple App & Google Play stores  
OR: [nsnu.itacit.com](http://nsnu.itacit.com)

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## NSNU in the Media

Entering the new year in the midst of an ongoing health-care human resources crisis, holiday cheer was soon overshadowed by media reporting on the state of our health-care system.

In the final days of 2022, two women died after seeking care in our province's emergency rooms, fuelling the growing media coverage on the state of Nova Scotian emergency departments.

By mid-January, health-care partners including the NSNU met with Premier Tim Houston to discuss possible improvements to the province's struggling health-care system. Following this summit, a provincial plan was released, said to ensure those with the most urgent needs would receive emergency care first. The province's Actions to Improve Emergency Care and the resulting feedback received considerable media attention - both positive and critical.

**As a trusted voice for Nova Scotia's nurses, President Janet Hazelton has received over 75 media requests since the new year.**

Though media coverage is broad (and features various mediums including radio, TV and print), the NSNU's message is clear. More must be done to improve recruitment, retention and respect in order to relieve the pressures on emergency departments.

**You can find a sample of past media coverage, as well as any future pieces, on our Facebook page: Nova Scotia Nurses' Union**

## Are you paying the correct Union Dues?

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

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

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

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



**JANET HAZELTON**  
BScN RN, MPA

# PRESIDENT'S NOTEBOOK

## The State of Emergency Care

On January 17th, I joined provincial healthcare leaders, stakeholders of all stripes, at a 90-minute healthcare summit convened by Premier Tim Houston to discuss the unprecedented challenges and recent tragedies that occurred in emergency departments across Nova Scotia.

The premier called “all the people who have an impact on how health care is managed in the province in one room so we can all talk about the same sense of urgency.”

He urged us to speak our minds, saying he was open to any idea. In my view, that means enabling nurses to work to their full scope of practice, leaving behind non-nursing tasks. It also means nurses need to be respected, not forced to work 24-hour shifts in violent and abusive workplaces.



I was quoted in the media that day for saying, “There’s no time for us and them anymore, what we need is all “us”...we owe that to Nova Scotians, we owe people confidence when they enter our health-care system that they are going to get good care.”

If we do not work quickly to find solutions and work collaboratively to implement change we will continue to see a decline in services.

On January 18th, the Minister of Health and Wellness, Michelle Thompson made an announcement about changes in the way patients are triaged and treated in our EDs.

In what Nova Scotia Health called Actions to Improve Emergency Care, the province announced a long list of transformations to ensure those with the most urgent needs get care quicker, including:

- *assigning physician assistants and nurse practitioners to provide care in emergency departments*
- *adding care providers and patient advocates to support patients in waiting rooms*
- *making virtual care available to more patients with less urgent needs*
- *providing healthcare teams with real-time data on where beds are available across the system*
- *a tuition rebate of \$11,500 to paramedics who work in the province for at least three years*
- *expanding services in more pharmacies*
- *more virtual care appointments & enabling out-of-province doctors licensed here to offer virtual care*
- *providing more mobile primary care, mobile respiratory care clinics and urgent treatment centres*
- *new phone app that will help people find the right services for their needs and where they are offered*



**In response to the premier's action plan, the NSNU issued the following release:**

## **Actions to Improve Emergency Care Don't Go Far Enough to Address Nurses Concerns**

*(Halifax, January 19, 2023) Members of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union, nurses working in emergency departments across the entire province, don't see their concerns reflected in the provinces new plan to improve emergency care.*

*On January 17th, Michelle Thompson, the Minister of Health and Wellness announced a plan to ensure people with the most urgent needs receive care first. A host of actions were listed but few address the staggering nurse vacancy rate and urgent and untenable pressures on nurses.*

*"I'm happy to see an all-hands-on-deck approach to this ongoing but far from new crisis," said Janet Hazelton, president of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union. "The NSNU has been talking about the nursing shortage and excessive workloads in emergency, as well as other areas of care for well over a decade."*

*The union president says there isn't really anything immediate in the plan. However, she's most concerned about initiatives that risk adding to the workload of existing nurses if there isn't a significant shift in filling vacancies, or at the very least, initiatives to retain the nurses we currently have. Without nurses in emergency departments, wait times will remain unacceptably long.*

*"We can get patients to emergency faster, we can get more ambulances on the road, but if we don't have professional staff and beds on the other side of the waiting room, wait times will not be reduced. Plain and simple, we need more nurses and more nurses working to their full scope of practice. We need to fill nursing vacancies," says Hazelton.*

*Nurses need non-nursing work such as administrative tasks and other duties removed from their practice in emergency, and elsewhere. Nurses need to focus on timely and precise patient care. There is no mention in the plan to cover these non-clinical tasks for nurses.*

*Although patient advocates may seem like a logical solution for anxious patients lingering in waiting rooms, their roles, qualifications, and boundaries must be very well-defined. There is a significant distinction between a patient's medical needs verses their comfort needs, and how the advocate is to intervene. In conjunction with the advocate role, NSNU is asking that a licensed practical nurse, someone with medical expertise, is present in waiting rooms to ensure patients are observed and assessed.*

*Hazelton says, she would have liked to see nurse-prescribing as an action item considering many patients presenting at emergency departments are looking for prescription renewals. Nova Scotia's piloted program should be scaled up to meet the needs of Nova Scotians.*

*Government must also provide consistent tuition relief for nurses who wish to bridge beyond their current designations and provide funding for nurses to acquire additional training to confidently apply to work in areas like emergency departments.*

*NSNU maintains, a plan that does not include restoring a full complement of nursing staff in every emergency department in Nova Scotia will fall short of meeting the government's goal of offering more places for people to receive care, faster care, while easing pressure on emergency departments.*

*NSNU will continue to work with government and employers to ensure the resources necessary to provide safe and urgent care are made available.*

# NSNU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

*Together Again! Resolutions, Elections, Discussions and Reconnecting!*

The 46th NSNU AGM will take place in **Truro April 24th-27th**, promising to be an enlightening and educational experience for all our attendees, familiar and new.

The theme, **Together Again!** was chosen because we haven't met in-person for an Annual General Meeting since 2019. Although it is difficult for nurses to get time off for the important things in life - family, friends, and favourite pastimes - we're hoping the event will attract good numbers.



There will be a lot to unpack at this meeting. We'll examine the compounding challenges in health care, but also discuss the possibilities - the things we can do as a collective to improve work-life balance and your working conditions. The AGM offers a face-to-face platform for bargaining team members to update leaders and activists on the **Collective Bargaining** process. The Nursing Council will still be in negotiations with acute care employers, but a report on any progress to that point will be shared.

The AGM provides an opportunity for members to review the Constitution and, through the **Resolution** process, enact change by modifying language and introducing new articles to better serve union members and the organization. The organizers expect insightful and informative debate on that front.

Once again, the NSNU will invite leaders from across the county and labour representatives from our own province to participate. The presidents of CFNU member organizations will join us in person and via video presentations to bring greetings and share their struggles, strategies, and victories over the past few years.



Over the course of our meetings, delegates and observers will hear from Linda Silas, the president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, counterparts from other provinces, and various friends from affiliate organizations. We're hopeful our elected government officials like the Premier Houston or the Minister of Health and Wellness, Michelle Thompson will be on site to take questions, hear our concerns and provide answers.

Once again, we are welcoming nursing students from campuses across the province, and NSNU members from close to 100 of our 124 locals, from all three sectors of care. Most importantly, we are eager to hear from our activists.

This an **Election Year** for NSNU. Nominees for regional, component, and executive roles will vie for positions on the NSNU Board of Directors. At every other AGM, the Nurses' Union conducts elections for representation on the Board, each role fulfilling a two-year term. Voting will be by ballot for all positions, with the results of the president and 1st vice-president elections made known Wednesday, April 26.

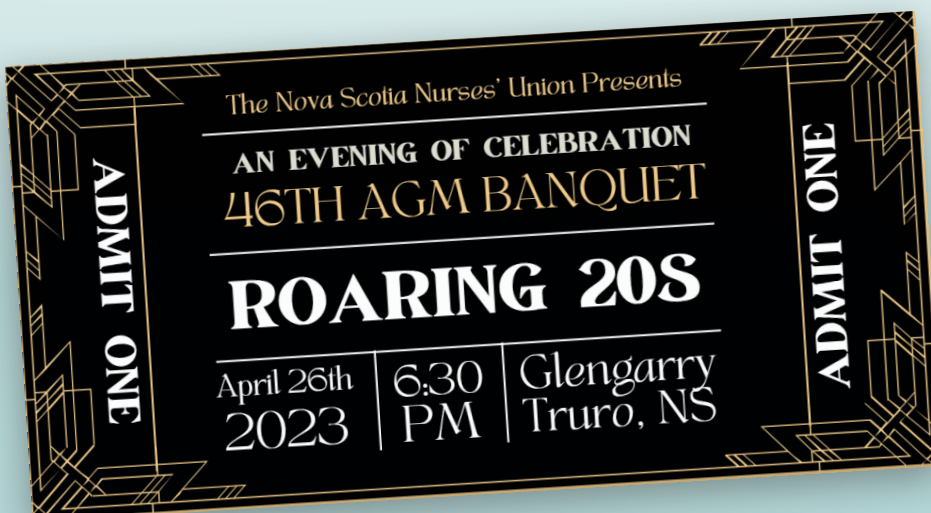
There are many opportunities to meet with colleagues, both socially and during union business. Participants are encouraged to be ready for action-packed days and evenings in Nova Scotia's Hub, Truro.

