

Premier's Office | Health and Wellness

Retention Bonuses, Incentives for Nurses, Healthcare Workers

As a way of thanking Nova Scotia's nurses while encouraging more of them to keep working in the province, today, March 20, **Premier Tim Houston announced a \$10,000 bonus for nurses in Nova Scotia's publicly funded healthcare system.**

Another \$10,000 incentive will be paid next year to nurses who commit to staying in the system for another two years.

"Our nurses do such an amazing job day in and day out. I'm proud to recognize our nurses with these bonuses - because they've earned it," said Premier Houston. "My message to every nurse in the province is 'We need you.' As long as you keep working in our province's healthcare system, our government will have your back."

Frontline nurses working for publicly funded employers will soon get a bonus of up to \$10,000. They will be eligible for another \$10,000 retention incentive next year if they stay in the system and sign a two-year return of service agreement by the end of March 2024.

The Province will also pay a \$10,000 incentive to nurses who have left the publicly funded system if they agree to come back and sign a two-year return of service agreement. To qualify for this incentive, they will need to agree to take a publicly funded position by March 31, 2023.

Other healthcare workers, including paramedics, telehealth staff, respiratory therapists, continuing care staff, ward clerks, housekeeping and food service staff, among others, will receive a retention bonus of up to \$5,000 in the coming weeks. Eligible employees work for publicly funded health authorities, Emergency Medical Care Inc. (EMCI), Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia, the continuing care sector and disability support programs.

"Through the pandemic and beyond, we know the last few years have been long and hard," said the Premier. "Many healthcare workers have contributed so much, sacrificed so much to keep us healthy and safe, but don't feel seen or recognized. We see you and this bonus is our way of saying thank you."

Bonuses and incentives will be prorated based on the percentage of a full-time equivalent position that an employee holds and when they were hired. For example, if an employee holds a 50 per cent position, they will be eligible for half of the bonus. If they started work after January 2023, they will be eligible for a portion of the bonus.

These bonuses are being offered outside any wage agreements that may be negotiated at the bargaining table. Negotiations are now underway between the health authorities, the Council of Nursing Unions and across the long-term care sector.

Quotes:

"Our healthcare teams have been doing more with less for years, and they've told us they're worried about the impact of constantly working short. Bonuses and incentives aren't a silver bullet, but they can help keep people on staff and bring others back, which will help fill shifts and support the healthcare workers already on staff."

- Health and Wellness Minister Michelle Thompson

Quick Facts:

- about 11,000 registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and nurse practitioners work for health authorities, EMCI, continuing care and disability support programs and will be immediately eligible for a \$10,000 thank you bonus
- another 44,000 people work for publicly funded healthcare and disability support program employers, and will get the \$5,000 retention bonus
- managers (except those who provide direct clinical patient care), physicians and medical residents are not eligible, nor are those working in federally regulated groups, or those not directly employed by a provincially funded health employer
- initiatives to recruit and retain healthcare workers are part of Action for Health, the government's plan to improve healthcare

Additional Resources:

Fact sheet - retention incentives:

<https://novascotia.ca/news/docs/2023/03/20/healthcare-retention-incentives.pdf>

Return to Nursing Incentive career opportunities, Nova Scotia Health:

<https://career17.sapsf.com/sfcareer/jobreqcareerpvt?jobId=152912&company=NSHAP&st=3FB6FBAD976419EEEDD07AFA038605A94E134061>

Return to Nursing Incentive career opportunities, IWK Health:

<https://career17.sapsf.com/sfcareer/jobreqcareerpvt?jobId=153089&company=NSHAP&st=D452E73FF8EE6E340639F430B12B1142ABE881B7>

Return to Nursing Incentive career opportunities, continuing care and disability support programs:

<https://jobs.crelate.com/portal/healthassociation>

Action for Health, the government's plan to improve healthcare in Nova Scotia:

<https://novascotia.ca/actionforhealth/>

Mandate letter of the Minister of Health and Wellness:

https://novascotia.ca/exec_council/letters-2021/ministerial-mandate-letter-2021-DHW.pdf