

March 17, 2020

Premier Stephen McNeil  
Office of the Premier  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, One Government Place  
1700 Granville Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1X5

Premier:

**Re: Home Care issues with Covid-19 Pandemic**

Home care providers and the workers they employ across Nova Scotia need clear direction on how they are to operate in order to protect the personal health of the patients, the community and themselves.

As of yesterday and up until this morning, many home care providers are still operating as per normal and unlike within the long term care sector, access to cleaning supplies and sterilization practices are not part of their regular day. This means that hundreds of Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) are continuing to serve patients, many of whom have compromised immune systems. Each day our home care providers are operating without the proper controls and procedures, our members risk contracting the virus and spreading it throughout their communities, thereby putting everyone at risk.

I have reached out to the Department of Health and Wellness to seek direction on behalf of our members, but have received little to no information to pass along to our members. This situation calls for immediate action: home care is part of health care, and a failure to act on this front could be catastrophic.

Here are major issues the NSGEU would like to see addressed:

1. Direction for the CCA's to contact their clients prior to visits to ask if someone in the home is self isolating and what to do if someone is;
2. An answer as to whether a pregnant CCA should be required to take additional precautions;
3. Consistent and clear instructions to all home care providers across the province that are in line with all WHO recommendations;
4. An assurance from government and employers that all health care workers regardless of where they operate or who they work for will be provided with all the necessary Personal Protective Equipment they require to do their jobs, as we have been told by many of our members that basics like hand sanitizer, gloves and masks are unavailable;

5. Childcare is unavailable for most members currently, and our members are concerned about discipline or loss of employment if they are unable to make shifts as a result of daycare and school closures; what assurances can be given to our members that their jobs will be protected?

I understand that the current health care crisis is stressing the system from top to bottom and I have publicly commended all of you for the decisions you have had to make so far. I am asking that an immediate focus be given to addressing the concerns we are hearing from those on the frontlines of home care. Once a plan is developed, the NSGEU will gladly play whatever role we can in getting this information out our members throughout this sector.

I look forward to your immediate attention.

Jason MacLean

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JM', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jason MacLean  
President

Cc – Hon. Randy Delorey Minister of Health and Wellness  
Dr. Robert Strang, Nova Scotia Chief Medical Officer of Health

JM/lb