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



## Here are some important dates, times and highlights to note:

- **Registration** for the AGM/Education Day **closes on March 10** – registration is by Local.
- For those attending only the April 27 Education Day there is a **separate registration form**.
- No group meals will be served at the Glengarry on Monday, April 24.
- Breakfast will be served in the Glengarry Dining Room, not the MacDonald Rooms. Lunch will be served in the MacDonald Rooms.
- **Regional and Component Meetings** will take place on April 24 beginning at 10:30 am and concluding at 4:00 pm.
- **The Hospitality Event/Meet & Greet** will take at The Engine Room on Tuesday, April 25 starting at 6:30 pm.
- Back by popular demand – **Door Prizes!** Please bring your door prizes directly to The Engine Room, ready to go. Do not leave them off with NSNU or The Engine Room staff. We will be selling 50/50 tickets at The Engine Room. There will be no karaoke.
- **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 & Hope House – items are to be left with NSNU staff at registration.
- **NSNU merchandise** will be sold in the MacLeod Rooms. The NSNU can now accept cash, credit & debit.
- **Deadline for Scholarship submissions is March 24.**
- After a hiatus, **Andrea's Jewelry** will be back as an exhibitor, selling her very popular designs.
- Please consider donating **menstrual health products** for our Truro Food Bank drive – every bit helps.
- **Keltic Clothing** will be onsite at the Glengarry from April 24-27 to sell uniforms & accessories.



The theme for the banquet –  
**The Roaring 20s!**

Time to flip the switch on the 2020s.

The décor will reflect the 1920's era (think Downton Abbey), as will the attire, if you choose.



Archive:  
Education Day 2022

# EDUCATION DAY 2023

## *A Day to Speak Up and Be Heard*

The NSNU is excited to be holding an in-person Education Day, **Thursday, April 27** in Truro. The event promises to provide an opportunity to speak up, be heard and hear from presenters who have much to offer.

The session will run from **8:30 am** until approximately **4:30 pm**, and will begin with an **Open Forum** for members to provide frontline feedback to the group and to the leadership of the organization. Billed as an open-mic session, members will be encouraged to share in a safe and supportive environment.

The NSNU will then welcome **Starr Cunningham**, President & CEO of the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia.



**Starr Cunningham**

Starr is a national recipient of a *Difference Makers - 150 Canadians Leading for Mental Health Award*. She is also the Northwood Foundation 2017 Live More Advocacy Award Winner. She currently serves on the Atlantic Bell Let's Talk Community Fund Advisory Committee and relishes the opportunity to speak with Nova Scotians about cultivating our mental health.

The Education Committee, Chaired by NSNU's Eastern Vice-President, Gerri Oakley is pleased to close out the day with **Meg Soper**, a motivational keynote speaker who combines the skills of a premiere stand-up comic with hands-on experience in healthcare to motivate, inspire, and entertain audiences.



**Meg Soper**

Meg's presentation will inspire the members and provide a good laugh.

Using experiences from her career as an O.R. nurse, Meg shares perspectives on finding balance even in the face of accelerating change. Her highly interactive presentation will leave members with practical ideas and perspectives.

## Registration for Education Day 2023 closes March 10th.

Locals and individual attendees are urged to visit [www.nsnucanada.ca/membersonly](http://www.nsnucanada.ca/membersonly) to sign up!



# NSNU Welcomes New Locals

On January 11th, NSNU labour relations representatives, Shannon Wark and Angela McKenna, successfully concluded bargaining for **Cape Breton County Homemakers** and **New Waterford Home Support**.

Cape Breton County Homemakers is a provincially funded organization under Continuing Care Nova Scotia, servicing rural areas of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and providing home care to those who wish to live safely in their own homes.

Like Homemakers, New Waterford Home Support provides homecare services to seniors, disabled, families and individuals in stress due to illness or aging in New Waterford and Glace Bay.

Congratulations to Shannon and Angela, and a warm welcome to our newest members.

**CB County Homemakers**  
Cathy Fry, Heather Giovannetti



**New Waterford Home Support**  
Debbie Tighe, Michelle Walsh



## ACUTE CARE BARGAINING UPDATE

The elected Nova Scotia Council of Nursing Unions negotiating team met with acute care employers to begin the bargaining process. The Council is comprised of representatives from four healthcare unions (NSNU, NSGEU, CUPE and Unifor).

The representatives met for two full days on Monday, January 16th and Tuesday, January 17th, and the unions have provided the employer with a list of 28 proposed dates for bargaining between February and June, during which time we expect to make significant progress. We are awaiting the employers' response to our proposed dates. As of the publication of this newsletter, the employer had not yet confirmed dates for face-to-face bargaining.

We acknowledge that many nurses are feeling frustrated by the delays in bargaining, as well as the extremely stressful working conditions you are currently experiencing. Your representatives on the Council are doing their best to expedite the

bargaining process and conclude a new collective agreement that will address members' concerns about compensation and workload.

The Health Authorities Act, passed by the provincial government in 2014, requires all nurses employed at Nova Scotia Health (NSH) and IWK to bargain together in a Council of Nursing Unions. Under the four Council constitutions, one union appoints the chief negotiator for each Council. The NSNU appoints the Chief Negotiator for the Nursing Council and has the majority of bargaining committee members.

You can view the Council Constitutions at <https://www.nsnucan.ca/CONUCONSTITUTION>.

We appreciate your patience as we progress in this round of negotiations. If you have questions or concerns about the bargaining process, please email [nsnu.office@nsnu.ca](mailto:nsnu.office@nsnu.ca).

The CFNU 2023 Biennial Convention will take place in **Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island from June 5 to 9**. The theme Together, we Got This, promises to feature interactive educational sessions and networking opportunities for nurses from across Canada, as well as exciting guest speakers.

The convention will open with registration and networking on June 5th, followed by panels and workshops on June 6th and 7th, with union business taking place June 8th and 9th.

In January, the NSNU conducted draws to randomly select eight provincially-sponsored locals to send their

president or co-president to the Biennial Convention. The winners are not all confirmed as of yet, but NSNU will report on who plans to attend at a later date.

In addition, the Nurses' Union will sponsor two lucky members-at-large, again selected in a random draw, to attend. The winners of those draws are:

**Jean Hatcher (Ivy Meadows Continuing Care) and Linda Cox (Fisherman's/South Shore)**

Congratulations to our winners. We're certain CFNU and host PEINU will put on a spectacular event.

To learn more about the CFNU Biennium visit [nursesunions.ca/convention2023](https://nursesunions.ca/convention2023).

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HISTORY OF BLACK NURSES IN NOVA SCOTIA

Historically, people of African descent have struggled to enter, practice and have their contributions recognized in the nursing profession. Though the first Canadian nursing school opened in 1874, Black women who aspired to be nurses were required to travel to the United States to complete their training - until they were permitted in Canadian nursing schools in 1940.

After completing her nursing education across the border, Toronto native **Bernice Redmon** became the first Black woman to work in public health in Canada when she was hired by the Nova Scotia Department of Health to work in Sydney in 1945. At the beginning of her career, Redmon also became the first Black VON nurse in Canada.

**Three years later, the first two Black women to graduate from a Canadian nursing school did so in Halifax.**

**Gwenyth Barton** of Halifax and **Ruth Bailey** of Toronto graduated from Halifax's Grace Maternity School of Nursing in 1948 - almost three-quarters of a century after the school opened.

In 1954, **Clotilda Douglas Yakimchuk** of Whitney Pier, N.S. became the first Black woman to graduate from the Nova Scotia Hospital School of Nursing. She would go on to be an advocate for social justice and was appointed the first Black president of the Registered Nurses' Association of Nova Scotia (now known as the Nova Scotia College of Nurses). A mentor to many, Clotilda was awarded the Order of Canada and the Order of Nova Scotia as well as many other awards.



**Clotilda Douglas Yakimchuk in 1954.**

When she was elected president of the RNANS, the white runner-up asked her to step down. *She refused.*

## BLACK CROSS NURSES

Traditionally, nursing was considered one of the most respectable careers available to women and represented the highest ideals of womanhood at the time. Black women were not deemed to meet these ideals and were prevented from pursuing nursing as a career.

Although Black women were not allowed to train as nurses in the province, an auxiliary group known as the Black Cross Nurses offered an alternative to pursuing a nursing education in the States.

Because nursing schools would not accept them, they were not professionally trained nurses. Despite the barriers, these women had considerable knowledge. They tended to their communities, educated them about nutrition, hygiene, and provided public and reproductive health education.

