



OFFICE OF THE PREMIER
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June 24, 2021

Jason MacLean,
President, NSGEU
lbouchard@nsgeu.ca

Les Duff,
Acting President, CUPE Local 8920
lduff@ns.sympatico.ca

Linda MacNeil,
Atlantic Regional Director, Unifor
linda.macneil@unifor.org

Dear Jason MacLean, Les Duff, and Linda MacNeil:

Thank you for your letter of June 22, 2021, regarding the health care bargaining unit negotiations between the two Health Authorities and the Council of Unions (COU).

I am proud of how all Nova Scotians came together to support each other in the fight against COVID-19. This has been a difficult time. Many small businesses were required to temporarily close experiencing financial loss, many Nova Scotians were temporarily laid off experiencing a drop in their household income and many publicly funded workers, including health care staff, worked long hours to ensure that Nova Scotians continued to receive the essential services they depend upon. Your members provide many of these essential services and should be proud of the work they did and continue to do every day to support and care for Nova Scotians.

I was aware that the Health Authorities spoke with the COU regarding their operational inability to attend negotiations dates that were scheduled to occur during the province's third and most significant wave of COVID-19. The Health Authorities required that time to fully focus on keeping Nova Scotians safe through enhanced COVID-19 testing, vaccinating Nova Scotians as quickly as possible and treating those Nova Scotians who unfortunately became ill. I was also aware of the Employer's offer to discuss setting new bargaining dates. I was disappointed to hear that after only one date of collective bargaining and in the midst of our third and most severe wave of COVID-19 the COU elected to file for conciliation.

As you note in your letter, many health services were curtailed during the pandemic and Nova Scotians are looking forward to their health system returning to full capacity. To this end, I believe as leaders in the health system you have both the power and the responsibility to work collaboratively with the Employers to negotiate an agreement that balances the needs of all parties.

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I support free collective bargaining and encourage parties to work together at the bargaining table to achieve, as you have also noted in your letter, a fair collective agreement. I believe after only one day of collective bargaining it is premature to discuss the possibility of sending health care bargaining to arbitration and encourage the parties to work together to reach a negotiated settlement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Iain Rankin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "I" and "R".

Honourable Iain Rankin, M.L.A.
Premier of Nova Scotia

c: Honourable Randy Delorey, Minister of Labour Relations
Honourable Zach Churchill, Minister of Health and Wellness