



Hon Premier Tim Houston

CC: Hon Minister Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness

RE: Nova Scotia Retention Incentive and Thank you Bonus

Dear Premier Houston,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the over 600 Medical Radiation Technologists (MRTs) of Nova Scotia to address the recent release of retention and thank you bonus incentives for healthcare workers in the province of Nova Scotia.

I first want to thank you for including the Medical Radiation Technology profession in the retention incentive program. Too often, healthcare workers outside of the medical and nursing professions are excluded from such programs. Without the hard work of the essential MRT profession, the healthcare system in Nova Scotia would have collapsed during the pandemic.

MRTs are the healthcare professionals who perform medical imaging and radiation therapy procedures across Nova Scotia. Just like the nursing professionals you included in the thank you bonus, MRTs are working under immense pressure currently to help the NS health system recover from COVID and the effects of years of slowdowns and closures. Understaffing and overwork have led to a concerning growth in burnout across the profession. Burnout seen at these levels, as you know from the nursing profession, is a predecessor for departures and unfilled vacancies in a profession, something we are starting to see from the region.

Despite their inclusion in your program, there are some concerns brought forward by our members that we would like to share with you. When an initiative by the government is called a "thank you bonus" and only applies to one profession, MRTs feel that their contributions are less meaningful and unseen. It is a misleading message to the public that only one profession is worthy of thanks. One member put it this way: "It is a bit of a slap in the face when we are also essential frontline workers that work just as hard, just as understaffed, and also leaving in droves".

Compounding this feeling is seeing that the government is setting up a live Q&A with the Premier with only one profession present. There are many perspectives that are missed, when consulting only one profession. One member asked: "What about the MRTs? When do we get a turn to speak with the premier? The doctors and nurses cannot give the proper care without the diagnostic imaging that MRTs provide daily (365, 24hrs/day). I feel snubbed by the government and the media". Although I am sure



this was not the intention of the government, these disheartening decisions are noted by our members as a contributor to their exhaustion.

I wanted to highlight this so your team can re-examine how retention programs have the potential to pit one profession against the other. I also invite you to listen to the voices of the MRT profession, just as you are with nurses, who bring a viewpoint you have yet to hear. Finally, I ask that any further retention, bonus, or recognition programs by the government, take into consideration that no one profession is more essential than another.

CAMRT-ATL had a very productive meeting with the Ministry of Health Staff last summer. With situations in medical imaging and radiation therapy constantly evolving, we would love the opportunity to meet with you and Minister Thompson so that we can discuss how MRTs can be part of long-term solutions to these challenges faced by the healthcare system in Nova Scotia.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Carey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Carey M.Org.M, BHSc, RTR

Regional Manager of Provincial Association Services Atlantic Canada, CAMRT-ATL