In Sydney, the BCN was there for women in childbirth and maintained support for new mothers immediately after. They taught women about the importance of breastfeeding.

Though they were not professional nurses, the auxiliary group allowed them to assume a similar role and pursue their ambition to work in healthcare. The BCN uniform of a white cap and gown adorned with a black cross, was intended to demonstrate the same professionalism and qualities that were expected of nurses.

Information on Black Cross Nurses and the impact they had in Canada is in danger of being lost as material documentation is sparse and few community elders are left to tell their own stories of the BCN. Representation matters and it is important to preserve the history of Black Nova Scotians working in healthcare settings.

# CFNU/NSNU OPINION AND EDITORIAL PIECE

Over the last decade, nurses have gone from feeling undervalued and overworked, to invisible and silenced. Their pleas for help and safer work environments are going unanswered.

In Nova Scotia, new regulations for commercial vehicles aimed to improve safety and prevent drivers from logging excessive hours on the road took effect January 1 of this year. Nurses, however, are commonly and repeatedly required to work 24-hour shifts while caring for our sick and dying. Their sense of hopelessness is profound and heartbreaking.

Nova Scotians know we are facing a dire shortage of nurses, unprecedented wait times, and overcrowding of emergency units, but all they get from politicians is bickering and finger-pointing. Right now, nurses across Nova Scotia are being forced to choose between their jobs, patients, their families, and their own wellbeing. They cannot abandon their patients when there is no relief or backfill; nor can they sustain a career that punishes them physically and mentally. Yet, politicians of all stripes banter about the words “nursing shortage” as if it’s a new and emerging talking point. The last thing patients or our nurses care about are political points.

Nurses sounded the alarm about the coming crisis decades ago and have been offering solutions and a willingness to collaborate with all levels of government. What we want for Nova Scotians is simple: for patients to finally receive the care they need, and for nurses to practice their profession under safe and sustainable working conditions. But we need governments to start listening.

Governments must do three things to fix the nursing shortage crisis: keep experienced nurses in their jobs, bring nurses back to the public sector, and recruit nurses where they are needed most. We need proven programs, backed by firm timelines and real accountability.

To stop nurses from quitting, going part-time, or retiring early, and ensure safe patient care, nurses’ working conditions must be improved. Nova Scotia can legislate to reduce workloads by implementing safe nurse-to-patient ratios and make targeted investments in retention initiatives. The federal government should also be making direct investments to support return and recruitment initiatives, including mental health programming. Currently, the wait time in Nova Scotia for urgent mental health care is seven days – an unacceptably grueling wait when enduring a mental health crisis.

Past generations of nurses often worked beyond their retirement date out of a passion for the profession and an eagerness to pitch-in when needed. It was common

for nurses to work well into their sixties, and sometimes seventies, on a casual or parttime basis. One such nurse dreamed of working beyond her 60th birthday at her rural, seaside hospital but gave up that hope once she saw her work-life balance eroding, even after reducing her availability. Vacation denials, excessive workloads, extended and unsafe shifts, and growing hostility towards healthcare workers were demoralizing for staff, forcing her to re-evaluate her long-term goals. She will retire in the spring of 2023. One more nurse lost to a broken system.

The solutions we are offering will help bring nurses and early-retirees back to the public sector, reducing Nova Scotia’s reliance on expensive private agencies while still ensuring surge needs are met across the country. We also need to expand domestic training programs and target recruitment to diversify the nursing workforce. To that end, Nova Scotia must continue to scale up student nurse programs to support them securing employment in attractive full-time jobs and expand access to micro-credentials to support nurses wanting to advance in their careers. The government must also provide consistent tuition relief for nurses who wish to bridge beyond their current designations and provide funding for nurses to acquire additional training to confidently apply to work in areas like emergency departments.

Nurses deserve safe workplaces and patients deserve access to the care they need. All levels government must step up, just like nurses have for so long. Change must be imminent and meaningful. Nurses must work in environments that are safe and respectful and be remunerated for their knowledge, skill, and value.

Before burnout claims all our nursing resources, immediate action is necessary to address ongoing transgressions against our largest sector of healthcare workers. Nurses in Nova Scotia have real solutions; our governments need to listen.



*Submitted to media by Janet Hazelton, President of the Nova Scotia Nurses’ Union, and Linda Silas, President of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions*

# 2023 | NSNU Board Candidates and Acclaimed Nominees

- In April, NSNU members will be elected to sit on the Board of Directors of the NSNU for a two-year term, 2023-2025.
- Candidates for the upcoming elections are presented as follows in alphabetical order according to the category in which they are nominated.
- This information can also be found online on the **NSNU Annual General Meeting** tab of **Members Only** at [nsnu.ca](https://nsnu.ca).

## CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT



### EDSON CASTILHO

#### Candidate for President

I graduated from the University of Toronto in 2004 with BScN. I have been a Registered nurse (RN) at the IWK since 2004. I worked on the pediatric medical unit full-time from 2004 to 2009 and part-time until 2013. In 2009 I obtained a half-time position in the allergy clinic which became a full-time position in 2013. I have been there ever since.

I have been involved with the union at a local level for almost all of my time at the IWK. I have been on Bargaining Union Grievance Labour Management Committee (BUGLM) and now Labour Management Committee (LMC) since 2007, serving as chief shop steward for 3 terms. I have served as treasurer and president of the local of the IWK and I have served on every provincial negotiating committee since 2008. I have attended labour school on two occasions and Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions (CFNU) three times.

#### **Personal Statement:**

Unions are a means of improving the lives of working people. The reason I am involved in my union is so that I can work to make meaningful changes in the working lives of my nursing colleagues. Just as nursing is a calling, so is union activism. Just as nursing is a selfless profession where we care for others, sometimes to the detriment of our own physical health, union activism is about the bettering of the working lives of our

nursing colleagues. This means fighting for decent wages, adequate staffing, and nurse safety. It means working to have nurses involved in ALL decisions that affect their working conditions and increasing the autonomy of nurses in recognition that we are professionals. And all of this is only possible if we harness the collective power of all nurses working together towards common goals.

I have fought for all of these things in my career as a nurse and a union activist, and especially in my roles as shop steward and provincial negotiating committee (PNC) member. Often in my role as a PNC member, I remind my committee colleagues, about the things a union should stand for and that unions are in an adversarial relationship with employers who constantly work to cut costs and thus worsen our working conditions.

It is not acceptable that licensed practical nurses (LPN) in our union continue to make barely above a living wage. With an ever-increasing scope of practice, LPNs need a pay raise, and I am willing to lead that fight for our LPNs. As your president, I will organize and educate nurses to advocate, and fight for, the things that we not only need, but deserve.

I am concerned that our union has not provided equal representation to all our members. The scope of practice for LPNs and RNs has continually increased while workplace demands are at an all time high. It is time to focus on making sure that our LPNs are compensated by making their top-out wage the same as the starting RN wage in recognition of the similarities in work and increased responsibility. It is time for us to move beyond the status quo. As your President I will work with all of you to ensure that, together, we achieve the things that we all want and need.



## JANET HAZELTON

### Candidate for President

In 1984 I graduated with a BScN from St. Francis Xavier University.

I was employed at Colchester Hospital for most of my career. Early on, I recognized staff needed a strong voice where matters of compensation, employee safety and work-life balance were concerned. So, in 1987 I became a union activist.

I first sat on my local executive, headed a committee with CUPE to establish a daycare for hospital staff, and pursued education in labour relations, leading to the positions of Second Vice-President, followed by Secretary-Treasurer on the Board of the NSNU, before becoming President.

In addition to advocating and negotiating (Chair - NS Council of Nursing Union since 2015) on behalf of nurses, I sit on numerous committees including the Provincial Nursing Network (PNN), NSFL, WCB, and the National Executive Board of the CFNU. I am also the NSNU Trustee for LTD and NSHEPP.

I work tirelessly against workplace violence and was a lead on the team that secured regulations under Section 82 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as well as the inclusion of nurses in the Workers' Compensation Act, 2017, a victory for those with PTSD.

In 2006, I was proud to sign a partnership agreement with the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative, a federal program to support representation of Indigenous persons in nursing. Also in 2006, I was named a recipient of the Progress Women of Excellence Award for my advocacy in health, sport and wellness.

In 2010, I completed my Master of Public Administration degree which has been instrumental in assessing policy problems and proposing solutions to government organizations.

I received a 2015 CFNU Bread and Roses honour, awarded to nurse activists for outstanding commitment to nursing issues including safe staffing and nurse identity, as well as strength of leadership.

During my leadership, we established Nursing Practice and Nursing Leadership Premiums to the amount of \$1800.00 annually, a formalized uniform allowance, and have consistently led wage patterns for nurses in the Atlantic provinces.

