



Charlene Fitzgerald
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President

Frustration with Provincial Government

Dear Colleagues:

Today we learned the provincial government has concluded a second consecutive collective agreement with the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public Employees (NAPE), during a time when it has not even started to negotiate a single agreement with the NLMA. While the government calls it an "extension," it is a two-year deal with salary and other changes.

We congratulate NAPE. But we are exasperated with the irresponsible delay of the provincial government in failing to start negotiations with the NLMA.

The delay is irresponsible because significant improvements for patients of the province cannot start until we have an agreement. New models of family practice to reduce the number of unattached patients are not getting discussed. Doctors are leaving the province. The government is making Newfoundland and Labrador a less competitive place to practise medicine, while neighbouring provinces are making advances.

There have been previous occasions when the physician contract would expire before the next one was fully negotiated. In the last round, the 2013-2017 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was not fully negotiated until September 2015, two years late. At present, despite multiple requests and discussions with Ministers Haggie and Osborne, the government has failed to organize itself to begin the 2017-2021 round of negotiations, and we are already 2 ¼ years late. Nor has the government agreed to a specific start date.

The government has also mischaracterized the NLMA's readiness to negotiate. Minister Haggie told the House of Assembly on December 2, 2019 that, "We are simply now in the early stages of positional discussions with the Medical Association. They need time to get their ducks in a row, we need time to get our ducks in a row for our formal sit-down collective bargaining thing." In actual fact, our "ducks have been in a row" since June 2018, and we have advised the government as such multiple times, including in a letter to Minister Haggie on November 26.

MOA negotiations normally occur with both the Minister of Health and Community Services and the Minister of Finance. I will be [writing the Premier](#) to seek his intervention in getting his Ministers to the negotiating table.

Sincerely,

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