

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions



**December 10, 2024**

### CONTENTS

#### NURSES

Mr. Savoie  
Hon. Ms. Holt  
Mr. Savoie  
Hon. Ms. Holt  
Mr. Savoie  
Hon. Ms. Holt  
Mr. Savoie  
Hon. Ms. Holt  
Mr. Savoie  
Hon. Ms. Holt  
Mr. Savoie  
Hon. Ms. Holt  
Mr. Savoie  
Hon. Ms. Holt  
Mr. Hogan  
Hon. Ms. Holt  
Mr. Hogan  
Hon. Ms. Holt  
Mr. Hogan

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

Hon. Ms. Holt

Mr. Ames

Hon. Ms. Holt

### ENERGY

Mr. Coon

Hon. Mr. Legacy

Mr. Coon

Hon. Mr. Legacy

### NURSES

Ms. Scott-Wallace

Hon. Ms. Holt

Ms. Scott-Wallace

Hon. Ms. Holt

Ms. Scott-Wallace

Hon. Ms. Holt

Mr. Savoie

Hon. Ms. Holt

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

[Translation]

### NURSES

**Mr. Savoie** (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Good afternoon.

[Original]

On September 20, 2024, the Premier released a statement saying:

*The retention payment will be \$10 000 for the first year and \$5 000 in year two and will go to all nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and licensed practical nurses employed by Vitalité and Horizon.*

This was costed at \$74.3 million, with \$37 million for the follow-up payment. We now know the true cost of the first portion is \$83 million, or \$9 million over what was costed. Once again, we're seeing a pattern of the Liberals under-costing their commitments. What does the Premier have to say about yet another error in her costing?

[Translation]

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you very much for the question.

[Original]

I appreciate that note on the difference. One thing that we decided to do after hearing feedback from nurses, and specifically nurses who are working part-time, was to change from paying out the bonus as an amount that reflected the part-time allocation—0.5 or 0.6. We heard that folks would like that bonus paid on their hours worked because many nurses who are classified as a 0.5 are working full-time hours, or people classified as 0.6 are working 0.8 hours. We made the adjustment to recognize that and to prorate the bonus payments based on the full hours worked of those part-time nurses. We thought that was fair and appropriate, and it ended up costing a bit more.

**Mr. Savoie** (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I guess what that naturally leads me to is this: What was the purpose or point of their costing if they hadn't done this work in the first place? It sounds as though they made this promise not really fully understanding what the actual cost was. Then, in talking to people, they realized: Oh well, okay, I guess we have to do it this way. So, did the Premier have any conversations with the nurses beforehand—during or before the election period—or is this a conversation that she just had because there was no consultation before they made this promise? Thank you.

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Certainly, we did a lot of consultation with nurses. You may recall my tour—going to hospitals, going to coffee shops, speaking with nurses in long-term care facilities, in hospitals, in primary care environments and others, all through the winter and spring of last year, and then through the summer, engaging with the Nurses’ Union and the representatives. When we costed the commitment to the nursing bonus, we did it based on the part-time figures that we had been given, based on the 0.5, 0.6, and 0.8 that we were told nurses were working in New Brunswick.

When we learned from nurses that they were working full-time hours even though they had a 0.5 classification, we chose to change the program because we thought it was the better thing to do, the right thing to do, to recognize all of the hours worked by the people who were classified as part-time but were giving more and more of their time to the system. We thought it was appropriate to recognize those hours and not the classification figures that we had built our budget on. What happened was that we built the budget; it was the right number for the program, but we thought it was better to go further.

**Mr. Savoie** (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Here we go on classification, which dovetails nicely into my next question.

*All permanent registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, nurse managers and supervisors, working in both regional health authorities and with Ambulance New Brunswick and Extra-Mural, are eligible.*

This is December 3, from the CBC.