Through my work on PNN, I have been an advocate for RN prescribing, sharps safety, safe staffing, increased scopes of practice, the introductions of LPNs in more care settings, accelerated nursing school curriculums, the inclusion of student nurses in unions, the nurse practitioner incentive program which pays RNs while studying to become NPs, 4.1 hours of nursing care for residents in LTC, and increases in overtime rates - to name some successes.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, despite initial public health resistance, the NSNU called for masking, better access to quality PPE, bonus incentives for essential workers, and was I present at all tables (government, public health, sectoral) multiple times a week over the course of the outbreak.

#### **Personal Statement:**

During my tenure, the NSNU has remained financially sound, highly regarded as a voice of nursing, and a change leader.

I have fostered collaborative relationships with all political parties, using those relationships to advance nursing and increase public awareness of challenges we face.

My rapport with media is respectable and reliable, as is my activism for nurses and publicly funded, publicly delivered healthcare.

I have proudly represented nurses and will continue to do so, if given the opportunity. We have much still to accomplish at the bargaining table, at all levels of government, and in all regions of this province to fix our staffing shortages and the healthcare crisis.



## JEN ROSSETTI

### Candidate for President

My name is Jen Rossetti, RN DGH ED. Working on the frontlines with you over the past 20 years has given me a true understanding of the deep seeded issues we have always faced in nursing and healthcare. Since the pandemic brought a new reality to our daily work lives, I understand the absolute crisis it has created for our profession.

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I started my union activism by attending local meetings and becoming a shop steward. I joined the IWK Labour Management Committee and served from 2009-2014. In 2014, I joined the Emergency Department at the DGH and got involved on the local executive becoming Treasurer. I maintained that role from 2015-2020, gaining valuable experience with financial statements and budgets. In 2016, I was elected to the NSNU Board of Directors (BOD) representing the Central Zone for 5 years and the past 2 years as your Vice President. Over the past 7 years I have served on multiple committees and executives, gaining experience and confidence, always ensuring that workplace issues experienced by nurses are voiced at the table.

I served on the Negotiating Committee for our last contract and am on the team working towards our current contract. I am part of daily workplace conversations and understand the in-depth issues, including recruitment and retention to name a few. These are in the forefront of my mind, and every decision I make is based on this collective experience. My voice is your voice!

Over the past 15 years, I participated in learning and development by attending every NSNU AGM and Eastern Labour School since 2009 and every CFNU Biennium since 2013. In 2013, I addressed 850 nurses speaking on

equity in the workplace and in 2018, I was chosen by my peers as the recipient of the Glenna Rowsell Award for outstanding leadership. I have lobbied MP's, Senators, and MLA's to discuss issues related to nursing and healthcare. I bring forward issues and offer solutions based on conversations with the nurses of Nova Scotia. After 20 years I know that nurses are the experts on nursing and we know what we need to thrive in today's environment. Again, my voice is your voice!

### **Personal Statement:**

You have a voice through your local leadership. Use social media, text, email, and show up at your next local meeting to let them know that you too want change. I have proven over the past 20 years that I have the experience, leadership skills, and passion to lead the nurses of Nova Scotia to safer thriving workplaces and to ensure that every nurse's voice is heard.

Change can be uncomfortable, but it can also bring forward new ideas, new voices, and new priorities. It strengthens already strong organizations. It is time for a change in our leadership to reflect the change in our workplaces. Let me build upon the experience I have gained over the past 15 years of union advocacy to unite the nurses of Nova Scotia.

Thank you for taking the time to read this!

## CANDIDATES FOR 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT



### **DAVID FOX**

#### **Candidate for 1st Vice-President**

I graduated from the University of Windsor with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2006. Since graduation I have worked mainly in rural and remote acute care settings including: emergency, med/surg, pediatrics, inpatient mental health, palliative care, labour and delivery, family practice, and diabetes education. I have completed the Emergency Nursing Program, Family Practice Nursing Education Program and Certified Diabetes Educator Examination. Currently I am working at St. Mary's Memorial Hospital as a Family Practice Nurse and Diabetes Educator.

Since 2018 I have been the president of the St. Mary's Memorial Hospital Local. I currently serve as the

co-chair of the St. Mary's Memorial Hospital Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) committee and have been a member of the NSNU finance committee since 2019. My previous union involvement includes work at the Weeneebayko Area Health Authority as local president for four years with the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) and Weeneebayko General Hospital local president for three years with The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC). I was the lead negotiating team member for two collective agreements; one with PIPSC and the second a binding arbitration collective agreement merger between ONA and PIPSC. I have also served as the Co-Chair of the workplace JOHS committee for six years at Weeneebayko General Hospital.

I have attended education sessions on collective bargaining, grievance, and arbitration with PIPSC and ONA. I have attended AGM's with PIPSC, ONA and NSNU as a voting delegate and have represented members' interest during multiple grievance arbitration hearings ranging from wrongful dismissal to reclassification.

**CONTINUED ON 15**

## **Personal Statement:**

During the past sixteen years, I have had the privilege of serving in three different unions each with a different perspective and structure of operation. This experience has given me a unique perspective into ways different unions address members' concerns.

While working on the front lines throughout the pandemic I have watched our working conditions become more challenging due to greater demands on nurses and an ever-growing staff shortage. There has never been a time in our collective memory more difficult than the challenges that we are currently facing. Recruitment and retention are no longer a regional problem but a global one. I believe that we are at a

pivotal point in time and the decisions that we make in next round of contract negotiations will determine the future of nursing in Nova Scotia for the next generation. It is time for us to put forward bold, innovative, and dynamic ideas to move beyond the status quo if we are to ensure that working conditions and work/life balance are improved. The unique experience I have gained while working with multiple unions allows me to identify solutions to the challenges that we face. As a nursing union we have the ability to make substantial changes to the current working conditions. I will make it my mission to ensure that all members across all parts of Nova Scotia will have a voice at the Board of Directors' table. Ensuring that all members concerns are validated and acted upon will be my top priority.



## **DONNA GILLIS**

### **Candidate for 1st Vice-President**

I graduated from the VG School of Nursing in 1993 and pursued continued education in critical care, occupational health, and Perioperative Nursing. I obtained my CNA certification in Emergency Nursing. In 2012 I graduated from STFX with my BScN with distinction.

My current role is Clinical Nurse Educator in the Northern Zone for the COVID-19 Response since 2021. While most of my career has been in the Emergency Department at the Aberdeen Hospital, I also worked in med/surg units, PACU, endoscopy, the OR and also Long-Term Care. I also held the role of clinical instructor for the NSCC LPN program.

I have been shop-steward on different units at the Aberdeen, secretary of the local executive, member of various committees of the local union and a member of the Constitution and Resolution Committee for NSNU. For the last two years I have sat on the NSNU Board of Directors as the VP for Northern. I also sit as the Chair for the Constitution and Resolution Committee, member of the education committee for the NSFL and the elected member for Northern Area for the Provincial Negotiating Committee for the current contract negotiations. I have participated in other labour relations events such as the meeting with the Federal Minister of Health, Jean-Yves Duclos, on behalf of NS Nurses to give voice to the dire situation of our Health Care System and the impact it has on nurses. I've participated in national radio interviews to discuss the healthcare crisis.

I have attended Labour School, AGMs, CFNU biennial

meetings, and Nova Scotia Federation of Labour conventions. I recently attended the Canadian Labour Congress Labour Education and the First Annual Nova Scotia First Responders Mental Health Conference.

Education has always been a priority for my personal development, and I continually update my education to reflect these values. My passion now is providing clear, relevant, and concise education to nurses across Nova Scotia.

I was chosen in 2020 to sit on a review panel for the Canadian NCLEX exam with nurses from across Canada. I have participated in various Community events such as the Wishmaker parade, Run for the Cure, Light the night walk for Leukemia and Lymphoma and Dragonboat Races. I participated in a CFNU Virtual Education Night with Health Care Workers across Canada speaking about their personal experiences and impacts of COVID. My COVID/Nursing story was also published in the CFNU book "Nurses Voices".

## **Personal Statement:**

I have been a long-standing union activist and a NSNU Board Member for the last two years representing Northern Area. I feel I bring a great deal of experience and passion to our organization. I will represent you with a strong and professional voice when faced with the difficulties nurses encounter daily. It would be my privilege to represent the nurses across this province with integrity and transparency as 1st Vice President of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union.

I will serve the members to the best of my ability to improve work-life balance, safety in the workplace, and participate in endeavors to secure a stable workforce. We have overcome many obstacles over the last few years, with plenty of hard work in the future. My values, experience, and professionalism as well as the resiliency of NS nurses will lead us forward into a brighter future for nursing in our province.

## VICE-PRESIDENT OF FINANCE



### JAMIE STEWART

VP Finance  
Acclaimed

I graduated from the VGH school of nursing in 1994 - hard to believe 29 years ago! In 2018 I received my BScN from St. Francis Xavier University and I also hold certification in emergency nursing from CNA.

I have spent the last 25 years in emergency nursing and am well aware of the issues that encompass that specialty and in healthcare. I am currently a Clinical Leader in the Emergency Department at Cobequid Community Health Center. I am the local shop steward and participate in many departmental committees.

