

# NOVA SCOTIA NURSES DISPUTE

***Seven in Ten (73%) Say Nurses Are Not Paid Enough -- Average Indicate Nurses Should Get At Least 20% Increase, Two-Thirds (62%) Say 25%***

***Three-Quarters (78%) of Nova Scotians Say That The Nurses Are Being More Fair And Reasonable Than Government -- 86%***

***Oppose Forced Overtime for Nurses***

***Public Support for Work to Rule at 80%***



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***Public Support for Work to Rule at 80%***

**Toronto, ON** – A new poll conducted by Ipsos-Reid for the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union shows almost all (91%) Nova Scotians say that in their opinion there is a nursing shortage in their province. Eight in ten (80%) say that they support the nurses' decision to work to rule given the provincial government's refusal to increase nurses wages more than 10.5 percent over the next three years.

On the issue of wages and benefits, seven in ten (73%) Nova Scotians say that the province's nurses are "not paid enough". Six in ten (62%) say that the 25 percent pay raise spread out over three years the nurses want is "about right", and three-quarters (75%) say that the provincial government's offer of a 10.5 percent pay increase over the next three years is "not enough". On an open-ended basis, Nova Scotians, on average, say that nurses should get a 20 percent increase. Moreover, 86 percent oppose the current requirement that nurses work overtime hours to keep their jobs, and roughly three-quarters (78%) say that they think that the nurses are being more fair and reasonable than the government in this dispute.



*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union between June 22<sup>nd</sup> and June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 500 adult Nova Scotians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm$  4.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Nova Scotia population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual adult Nova Scotia population according to the 1996 Census data.*

### ***91% Say There is a Nursing Shortage in the Province***

Nova Scotians (91%) overwhelmingly say that there is a nursing shortage in the province. In fact, Nova Scotians feel strongly about this with 68 percent who say "yes, definitely", while another one-quarter (23%) say "yes, somewhat". Only 5 percent say there is not a nursing shortage.

- Women (71%) are more likely than men (66%) to say that there is "definitely" a nursing shortage.

### ***Public Support for Work to Rule at 80%***

Eight in ten (80%) Nova Scotians say that they support the nurses' decision to work to rule, meaning that they are refusing to work overtime or to do work which is not officially part of their jobs. Half (50%) say that they "strongly support" the decision of nurses to work to rule, while 30 percent "somewhat support" it. Two in ten (19%) oppose the work to rule decision by nurses including 8 percent who say that they "strongly oppose" it.

Amid strong support for the work to rule decision, an even larger number of Nova Scotians (89%) say that they trust the nurses to provide emergency services in the event of a strike. A majority (55%) say that they "completely trust" the nurses to provide emergency services in a



strike situation, while an additional third (34%) say that they would trust nurses “somewhat”. One in ten (10%) say that they trust the nurses “not much” (7%) or “not at all” (3%).

***Seven in Ten (73%) Say Nurses Are Not Paid Enough -- Average Indicate Nurses Should Get At Least 20% Increase, Two-Thirds (62%) Say 25%***

On the issue of wages and benefits, nearly three-quarters (73%) of Nova Scotians say that nurses in the province are paid “not enough”. Two in ten (21%) say that amount nurses are paid is “about right”. Indeed, when asked to agree or disagree with a list of possible options to retain and attract nurses to the province, thereby reducing the shortage, a full 90 percent of Nova Scotians say that they would agree if the “government increases the salaries paid to nurses”.

Two-thirds (62%) say that the 25 percent total pay raise spread out over three years that the nurses are asking for is “about right”, while one-quarter (26%) of Nova Scotians say that it is “too much”. One in ten (10%) say that the 25 percent increase over three years that the nurses want is “not enough”. Regarding the government’s offer, three-quarters (75%) say that the provincial government’s offer of a 10.5 percent pay increase over the next three years is “not enough,” while one-quarter (23%) say that the government’s offer is “about right”.

On an open-ended basis, Nova Scotians were asked, “what percentage pay increase should nurses in Nova Scotia get spread out over the next three years”. On average, Nova Scotians say that the nurses should get a 20 percent increase. And, 85 percent say that the government should now make a significantly better offer to the nurses in terms of wages and benefits in the context of a forced settlement if the government passes legislation to outlaw a nurse strike.

- Women (80%) are more likely than men (71%) to say that the provincial government’s

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offer of 10.5 percent over three years is “not enough”.

***Three-Quarters (78%) of Nova Scotians Say That The Nurses Are Being More Reasonable and Fair Than Government -- 86% Oppose Forced Overtime for Nurses***

In terms of a trade-off between the two parties, Nova Scotians were asked “overall, who do you think is being more fair and reasonable in this dispute?” Three-quarters (78%) say that the nurses are being more fair and reasonable than the provincial government. In fact, fully 86 percent say that they oppose forced overtime for nurses. The intensity of the public’s opinion on the forced overtime issue is notable as seven in ten (69%) say that they are “strongly opposed” to the current requirement that nurses work overtime hours in addition to their regularly scheduled shifts.

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