*Permanent part-time employees will receive a bonus pro-rated to their average hours over the last 12 months.*

*Nurses represented by the New Brunswick Nurses Union and licensed practical nurses represented by the New Brunswick Union working in long-term care homes will also receive the payments.*

It went on to quote the Premier:

*“We can’t recruit in when we don’t have a staff that is feeling respected and valued by their employer, so we thought that issuing a retention payment immediately would signal that value for the work and our request that you stick with us for the next two years as we try to improve working conditions.”*

Based on the Premier’s comments about categories, I would like to ask the Premier this: Do you not value the work of casual nurses?

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you very much for the question. Casual nurses are a critical part of our system. It's clear that there are many people working to keep the lights on and cover for their colleagues. They work various hours and come in when needed. We've been learning quite a bit about how many casual nurses would like to be permanent and how many are doing full-time hours, waiting for a permanent job to show up. Right now, in partnership with the unions, we are looking to understand how many full-time hours are being worked by casual nurses. Can we create those permanent, full-time positions so that we can move those casual nurses in who want to work permanently, who want to work full-time, so that they can be part of this program?

[Translation]

**Mr. Savoie** (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

[Original]

I will go to another one of the Premier's quotes, this time from the December 3 *Telegraph-Journal*:

*If (casual workers) feel like they are prepared within the next year to come on board in a permanent fashion, then we will have this bonus here for them,*

It sounds as though the Premier is trying to push casual nurses into full-time positions. There could be many compelling reasons why a nurse may need to remain as a casual worker, whether it be finances, family dynamics, or flexibility. These are all reasons why a nurse may choose to remain as a casual worker. Whatever the reasons are, these workers do the exact same job as every other full-time employee in the system. If this is about respecting workers, why does it sound as though the Premier is pressuring nurses into full-time positions in order to get this bonus? Why is their work not valued as much as that of full-time employees when they do the exact same work? That doesn't sound like respecting workers to me.

[Translation]

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to clarify that. We certainly think that every nurse in New Brunswick is important, and we know that these people work in really difficult conditions.

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

[Original]

For a number of years, nurses have been asking for respect, asking for higher wages, and looking for a contract to get negotiated. They've been waiting and waiting for a long time for a government that would show that it values their work and wants to retain them here in New Brunswick. Thankfully, they have that government today, a government that is looking to convert any casual worker who wants to make a permanent commitment to the system. Those people will be eligible for bonuses.

As to your example, for the casual folks who are choosing a more flexible schedule, choosing to be home with family, choosing to do something different, or choosing to work different jobs, we're talking with them about whether they are prepared to make a permanent part-time commitment to the system. We need to recognize that the working conditions that nurses are struggling with have to do with working in short-shift and unsafe conditions without people to come in on those challenging shifts that the casual workers aren't available for.

[Translation]

**Mr. Savoie** (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Thank you very much again, Madam Speaker.

[Original]

I will go to another one of the Premier's quotes, this time from the December 3 *Telegraph-Journal*:

*If (casual workers) feel like they are prepared within the next year to come on board in a permanent fashion, then we will have this bonus here for them,*

It sounds as though the Premier is trying to push casual nurses into full-time positions. There could be many compelling reasons why a nurse may need to remain as a casual worker, whether it be finances, family dynamics, or flexibility. These are all reasons why a nurse may choose to remain as a casual worker. Whatever the reasons are, these workers do the exact same job as every other full-time employee in the system. If this is about respecting workers, why does it sound as though the Premier is pressuring nurses into full-time positions in order to get this bonus? Why is their work not valued as much as that of full-time employees when they do the exact same work? That doesn't sound like respecting workers to me.

[Translation]

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

[Original]

I think that it's a sign of respect to casual nurses to offer that apology. We can always improve our communications. That's what we've been doing through this process. We budgeted for part-time work at the allocated hours, and then we listened to nurses who told us about how many more hours they're working over their classification. Because we listened, we want to recognize that time, and we've increased the budget to recognize that work.

We've listened to casual nurses who told us they want to work permanently and they want a full-time position. We're looking for ways that we can make that happen so that those folks who want to contribute that way can get access to this bonus.