I stay active in the union and attend AGMs, Labour Schools, regional education days, CFNU Biennium Conventions, and CLC AGMs. I've attended many conferences and webinars on current healthcare

trends and issues facing frontline care providers. I am often called upon to do media relations, provincially and nationally, related to current issues in nursing and healthcare.

#### **Personal Statement:**

I am very honoured to represent the membership as VP Finance on the Board of Directors for a third term. As a board member, I chair the Finance Committee and sit on the Personnel Committee.

These last few years have certainly been a challenge on all sectors of nursing and healthcare. I will continue to represent all members at the Board level. I will be transparent, committed, and accountable for the administration of affairs and activities of the union. I'll ensure spending aligns with our vision, mission, values, and objectives.

I'll continue to build strong working relationships with the staff, membership and other board members. I'm looking forward to our first in person AGM in years and seeing new and familiar faces.

In Solidarity,  
Jamie Stewart BScN RN ENCC

## CANDIDATES FOR NORTHERN VICE-PRESIDENT



### DENISE ELMS

Candidate for  
Northern VP

I began my nursing career as an LPN then graduated from the Aberdeen Hospital School of Nursing in 1986. I have worked in ophthalmology and surgery, then 20 years in an emergency department. I currently work part time in the endoscopy unit at the Aberdeen hospital.

I have been a union activist for many years with experience as a previous finance committee member. Currently, I am chair of our local bursary committee, and a member of the NSNU Regional Bursary Committee. I am a member of the NSNU Resolution and Constitution Committee, Shop Stewart for the endoscopy unit and Co-Shop Stewart for perioperative services at the Aberdeen Hospital. I have been our local treasurer for the past eight years. I also attend many employer/employee meetings as the local union

representative.

I attended many NSNU AGMs and education days. I attended CFNU in Halifax as well as the virtual CFNU conference in 2021. I have attended Eastern Labour School with a keen interest in general labour relations and the grievance/arbitration process. I continue my education in NSNU on the website to include various courses such as violence in nursing, meetings and conflict resolution and building psychologically healthy workplaces.

I strive to maintain my education and enhance my nursing career with ongoing education both formal and informal. My formal education includes post grad courses in ophthalmology, CCNP in 1998, CNA certification in emergency in 2000 and ongoing endoscopy education with a focus on building learning sessions in my role as resource nurse.

I believe volunteerism is paramount for a strong healthy community. I am a previous member of the Kinette Club of New Glasgow serving the community's greatest need. I volunteer with a small local group of women providing social interaction, meal prep and housekeeping services to elderly neighbours. I also

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participated in local community fund raisers such as Wishmaker Parade, Race on the River, MS Walk, and Run for the Cure.

**Personal Statement:**

It would be my privilege to represent nurses in the Northern area and bring years of union activism and experience to enhance the lives of frontline nurses.

I would encourage new member participation and invite open communication for all local members bringing their concerns to the Board of Directors and continue my union education to be the best member representative possible.



**DONNA GILLIS**

**Candidate for  
Northern VP**

See **page 15** for Donna's Bio

**Personal Statement:**

It has been an exciting and educating two years as VP of the Northern Area. I feel I have made valuable contributions as a NSNU board member for the last two years. I would be honored if re-elected to continue to bring your concerns and voices to the table to strive

for improved working conditions. Nurses need to feel safe both physically and psychologically in their workplace. My focus remains in the promotion of respect, unity, and equity among Nurses.



**MARIA LANGILLE**

**Candidate for  
Northern VP**

My name is Maria Langille. I have been nursing since 1978. Throughout my career I have worked in LTC, Psych, Acute Medicine, Rehab, and currently work at the Covid Testing Center.

I have been involved with NSNU since 1982, holding many positions on the executive at the local level, shop steward, OH&S, treasurer, Vice President, President, political action committee. I sat on the BUGLM committee representing the Aberdeen and SHMH, then sat on the ZULMC for the Northern Zone.

Provincially, I am the current VP of LPN Component since being elected in 2007. I have worked very hard to represent the LPN's in NSNU. And, as a member of the NSFL, I have sat on the Women's Committee for the past 6 years, and also the new NSFL Awards and Bursary Committee.

Being a lifelong learner I have attended several Eastern

Labor Schools, NSNU AGM's, CFNU Biennium's, CLC, NSFL and Global Nurses United. With this experience from the conventions and Labor schools, I have been provided the opportunity to learn about unionism and the diversity of nurses in our great country and around the world.

Throughout my career I have strived to maintain the most current education with our ever-changing scope of practice for all nurses, always receptive to new education opportunities. As a union activist I explore the My NSNU app and What's NU for any upcoming education that may be helpful to fulfill my role as a union activist. I have also worked with "Friends and Family" addressing workplace domestic violence. Also, I have worked with "Child Care Nova Scotia" to develop a plan of action to reduce child poverty in our province.

At the local level I became an informal educator working with a doctor and we developed a twice-monthly in-service and a yearly skills night called "Points to Pay". This brought education to our small hospital.

**Personal Statement:**

As a board member as well as at the local level, I have worked diligently with others to promote NSNU and the benefits of being a union activist. I strive to do my best, I have good knowledge of the issues facing nurses

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today and working with the NSCN has enabled me to be aware of the scope of practice of NPs, RNs and LPNs and changes we are all facing.

Doing what is best for NSNU and nursing has always been a priority of mine. With the unrest happening in today's nursing world, I would be honored to represent

the Northern Zone, to be their voice, strive to promote open communication and dialogue with the Board and our members, and to offer support to the nurses.

I would focus on the promotion of respect, unity and equity among nurses while maintaining the goals and objectives of NSNU.

## CENTRAL VICE-PRESIDENT



### ANNE BOUTILIER

Central VP  
Acclaimed

I have been a Licensed Practical Nurse for twenty-two years. After graduation, I started working at the Dartmouth General Hospital, where I continue to work full time in the Emergency Department. I've worked with VON and long-term care, as well.

Since the start of my career at DGH, I have held many roles within my local. I've been Shop Steward, JOHS and LPN rep, Secretary and now currently first VP. I have had the pleasure to attend many NSNU AGMs, Eastern Labour Schools and CFNU conventions.

To this day, I am forever grateful to have attended my

first AGM back in 2005. It was then and there I knew I wanted to be an advocate for nurses and for health-care. Being a part of the Board for the past two years has been a rewarding experience. I have had the opportunity to represent NSNU in the Halifax, Cape Breton and Colchester pride parades, as well as, the Labour Day March in Halifax.

I attend our ZLMC meetings. I sit on the anti-racism and human rights committee with NSFL. I've spoken with the media regarding the stress in nursing. I attended the CLC Atlantic Labour School, where I took a course in union leadership and I attended the NS First Responders Mental Health Conference.

#### **Personal Statement:**

I am honoured to be acclaimed back into the role of Central Vice-President. I promise to continue working hard at being the voice of our nurses in the Central Region.

## CANDIDATES FOR EASTERN VICE-PRESIDENT



### Laurie Forrest

Candidate for  
Eastern VP

I am currently employed as a full time Primary Health Care (PHC) Nurse Practitioner in a collaborative practice at Health Park in Sydney since 2017; prior to this, I worked in a collaborative PHC practice in New Waterford (2014-2016). I'm a graduate of Sydney City Hospital School of Nursing (1988) and have worked as a Registered Nurse in several clinical areas including medical-surgical, critical care, mental health, youth

health, cardiopulmonary rehabilitation, informatics, and research roles. I graduated from St. FX University with my post RN BScN in 2003 while working full time and raising my family with my husband, Don. I developed a passion for lifelong learning and leadership and completed a Master's in Nursing Degree with a focus in Nurse Practitioner studies (Family of All Ages) from Dal in 2013.

I've been actively engaged in my local union for several years and have participated regularly in local, provincial, regional, and national meetings including Annual General Meetings, CFNU Biennium, labor school and other union related educational opportunities as they arose. Over the last number of years, I've held regional designations as Alternate for VP Eastern Zone (currently 1st Alternate), Alternate for EZ Bursary Committee and member EZ Union Disciplines Appeals Committee.

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I've held several leadership positions over the past number of years, more recently as the Co-President of the Cape Breton Regional Local of NSNU (2020 - present). In this role, I actively participate in engaging the local membership through regularly monthly meetings despite challenges that arose with the pandemic. I collaborate with my Co-President, local presidents, and Provincial Labor Relations Rep as necessary. I participate and support nurses in Labor Management meetings, have regularly attended former BUGLUM and current ZUGLUM meetings and make myself available for nurses to discuss issues or concerns that arise at the local level.

### **Personal Statement:**

If elected to the VP of the Eastern Zone Board of Directors position, I would be honored to participate in setting the strategic direction of NSNU, assisting with the development and management of union policies, and governing between annual meetings. I would act as a liaison between local unions in the Eastern Zone and the BOD, bringing forth issues and concerns, and information back to locals as necessary and appropriate.

In my spare time, I enjoy camping, traveling & photography, and spending time with family!



