

Kim Adair  
Office of the Auditor General  
5161 George Street  
Royal Centre, Suite 400  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 1M7

October 1, 2024

Dear Ms. Adair,

I am writing to request that your Office conduct a value-for-money audit of the province's use of private nursing agencies across Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health and long-term care facilities. As you may be aware, auditors general in New Brunswick and Newfoundland announced earlier this year they would be conducting similar audits.

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions recently described the use of nursing agencies as a 'black box', "where public money is being poured in with very little oversight or reporting of how public funds are being used." The organization formally recommended that auditors general across the country investigate the cost of the use of private nursing agencies.

Last week, we learned during the September budget update that the Department of Health and Wellness is reporting increased spending on agency nursing of \$17.8 million above the already budgeted \$80 million.

What began as a stop-gap measure to address acute staffing challenges, is becoming a troubling reliance across our healthcare sector. As many others have pointed out, agency nursing is associated with much higher public costs, reduced transparency, and a troubling encroachment of private, for-profit agencies into our public healthcare system.

Considering the current challenges facing our healthcare system, I believe there would be great value in your office conducting this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Chender".

Claudia Chender  
Leader, Nova Scotia New Democratic Party

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