We are not above recognizing that we can improve our communications and our programming. When we hear from the nurses who are working so hard to care for New Brunswickers, we're prepared to take the steps to make the program better. They know that, in the Holt government, they have a partner that will care for them. Thank you.

**Mr. Savoie** (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Well, words are wind, Madam Speaker. In this case, the Premier's saying that she's sorry.

She's apologizing and saying: I recognize the work that you do. But when it comes right down to it, the question was this: Are you going to do this this year—yes or no? No answer. I think that's quite telling, Madam Speaker.

I think that we need to clear the air on a couple of things. This promise is going to cost an extra \$9 million compared to the original costing, does not include all nurses, and could cost even more when you factor in the CUPE workers who have yet to sign on. At the start of this session, we established that the government members were wrong right out of the gate with the \$79-million costing for all their promises for this year. They've already blown that figure out of the water. Add to that a \$1-billion math mistake in double counting the HST, and now a \$9-million overrun on the costing of the retention bonus. Twice can be a coincidence, but three times is a trend. Is the Premier still confident in the \$37-million figure for the next half of this promise, or are we going to see an overage on that too?

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It sounds to me as though the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn't want us to fully recognize the hours that part-time nurses are putting in. It sounds as though he wishes that the \$9 million not be spent to recognize that work and that, instead, we keep them at the classifications they have in the system. If that's what he's suggesting, then I disagree. I think we need to recognize the hours that those nurses are putting in. He referred to \$37 million. I don't think he had a chance to finish his question, so I'll just reiterate that we have a plan to deliver a balanced budget. We're going to invest in the people who are caring for us. We're going to listen to nurses, respect their

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

feedback, and make sure that we retain every single one of them in this province, because we have work to do to get that contract signed. We have work to do to improve the conditions for health care workers in New Brunswick, and our government is committed to doing that work so that every New Brunswicker can get great care here.

**Mr. Savoie** (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. With all due respect, that answer from the Premier was laughable. I took her own words and quoted her word for word. She said all workers and that we need to respect workers, but it has become clear, through this line of questioning and everything we've seen in the media, that she is leaving workers behind because this wasn't well thought out. All I'm saying is that nobody on this side of the House has an issue with workers being recognized. What we have an issue with is a government that can't get its costing right, can't get its commitments right, and can't live up to the promises that it made, and now the members are trying to skate. All we're asking is for them to be clear with New Brunswickers and say this: We will get you this money this year, just as we promised. That is all this opposition is asking for. That is what people expect because that is what the government members promised. Thank you.

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I didn't hear a question in what the Leader of the Official Opposition said, but I'm going to repeat what I said previously. There are 10 000 nurses in New Brunswick who will receive a retention bonus. The bonus is to encourage them to continue working with us.

*[Original]*

If there are casual nurses who are prepared to commit to permanent work with the government, then that bonus is there for them as well. When we get a deal struck with CUPE, that bonus will be there for those workers, too. So we have more than 10 000 nurses in New Brunswick who are receiving this sign of respect and of the value we place on their work, something they haven't seen or felt from a government in a lot of years. This is going to help us ensure that every New Brunswicker gets access to great care. We've been getting wonderful feedback from the nurses who really appreciate that this payment is coming in right now, this calendar year, because of our team's ability to hit the ground running, move quickly, and deliver on the commitment that we made during the election to show that we value nurses by delivering those \$10 000 payments to more than 10 000 nurses in New Brunswick.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Hogan** (Woodstock-Hartland, PC): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.



# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

[Original]

All casual nurses who want to work full-time is what the Premier is saying, and I find that very interesting. There are a lot of casual nurses who can't get hired full-time because Horizon Health and Vitalité won't hire them full-time. Is the Premier going to direct Horizon Health and Vitalité to hire these nurses full-time? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much for the question. That's exactly the conversation we're having with Horizon, Vitalité, the New Brunswick Nurses' Union, and the NBU. We have so many people working full-time hours on a casual basis and expressing a desire to become full-time, and we are looking at whether we can create those full-time positions to bring those folks on. The hours are there and are being worked.