**DAVID FOX**  
Candidate for  
Eastern VP

See **pages 14** for David's Bio

### **Personal Statement:**

During the past sixteen years, I have had the privilege of serving in three different unions each with a different perspective and structure of operation. This experience has given me a unique perspective into ways different unions address members' concerns.

Most of my nursing career I have worked in small rural and remote facilities. Prior to the pandemic, rural and remote areas were experiencing challenges related to recruitment and retention. These recruitment and retention issues have now become a global challenge. It is time for us to look at implementing the innovative types of ideas that have worked in Northern and remote areas such as yearly retention incentives, better vacation entitlements, and wages that are competitive with nurses outside of the Atlantic Provinces. If elected as the VP of the Eastern Region I will use all my experience to ensure that all members from the Eastern region have a strong voice at the Board Table. I will make it my mission to ensure that our region gets the resources we need to deal with the increasing challenges that we are facing.

## WESTERN VICE-PRESIDENT



**TRACY D'ENTREMONT**  
Western VP  
Acclaimed

I began my career as a nurse in 1990. Working in long term care for a short time, private duty in hospital/in home and then remained as a community nurse for 30-years this March. Throughout my career I had been very involved at my branch as local president, in-house CPR instructor, PACE trainer, OH&S and Quality Service and Communications committee member for over a decade-plus but decided to step away for the new generation to step forward and become involved.

I volunteered for pandemic relief at Northwood in May 2020 as I felt a leader needs to see firsthand what the staff challenges are to be able to not only aid in relief, but to report back effectively for change. I also took a casual position with NSH as an immunizer to help in the pandemic immunization efforts. I have participated in sessions on nurse identity, nurse safety, and joint occupational health and safety. I also sat on the board of AWAR-NS for two terms as a frontline worker rep.

My union involvement has been constant from 2008 until the pandemic as we were not able to gather. As a union rep, I have attended thirteen AGMs, three CFNU conventions, six Eastern Labour School events, the NSFL conference/CLC in 2018, and began working on the McMaster University Labour Studies Certificate which I have partially completed. I have been involved in contract negotiations, media productions, and participated whenever NSNU has requested.

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**Personal Statement:**

Presently, I am a frontline LPN and OH&S REP at my local. I wanted to free my time to focus on Board involvement which is now as your Western Vice-

President. I welcome this new challenge and will be looking forward to meeting new members in the western zone.

**CANDIDATES FOR IWK VICE-PRESIDENT**



**EDSON CASTILLO**  
Candidate for  
IWK Vice-President

See page 12 for Edson’s Bio

**Personal Statement:**

I have worked at the IWK for all of my nursing career. It is an institution that is much loved in the province and in the Maritimes. The reason for this is the people that I work with every day. Despite the best efforts of management and governments to continually cut costs and worsen the working conditions of nurses and all staff at this institution, we continue to provide care to the women and children of Nova Scotia and the Maritimes that should make us all proud.

Unfortunately, things have deteriorated here at the IWK, just as they have across the health system in Nova Scotia, and indeed, all of Canada. Continuing to do business as usual is not the solution. We need a new approach to retaining nurses and recruiting them to what should be a rewarding profession. The IWK needs a board member that will organize every possible IWK nurse to force this much-loved institution to show some love back to the workers that make it great in the first place.

Only together can we make our employer and our union take our concerns seriously and enact the measures that will stop the flight of nurses from the IWK’s most vulnerable units like the birth unit and the emergency department, and to improve the working conditions of all nurses across the health centre. As your board member, I will ensure that both your employer and your union are accountable to you, the nurses that make the existence of both of these institutions possible.



**NATALIE NYMARK**  
Candidate for  
IWK Vice-President

I’m Natalie Nymark RN, MN, a-IPC. I have worked at IWK Health since graduating from DAL school of nursing in 2008. I started my union involvement right away while working as a nurse on the family newborn unit, attending meetings and getting to know the collective agreement. I went on to work throughout all three programs at IWK Health employed on inpatient units and ambulatory care clinics in the pediatric health program and I’m currently an infection control practitioner and patient safety consultant working primarily with the mental health and addictions program. I completed my Master of Nursing with a teaching focus in 2015 at

Athabasca University and in 2020, while working with IPAC, completed my associate infection prevention and control certification. I’m currently studying towards a CIC (Certified in Infection Control).

I have been the IWK Vice President on the Board of Directors of the NSNU since 2020 and have enjoyed learning and growing as a union member. My other labour relations experience includes four years as shop steward for the MHA program, 4 years on LMC, JOSH representative for 8 years. I attended the NSNU AGM almost every year since becoming a nurse and have attended three CFNU Biennial Conventions. Every union event has been an exciting learning experience, helping me to feel like I am representing the nurses at IWK Health better every day at the local and provincial level.

I describe myself as a lifelong learner and I’m looking forward to learning more about union activism and continuing to represent the nurses at IWK Health to the best of my ability. During my first term on the Board

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of Directors, I was able to establish that the IWK have their own provincial education fund. IWK nurses can now apply for education funds separate from the central region, allowing more nurses to access funding to further their education and nursing professional goals.

**Personal Statement:**

I am honoured to have had the opportunity to represent the nurses at IWK Health on the Board of the NSNU and I'm hoping to continue to support all nurses during this difficult time as a nursing profession. I have

helped to bring forward the struggles and concerns of the nurses at IWK Health from children's program, women's and newborn health program and the mental health and addictions program focusing on the fact that nursing needs to come together more than ever to help support each other and build a system that empowers, values, and listens to the nursing profession.

If re-elected, I pledge to continue to listen to nurses across IWK Health and bring forward the struggles and celebrate the successes of the nurses at IWK Health.

## VICE-PRESIDENT LONG-TERM CARE



### GLEND A SABINE

VP LTC  
*Acclaimed*

My name is Glenda Sabine. I work full time and have spent most of my career in long term care at Shannex.

I have been privileged to represent us on the Board of Directors since 2018 and am happy to represent us for another two years.

This April's NSNU AGM is so special because after two years virtually, we can gather physically in person. We can engage, meet new friends, catch up with old ones and maybe have a dance or two!

In all seriousness, nursing is in crisis. As long-term care nurses, we are all too familiar with less-than-adequate nurse to patient ratios. This is unacceptable just as excessive amounts of overtime are as well. Nurses from Nova Scotia are leaving our province to do travel nursing for more money. On the flipside, nurses are coming to Nova Scotia as we do not have enough nurses for more money.

How do we attract more nurses to long term care? How do we retain the skilled nurses that we have? We are a

strong group. However, being shorthanded and doing extra work can be physically and emotionally taxing on the best nurse, leading to burnout. These problems also affect our residents' psychological and physical health.

We need to engage with each other and continue to support each other for our mental health now more than ever.

Being on the Board of Directors since 2018, I have seen numerous efforts by our governments to recruit and retain nurses in Nova Scotia. This is an ongoing problem.

**Personal Statement:**

I want us to work in healthy workplaces that are full staffed and free of workplace violence and injuries. I want quality work-life balance for us. Long term care nursing is rewarding. We are resilient and mighty!

I am hoping 2023 brings us productive collective bargaining with our employers. I hope for forward, innovative thinking to attract and keep nurses in our sector.

I will continue to collaborate with the Board of Directors in the best interest of the nurses NSNU represents and the residents and patients we all care for.

In solidarity,  
Glenda Sabine, RN

ELECTIONS  
JUST AHEAD

## CANDIDATES FOR VICE-PRESIDENT LPNS



### ALAINE HALLIDAY

**Candidate for  
VP LPNs**

My name is Alaine Halliday LPN. I have 37 years of nursing experience in acute care, VON and long-term care. I am currently employed at the Covid Testing Centre as a Charge Nurse. I was also the Charge Nurse involved in the set up and implementation of the Covid Immunization Clinics. I also continue to work and support my colleagues in the Palliative Care Unit at Aberdeen Hospital.

As a Union activist for 25+ years I have held many positions at our local level. I have been Shop Steward, secretary/ treasurer. I am currently President at the Aberdeen local, a position I have held with privilege for 21 years. I am also Chief Shop Steward and have been involved in the grievance process defending our collective agreement while insuring a better work life for our nurses. I sat as Chair with BUGLM supporting the Aberdeen and Sutherland Harris locals and I now sit on the ZULM for the Northern Zone.

At the provincial level, I have sat on the Provincial Negotiation Committee, negotiating the first collective agreement for nursing with the council of unions. Before that, I was on the committee negotiating collective agreements for acute care, long-term care, VON and blood services. I am on the NSNU finance committee and the LPN component assistant for the Northern Zone.

I have attended several Atlantic Labour schools, CFNU conventions, NSNU AGM and educations days, CLC and NSFL. From these I have attained a vast knowledge of union rights and have learned how to apply them to improve the work life balance for Nurses in NS. NSNU website/APP/NSNU What's NU education resources have been a valuable resource for my union knowledge as well.

I value continued education to keep up with the ever-expanding scope of practice, completing the CVAD course, blood transfusion, IV and IV medication and NSH immunization course.

