

Nurse Practitioners' Association of Nova Scotia (NPANS)

1. Role Expansion and Promotion– NPs are recognized as being critical to improving public access to quality healthcare, particularly in underserved areas. For example, the majority of health care professionals at Virtual Care Nova Scotia are NPs. With their advanced training and ability to deliver comprehensive care, their role can continue to expand to address gaps in the healthcare system. However, as a relatively new contributor to the health care system, the NP role is often misunderstood or dismissed.

- Will your party commit to policies supporting expanding the NP role across healthcare settings in Nova Scotia?

- Yes. The waitlist of 145,000 Nova Scotians seeking a family practice is the most visible sign of how many people do not have access to the care they need and how many more fear they too will be without the recommended primary care. Nurse practitioners have a very wide scope of practice. Nurse practitioners will be an important part of the 45 new collaborative family doctor clinics that an NDP government open. Building on the Health Home model of care, these clinics will expand people's access to the primary care they need by generally being staffed for 10,000 patients. We'll build a team of health professionals to deliver the care close to where people live.
- An NDP government will engage NPANS in planning ways to increase the number of NPs we have in the province and to ensure NPs are working to the full scope of their practice.

- Will your party commit to providing targeted funding to NPANS to support public awareness and promotional campaigns that educate about the important role and benefits of NPs?

- Yes, an NDP government will support and promote the important role and benefits of Nurse Practitioners in improving the work-life balance and working conditions for the many workers in the health system.

2. Enhanced Autonomy for Nurse Practitioners – NPs are autonomous practitioners; however, many experience unnecessary red tape and micromanagement by healthcare administrators, preventing them from maximizing their impact on the healthcare system.

– How will your party address this issue to ensure NPs can practice fully and autonomously?

- An NDP government will engage NPANS in a review to reduce red tape and increase the scope for NPs to exercise their professional judgement in caring for Nova Scotians. This review will also look at alternative payment models to ensure nurse practitioners can operate autonomously within the public healthcare system.

3. Alternative Funding Models—On October 8, 2023, the Minister of Health in Alberta announced a new funding model allowing NPs to direct bill and open their own clinics. NPANS has developed and attached a document outlining the details of this Model and highlighting its positive impacts on the Nova Scotia health system.

– Will your party consider implementing alternative funding frameworks like those in Alberta to increase access to care for NPs in Nova Scotia?

- An NDP government will first assess the implementation of the new doctor clinics with collaborative teams as a step toward enabling all Nova Scotians to be attached to a family doctor clinic. That will include the well informed advice from NPANS on how to ensure effective operation of the clinics.

4. Retention of Nurse Practitioners in Primary Care – There is a growing trend of NPs leaving primary care. NPANS estimates that 20% of NPs working in primary care have left for other positions in the last year and a half. These positions are not always another role within the health authority.

– How does your party plan to address the trend of NPs attrition from primary care roles, ensuring we maintain a robust workforce to serve our communities?

- Attrition from primary care is a concern for most health workers, including doctors, other nurses, technicians and paramedics. Collective agreements that help people catch up from prolonged restraint have been hard won and now help people make ends meet. NPs are among the professions that will benefit as an NDP government provides a better working environment and more Nova Scotians have the reassurance of attachment to primary care.
- A NDP government will also ensure that NPs receive fair wages that recognizes their broad scope of practice.
- A NDP government will increase opportunities for NPs to train and step into primary care roles, and enhance bridging programs so nurses can advance to other levels of their profession.