There are people who want to contribute that way, and, because we have been paying them to do so—for years and years in some cases—it may be time to convert those positions. We're talking with the health authorities to see whether we can do so.

[Translation]

**Mr. Hogan** (Woodstock-Hartland, PC): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to know what value the Premier is putting on each nursing category in our province's system.

[Original]

I'd also like to know what she's going to do about Horizon Health and Vitalité. The government can't tell them what to do. They're independent bodies. They act as Crown corporations, and they decide what they're going to do. The perfect example of this, Madam Speaker, is the \$172-million dollar contract that Vitalité signed for travel nurses. The government was unable to do anything about it. What's the Premier going to do to direct Horizon Health and Vitalité to engage these casual nurses? Thank you.

[Translation]

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I find it interesting that the member opposite wants to talk about nurses employed by the agency that his government hired without reading the contract that was signed. The ministers and deputy ministers were all in favour of this contract, but not in favour of improving working conditions for nurses, as the CEOs of the Vitalité Health Network and the Horizon Health Network proposed.

Our government has a good collaborative relationship with the health network leaders. We work together. The networks need help when it comes to increasing their official budgets

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

to enable them to create permanent positions for nurses who don't have them right now. We have good conversations, maintain good relations, and work together, along with nurses and unions, to improve the health care system. That's something the previous government was unable to do.

**Mr. Hogan** (Woodstock-Hartland, PC): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to find out from the Premier what she will do or intends to do to take charge of the health care system authorities. The Vitalité Health Network and the Horizon Health Network are self-governing. We have no choice and no control over what these networks do. So, will the Premier change anything? What does she intend to do to ensure that these \$10 000 bonuses are paid to every nurse in our province before the end of the year, as she promised?

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think that's where the differences between the two teams are very clear. The member opposite thinks that we need to control the health network leaders. That's no way to govern a province, and that's not what New Brunswickers want.

New Brunswickers don't want a government that tries to control everything. They want a government that listens. They want a government that listens to nurses and people on the ground, in the system. These people are explaining why nurses need to be paid differently for their part-time work and why new positions need to be created to show them our gratitude and thank them for all their hours of work.

Our government doesn't insist on controlling the system. We work in a respectful, empathetic, and cooperative way with the experts in the system. We can reassure every nurse in the system that they will receive this \$10 000 retention bonus before the end of the year.

*[Original]*

**Mr. Ames** (Carleton-York, PC): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Now Premier Holt says that some nurses were misinformed because of a communication issue on the part of the government. However, casual nurses in my riding are deeply disappointed that the bonuses that were promised won't be delivered. Casual nurses in my riding do not think it was a communication issue on the part of the government as it was a promise made by Premier Holt. Can Premier Holt offer an apology to those casual nurses who feel abandoned? Will she take full responsibility for her inaction? What is Premier Holt going to do to address this issue? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, and I have done so already. I have apologized to the casual nurses who felt that expectation and understood that they were

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

going to be getting a bonus and now feel bad that they are not going to get one. There are two ways that we are trying to address this. One is by having the bonus available for anyone who wants to move to a permanent position that is available. We're also looking at all the people who have been working full-time hours in a casual status for many years.

We're working with the health networks, Vitalité and Horizon, to create those positions so we can move those casuals into those positions and provide them with the bonus.

We are listening, and we are working on communicating as clearly as possible. We will always be ready to accept when we haven't been as clear as we have needed to be, to apologize for the impact that it has had, and to work to do better.

[*Translation*]

### ENERGY

**Mr. Coon** (Fredericton Lincoln, Leader, G): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[*Original*]

On Sunday, NB Power took a step toward expanding the contribution of renewable energy to our electricity supply with an announcement of 670 MW of new wind power, an important step forward in making renewable energy the dominant source of electricity in this province. The ball is now in the government's court to take the next step on its commitment to establish a solar retrofit program and ensure that on-site generation of solar electricity becomes the norm in New Brunswick for households, apartments, businesses, and institutions.

