



31 October 2019

Dear Mayor or Warden,

As you know, our healthcare system faces many challenges. Emergency departments across the province are under immense stress. Patients are being treated in hallways and nurses are working short-staffed. Homecare nurses are treating increasingly complex clients and are often pushed to do more in less time. Long-term care staffing continues to be a serious problem. Many Nova Scotians continue to lack access to primary healthcare when and where they need it.

Municipalities across the province are now playing an increasing role in efforts to recruit and retain healthcare professionals for their communities. For this reason, I wanted to share with you some important research produced by the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union.

Enclosed, you will find a copy of our recent publication entitled *Nursing Potential, Optimizing Nursing and Primary Healthcare in Nova Scotia*. This evidence-based book will help Nova Scotians better understand the role of nurses and what they can do to help build the primary healthcare system of tomorrow. Our vision is one where collaborative care is central, with primary healthcare doctors and nurse practitioners providing oversight and continuity of care, and where nurses practice to the full extent of their abilities.

Our goal with *Nursing Potential* is to be part of the solution. Beyond pointing out problems, we need to enact changes that nurses and other experts tell us will build a better health system. There is no one fix to the myriad challenges we face, but enhancing the roles of nurse practitioners, primary healthcare nurses, VON nurses and emergency department nurses, with the appropriate supports, will go a long way to improving primary healthcare and the health of Nova Scotians.

I encourage you to read *Nursing Potential* and share it with your colleagues, friends and family. It can also be found online at www.nsnu.ca/nursingpotential. If you wish to speak further about any of these issues, please reach out via my Executive Assistant (Lorna.Myers@nsnu.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Hazelton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Janet Hazelton, BScN, RN, MPA
President, Nova Scotia Nurses' Union