#### **Personal Statement:**

I am a dedicated worker taking my positions seriously, striving to find a resolution to any issues that come up and tasks that need to be completed. I am a team player working collaboratively with other professions and manage my time wisely.

There are many issues, as we all know, 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 given the opportunity and I am elected to VP of LPN's grad component, I will work always, to the best of my ability, with other board members, to serve the LPN's on issues arising. I will work endlessly to ensure that LPN's are treated equally with dignity and respect in our ever-changing work environments.



### DAWM MCKENNA

**Candidate for  
VP LPNs**

I graduated from then Dartmouth Regional Vocational School in 1979, working in many aspects of nursing. Working in long term care, acute care, dialysis, day surgery, ALC, and Palliative Care, at St. Martha's Hospital in

Antigonish, I have gained much experience and knowledge in health care. Retiring in 2020, I have returned to work casual in acute care, and clinical instructor at NSCC with our future LPNs.

I have been actively involved in our local for many years, serving as Shop Steward, LPN Component/Grad rep, JOHSC rep, Vice President, and presently President. Currently, I sit on the PNC committee representing LPNs.

Attending several NSNU AGMs, CFNU conventions, and Eastern Labor School has given me much knowledge and education. I have been involved on several

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committees over the years, expanding that knowledge. I have been a member on Registration and the Disciplinary Committee with NSCN, Co-Chair and Chair on JOHSC, Co Chair, and Chair on Best Practise Committee, as well as Secretary and Past President of the Heatherton Group Home. Being involved on these committees has given me much experience in leadership, communication, problem solving, and solutions.

As a senior LPN, I ensure that I am updated on my education and skills, which is important to me as our role as an LPN has expanded over the years.

### **Personal Statement:**

Being actively involved with NSNU, president of our Local at St. Martha's Hospital, and staff nurse, I strive to have good communication skills with our members, which I believe is an important component in a leadership position. I encourage all members to become more involved within our union, to participate in education and be a voice. I will continue to advocate for all nurses, and if elected, will be a voice for each and every LPN within NSNU.

## VICE-PRESIDENT COMMUNITY CARE



### **KIM WILLIAMS**

#### **VP Community Care Acclaimed**

I graduated from St Rita's hospital in 1992, I have 31 years of experience. I have been employed as a registered nurse with the Victoria Order of Nurses Cape Breton Metro since 2008, prior to that I worked at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital in the palliative care and CVA units. I also have experience in long term care.

My union activism began in 2015 when I assumed the role of vice president of my local, which I held for one year, then I assumed the role of president and currently remain in that role. The past two years I have sat on the Board of NSNU as your VP of Community Care.

I have attended several NSNU AGMs as well as CFNU and CLC conventions. I attended Eastern Labour School in 2018 and, most recently, the Canadian Labour Congress Labour Education Conference. I also had the opportunity to represent community care on the last Provincial Negotiating Committee. I avail myself of every educational opportunity offered, including online

lunch and learns, webinars and in-person sessions to name a few.

I am very passionate about keeping nurses safe when on the job, as such I sit on numerous committees to help advocate for safe work practices. They include, Community of Safe Practice with Aware Nova Scotia, Provincial VON Health and Safety Committee (which I co-chaired for the last two years), I co-chair my local OHS committee, and I also sit as a member on the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour OHS Committee. I actively participated in the establishment of an overnight safety protocol for nurses working alone after hours to ensure they are safe.

### **Personal Statement:**

I am an active NSNU member, and I am a formidable advocate for the nurses I represent. I'm readily available for calls and emails and engage with many local representatives on a regular basis, answering any questions and/or concerns they may have in a timely manner.

As the VP, I will continue to be a strong voice on behalf of all Community Care nurses and the challenges we face every day. Overtime, mileage, retention/recruitment, workload, decent work-life balance and, most importantly, nurse safety.

I will be present, approachable, and available to hear all!

**Election**

## NSNU Virtual Townhall Meetings

# EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS IN CRISIS

In light of ongoing concerns and recent events in emergency departments across Nova Scotia, the NSNU held two virtual townhalls on February 1st to engage emergency nurses and hear their concerns.

One week after government introduced *Actions to Improve Emergency Care*, a plan to improve emergency care will ensure people with the most urgent needs receive care first, the media calls slowed and the news cycle changed to other matters of interest, leaving the NSNU to wonder how committed our stakeholders are regarding enacting change in emergency departments.

Over the past several years, the NSNU and CFNU surveyed emergency nurses to inquire about the shortcomings and pressures nurses face. NSNU and CFNU used that data to inform reports and develop recommendations that were shared with government in 2019 as a means of improving care and assisting nurses to safely work to their scope of practice.

To keep the conversation going and to learn more, NSNU president, Janet Hazelton and staff hosted the 90-minute virtual townhalls to meet with over 60 registered participants over the separate broadcasts. The sessions were open to current ED nurses and those who recently, but no longer work in that area of practice.

Townhall participants were pleased to hear about expanded RN prescribing, NPs in EDs, programs to help nurses bridge to other disciplines and take courses relevant to their practice, but they also voiced their concerns about dwindling float pools, burnout, the lack of auxiliary staff “after hours”, and their sense of feeling defeated and undervalued.

President Hazelton and NSNU Executive Director, Chris Albrecht will be meeting with NSH reps, Dr. Gail Tomblin Murphy, Vice President, Research, Innovation & Discovery and Chief Nurse Executive, and Cindy MacQuarrie, Senior Director of Interprofessional Practice and Learning to present the ideas put forward by members who attended the townhall meetings.

Understanding that the decline in emergency services has persisted, the NSNU has also re-launched an updated survey for emergency nurses, to compare your insights from 2019 to today. We hope members take some time to participate in that poll, to better inform the union on further recommendations and solutions to improve ED services. The link to the survey was shared in a February 2 Campaigner e-memo.

We thank all who participated in the townhall sessions. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.



## VON Multi-Site Meeting

On November 30th, a VON Multi-site meeting was held on-site at NSNU with NSNU local representatives and the VON Management team.

Members discussed a large agenda of issues they are currently facing across the province, including overtime, critical safety incidents and staffing. One topic of discussion included back-up plans, what nurses have their clients do when they are unable to make their visit, which has been a hot topic at labour management meetings as of late. Additionally, Lisa Briers provided provincial OHS and ARP updates, and an overview of WCB stats.

These meetings allow all parties – the Union, employer and nurses – the opportunity to express what they are facing and the current initiatives that are being developed to address these identified challenges.

Though nurses across the country are facing similar issues related to staffing, the Union asks how nurses from VON are coping and what employers are doing to attract and retain nurses within VON. The NSNU remains committed to addressing the issues at hand.





# Standing Committee on Health Discuss Wait Times



The Standing Committee on Health met December 13th, 2022 in the Legislative Chamber at Province House to discuss issues plaguing our healthcare system, including close to 22,000 Nova Scotians on surgical waits lists across the province.

Surgical backlogs and the extension of operating room hours were top of mind for the representatives from the Department of Health and Wellness, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, IWK Health, Doctors Nova Scotia, Scotia Surgery Inc. and NSNU's president, Janet Hazelton who appeared before the all-party committee which also included Karen Oldfield, president and CEO of Nova Scotia Health.

Oldfield publicly pledged to reduce an excess of about 12,000 surgical patients (the national benchmark is 10,000) between now and mid-2025. Some call this promise far-fetched and unattainable given the challenges facing our short-staffed hospitals.

In the September 2021 mandate letter on surgical wait times, Premier Tim Houston instructed Health Minister

Michelle Thompson to meet the benchmark standards for wait times as established by the wait time alliance, within 18 months of being elected. Government failed to meet this goal and wait times have gotten far worse.

Of concern for the NSNU is the continued referral of surgeries to private clinics, clinics like Scotia Surgery that are willing to take on more work for the province. To do that, private clinics also take staff from our public system, a system that is propped up by overworked staff and travel nurses.

Janet Hazelton urged the province to create its own pool of travel nurses, who work for private agencies, rather than the public system, enjoying better pay and more control over their hours. A pool instead overseen by the province would help keep young nurses from leaving Nova Scotia and might lure back those who have already left.

The province is already spending between \$11 million and \$13 million on travel nurses, said Oldfield, who loved the NSNU president's idea.

## Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Honours Bestowed on Labour Movement Activists



Congratulations are in order for two members of Nova Scotia's labour movement.

Nova Scotia Federation of Labour president, **Danny Cavanagh** received the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee medal at the ceremony at Province House on January 23, 2023, a life experience Danny called truly remarkable.

Danny, who received the honour from by Gary Burrill, MLA and former leader of the NS in NDP remarked, "Every moment felt surreal, and I keenly remember feeling grateful for such a distinguished honour for my work in the Trade Union Movement".

NSNU is very pleased to applaud one of our own. Northern Vice-President on the Board of Directors of the NSNU, **Donna Gillis** was notified on January 31st that she too would be receiving the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal on the recommendation of Nova Scotia Health.