Solar is the cheapest and cleanest form of energy today. The new solar panels that just plug into an electrical outlet can play a big role in cutting energy poverty for those living in apartments or homes. Will the Minister responsible for Energy ensure that his government's solar retrofit program is launched by the coming spring?

**Hon. Mr. Legacy** (Bathurst, Deputy Premier; Minister of Finance and Treasury Board; Minister responsible for Energy; Minister responsible for the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, L): Thank you, Madam Speaker, to the member opposite for the question. Yes, it was a great announcement on Sunday. There was the announcement of the wind projects with First Nations, which is a great tripartite federal-provincial-First Nations collaboration. There was also an announcement on furthering some nuclear. There was an announcement on continuing to convert Belledune to biomass. There were many varied parts of that proposal.

I'm happy to hear the member continuing to push for other solutions because solar is part of the mix. We know that NB Power is looking at all opportunities to make our grid



# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

stronger and greener. We will continue to look at any opportunities that we can to make that happen.

**Mr. Coon** (Fredericton Lincoln, Leader, G): Well, as I said, Madam Speaker, solar energy is the cheapest form of energy today. Nuclear energy is the most expensive form of energy today. It now makes more sense for homeowners and business owners to generate solar power than to buy electricity from NB Power. This government's solar retrofit program, which it has promised, should be designed to unlock the reliability and cost savings of on-site solar generation and energy storage for tens of thousands of households and businesses in this province.

New plug-in solar technology means that the sun can be used to cut power bills for those who are living on low incomes, at little cost. You can hang plug-in solar panels from your apartment's balcony to power your fridge and much of your hot water and the costs will never go up. Will the Minister responsible for Energy ensure that New Brunswickers struggling to make ends meet will have this government's support to acquire plug-in solar panels to cut their power bills?

**Hon. Mr. Legacy** (Bathurst, Deputy Premier; Minister of Finance and Treasury Board; Minister responsible for Energy; Minister responsible for the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, L): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you again to the member opposite for bringing up the proposal. Again, we are looking at all solutions, including energy retrofits with heat pumps and mini-splits. We have continued pushing this, and we still have a lot of work to do. Everything's on the table. I won't commit to the spring until I can talk to NB Power about this. We all know that the Crown corporation is responsible for this. We can go through policy and possibly look at trying to encourage NB Power and find ways to make this easier, but this is not the kind of commitment that we make on the floor of this House during a question period. Thank you.

## NURSES

**Ms. Scott-Wallace** (Sussex-Three Rivers, PC): Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. Nurses in my riding don't all have the opportunity to take full-time positions. This is another hit on rural regions. In rural areas such as Sussex, casual is the only offer being made. These nurses are not fill-ins. They work full-time hours and beyond in their communities, but they are being penalized by being left out of this \$10 000 payout through no fault of their own. What do I tell my constituents who go to work as nurses every day and are being told by this government that they are not valued enough? We're hearing now that there are full-time positions available. I'm hoping that the Premier can tell us where these positions are and whether any of these positions are available in rural regions.

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Thank you for the question and for highlighting the fact that we need to make sure we have functioning hospitals that are open



# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

and not closed in all regions of our province, that are fully staffed and supported so that their ERs are operating full hours, and that have the complement of staff and health care providers that is required to serve their populations.

I don't have the list of every permanent position that's currently open and vacant in New Brunswick right now, but we can get that for you. Where there are vacant permanent positions, we're happy to move casuals into those positions so that they can become eligible for the bonus. In response to the point the member opposite made, we're also doing the work to recognize that there are a lot of casual workers who work full-time hours and have been doing so for a number of years. This suggests that we should be creating the permanent full-time positions to recognize the work that's being done on a permanent, full-time basis. That work is happening right now. As soon as we're able to create those new positions, the casual workers will be eligible for the bonus when they transition into those positions.

