



**Nurse Practitioner
Association of Canada**

**Association des
infirmières et infirmiers
praticiens du Canada**

June 1, 2020

Minister of Health and Wellness and Deputy Minister
Department of Health and Wellness
1894 Barrington Street
P.O. Box 488
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2R8

Dear Honourable Randy Delory and Dr. Kevin Orrell,

We congratulate you Dr. Kevin Orrell on your new professional role in Nova Scotia's Department of Health and Wellness. We recognize the work being done through the pandemic by the ministry leaders.

Deborah Hart is the society lead in Nova Scotia for the Nurse Practitioners Association of Nova Scotia and I am the national society lead for the Nurse Practitioner Association of Canada. We feel blessed to be Nova Scotians and experienced nurse practitioners; I am employed by the Nova Scotia Health Authority serving Pictou County. As the national society lead I am invited to participate in national stakeholder tables and this past Monday, May 25, 2020, I attended Choosing Wisely Canada's Society Leaders National meeting virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on travel and group gatherings. Nationally there is a conversation occurring regarding the value of phone and virtual patient visits for care and service. Aligning with the value is a concern that billing codes are not in place for fee for service (FFS) providers and shadow billing providers i.e. nurse practitioners and physicians on alternate funded plans (AFP). There is concern ministries may not modernize policies to permit ongoing valuable phone and virtual care.

We are reaching out to explain an inequity in shadow billing occurring in Nova Scotia during this pandemic for the care and service nurse practitioners are providing. Historically office visits by

nurse practitioners in primary care have been shadow billed. The data from MSI has been utilized by DAL researchers to assess Models of Care in Primary Health Care in Nova Scotia. I participated in the assessment and my MSI shadow billing was directly compared to FFS and AFP physicians. AFP physicians are shadow billing for their phone and virtual visits, however, the shadow billing has been stopped for nurse practitioners because a decision was made to not permit shadow billing for phone and virtual visits for nurse practitioners in Nova Scotia.

We are requesting shadow billing for nurse practitioner phone and virtual patient care be immediately restarted and back dated to the point it was ceased so the system can continue to analyze the service done by nurse practitioners (NPs) and valuable research can continue. It is data that we will rely on post pandemic to ensure evidence is the basis for service decisions which includes policies for FFS, AFP physicians and NPs.

Nursing is a valuable profession. Nurse practitioner service as primary care providers cannot be unrecognized during COVID-19. The systems in place need to appreciate and value the modernization that is occurring to meet the changing landscape in health care.

Leadership and strength is developed through decisions for the greater good for those we serve.

Respectfully,



Lenora Brace, MN, NP, President NPAC-AIIPC
Nurse Practitioner Association of Canada-Association des infirmières et infirmiers praticiens du Canada
309 Burris Road
Brookfield, Nova Scotia, B0N 1C0
1-902-956-4822
<https://npac-aiipc.org>

Deborah Hart, MN, NP Chair NPANS
Nurse Practitioner Association of Nova Scotia
40 Leitches Creek Rd,
Leitches Creek, NS, B2A 3Y9
1-902-304-8496
www.npans.ca