Donna is being recognized for her contributions to the health field and her community during the COVID-19 pandemic, making her worthy of acknowledgement and praise. Upon hearing the news, Donna says she became emotional.

Donna, a registered nurse working at the Aberdeen Hospital will soon receive her award at Government House.

The province of Nova Scotia established the awards in early 2022 as a way of honouring The Queen's extraordinary lifetime of service to Canada, and also to recognize 5,000 in our Province for their service throughout Nova Scotia and in a wide variety of fields.

**Well done Donna and Danny.**





# WAGE INCREASES

## for Nurse Practitioners & RN Prescribers

On February 3rd, the Nurses' Union announced that NSNU and NSGEU had concluded a classification and re-classification process, as per Article 8.15 in the acute care collective agreement. That language states that if a nurse believes the job has changed substantially since the signing of the collective agreement, an application can be made to the employer, and the unions and the employer can enter into a process to negotiate a more appropriate rate; as well, if a new classification is introduced, the Union and the employer can negotiate a rate of pay for that position.

The NSNU and NSGEU recently settled on a new wage rate for Nurse Practitioners, as the scope of this role has changed significantly. NP's increased responsibilities include, but are not limited to, admissions and discharges from hospital, consulting specialists, working autonomously to diagnose, order and interpret laboratory tests, ordering and interpreting reports of diagnostic imaging investigations, prescribing pharmaceuticals, and performing procedures.

As a result of the re-classification process and ensuing negotiations, the new wage rate of NPs will increase by eight per cent placing Nova Scotia NPs amongst the highest nurse practitioners in the country.

Language in the AC collective agreement also allows negotiations to take place if a new position is

created. Recently, the employer introduced Registered Nurse prescribing, which allows RNs who complete extensive education to prescribe medication to patients. The Council of Nursing Unions and employer agreed to increase the hourly rate of those nurses by an additional \$4 per hour.

Work began in 2017 to advance RN prescribing in Nova Scotia. In late January, government announced that a range of professional development opportunities will be available to optimize scopes of practice for triage nurses working in emergency departments, including the RN prescribing course.

The Certificate in Registered Nurse Prescribing program (part of the Master of Nursing curriculum) at Dalhousie University prepares RNs with specialized education and skills to prescribe medications within their specific area of expertise, practice, and client population.

Registered nurse prescribing improves services to patients by reducing wait times in various settings, specifically our EDs. The unions welcome the decision to expand this program.

We are hopeful that these increases will assist in recognizing the increased scope of practice of our nurses, as well as the value of their work. We look forward to negotiating wage increases for the remainder of the nursing bargaining unit once face to face negotiations commence.

## NSHEPP Retirement Session

On November 16th, NSNU hosted a day-long pre-retirement information session with NSHEPP's Manager of Pension Administration, Christie Settle. As the NSNU Trustee for NSHEPP, NSNU President Janet Hazelton welcomed participants and gave a brief introduction to the session.

The session aimed to help members better understand the Pension Plan and provide a sense of what to expect as retirement approaches. The group, 75 of whom joined virtually, discussed how to calculate benefits, examine plan statements (including key details to look for), the overall retirement process and more.



Learn more about your pension plan at [nsnu.ca/NSHEPP](http://nsnu.ca/NSHEPP) (Member Login Required)

# What are our nurses up to?



Many Nova Scotians were eager to support their local fire services while hoping to win big over the holidays. On December 22, Kayla Eldridge (NSNU member currently bridging to the RN program), became the lucky winner of a staggering \$1,467,620. This was the largest 50-50 draw in our province's history!



L-R: NATALIE NYMARK, JEN ROSSETTI, ANNE BOUTILIER

In late fall, NSNU Board Members Jen Rossetti, Natalie Nymark and Anne Boutilier attended the 2022 CCPA Fundraiser Gala at Mount St. Vincent University. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) welcomed Dr. Grace-Edward Galabuzi to speak on anti-black racism and the fight for economic, racial and climate justice.



CB METRO VON

Several NSNU locals had the opportunity to gather for a celebration during the holiday season. From fundraisers and dinners to holiday socials and NSNU swag, these nurses brought the holiday cheer. We would like to extend a big thank you to all the members who shared with us!



HALIFAX VON



ABERDEEN



COLCHESTER/EAST HANTS



ST. MARTHAS

## Johnson Insurance Contest Winners

In late 2022, Johnson Insurance, an unwavering supporter and trusted service provider to nurses launched their Thank You contest for NSNU members.

For the second consecutive year, to show their gratitude for your steadfast dedication, Johnson offered all NSNU members a chance to win 1 of 3 cash prizes in their "Thank You" contest: a grand prize worth \$1000 and two \$500 prizes. The contest closed on December 14th.

The following members were chosen in a random draw, the lucky winners of the Johnson Insurance Thank you contest:

**\$1000.00 Winner**

**Danielle MacPhee** - LPN, Braeside Home

**\$500.00 Winner**

**Amy DeBaie** - RN, IWK

**\$500.00 Winner**

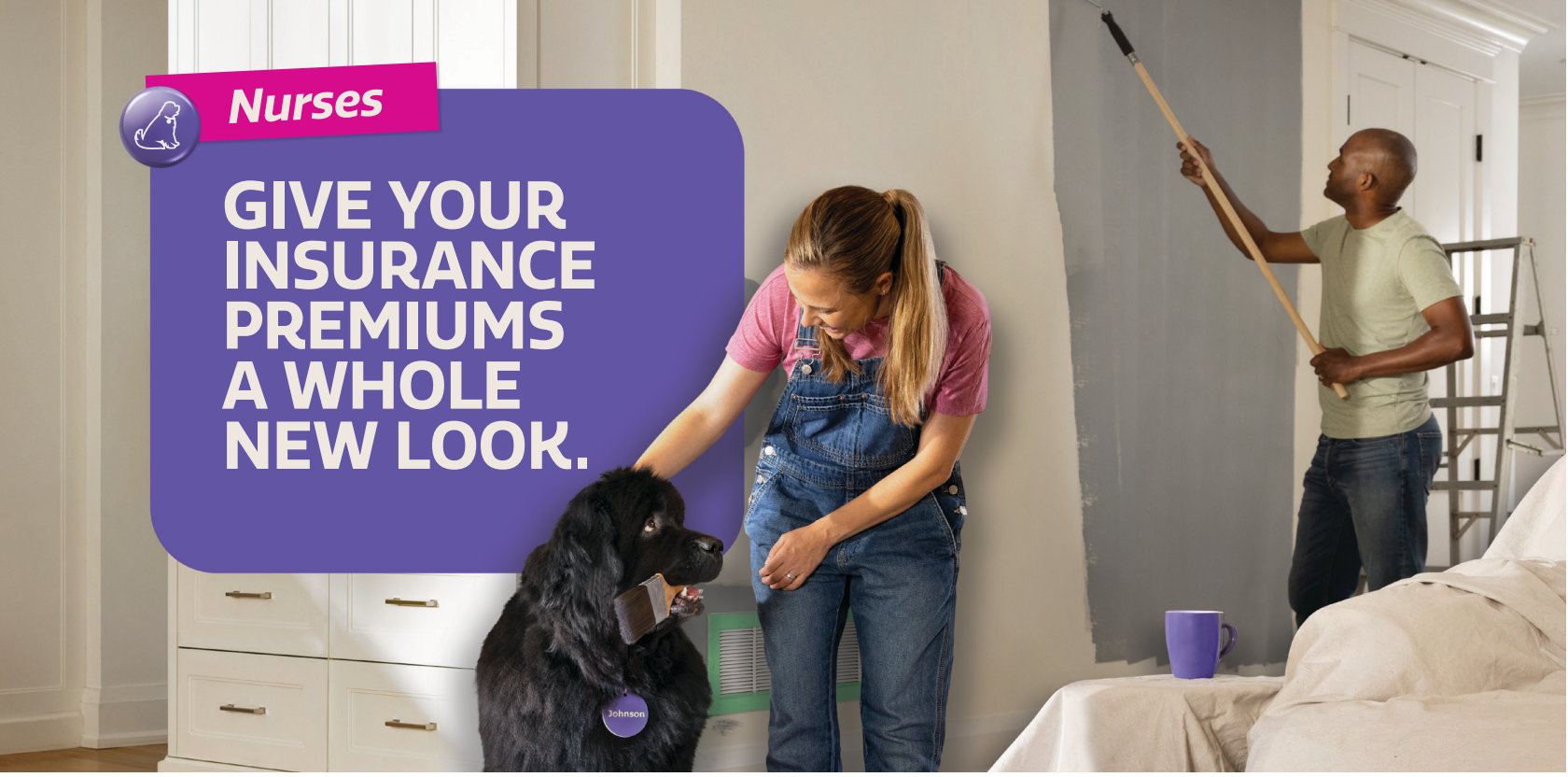
**Frances MacKenzie** - RN, Northside Harbourview Hospital

**Congratulations to all the Thank You Contest winners!**



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