**Ms. Scott-Wallace** (Sussex-Three Rivers, PC): Thank you. I'm so glad the Premier mentioned communities, such as Sussex, that don't have ER services offered 24-7 anymore. We're told over and over again that there is inadequate staffing and that, therefore, we cannot be open 24-7 in Sussex. I have to ask. There's a doctor shortage, but certainly there's also a nursing shortage. Certainly, that's been the case for a long time. I'm asking: How can we seriously tell nurses in Sussex that there's no full-time work for them and that there's no \$10 000 for them when we cannot even manage to have our ER open 24-7 because of a shortage of workers?

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the question. The member is highlighting an important point about the challenges we've had in a hospital that has been threatened with closure, had its ER cut way back, and had band-aid programs put in place to try to figure out how to staff that ER. Our government is working hard to rebuild trust in a community that has lost a lot of faith in the ability of its government to manage its emergency health systems.

We're looking at how many hours are being worked, we're looking at creating permanent positions, and we're showing the respect for and valuing of nurses that is going to help us attract people to the position. What works as a retention bonus also works as a recruitment bonus. The sign of respect and value that our government is showing to our nurses is going to help us attract people to communities that need full-time staff for their ERs. We're also overhauling the compensation system for doctors and nurse practitioners in New Brunswick to make sure that this is an attractive place to provide care for New Brunswickers. When we show that we care for the people caring for us, you'll see improved results in the health care system in New Brunswick.

**Ms. Scott-Wallace** (Sussex-Three Rivers, PC): Thank you so much. No doubt, the Premier will attract a lot of casual workers to the rural areas. Without a promise of more, our rural



# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

areas are not always attractive, I guess, to men and women who are working in this sector. I ask the Premier... When we look at 24-7 care in Sussex, for example, we don't have enough workers to make 24-hour care happen. I'm asking this: Is she going to continue with the existing plan to reopen the emergency room in Sussex 24-7 come spring?

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to touch on something. I really disagree with the member opposite when she says rural areas aren't attractive to people in the health care sector. I think that completely misrepresents New Brunswickers' experiences with rural areas. We have exceptionally beautiful and desirable rural areas to live in. We have a number of health care professionals who absolutely want to be working and delivering care in those rural areas, which is why we've seen great advancements in collaborative care happening in places such as Sussex. Advances are being implemented by those very health care professionals who didn't have a government or a health network that was prepared to be flexible and respond to what they were proposing for delivering care to their neighbours. Now, they have a government that's prepared to recognize their suggestions and innovations, the way those nurse practitioners and family doctors want to work, and the way they want to blend their time in the ER and their time delivering primary care. Because they have a collaborative government that is listening and prepared to be flexible, we're going to deliver better hours in the ER in Sussex as quickly as possible. Under an old model, the commitment was for the spring. We're going to improve upon that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Savoie** (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

[*Original*]

Going back to nursing, we know over 1 200 people are being left behind by this government's poor decision-making, Madam Speaker. When I was at home over the weekend, one of my constituents reached out to me by text to tell me she works at Bobby's Hospice. She's an LPN. She's a member of the professional LPN association, the ANBLPN. She works every bit as hard as any other nurse, does not get paid the same sort of wage, and is not eligible for this \$10 000 bonus. We're heading into the Christmas season.

I used the Premier's own comments to illustrate the fact that she made these commitments to New Brunswickers, and my constituent is one of them. What does she have to say to people like my constituent who are being left behind and could use that \$10 000 bonus but are going to be left out because of poor communication or lack of understanding? When is she going to come through for these people?



# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Ms. Holt** (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

[*Original*]

I really appreciate the member opposite calling out Bobby's Hospice in particular, but actually, all hospice organizations across New Brunswick are doing incredible work to support people at some of their most vulnerable times and to provide those environments for their families to experience some of their last days. We have incredible people—nurses, LPNs, and others—working in the hospice system and the special care home system. They're not working as Vitalité or Horizon employees, but they are delivering nursing services to New Brunswickers. Right now, our team is looking at those classifications and those organizations that are outside of our public system to see what we can do to recognize the incredibly important work folks are doing in hospices in New Brunswick.

[*Translation*]

**Madam Speaker** (Hon. Ms. Landry): The time for question period has now expired.

