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Coalition of Nova Scotia health care unions requests meeting with premier

(Halifax) – A coalition of health care unions representing 32,000 health care workers in Nova Scotia has requested a meeting with Premier Rodney MacDonald.

In a letter sent to the premier today by Rick Clarke, president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, the unions are following up on a meeting they held this week with senior staff in the Department of Health regarding the Corpus Sanchez Report.

Says Clarke, “The meeting with senior staff revolved around process and participation, but we were also asked what it would take for the health care unions to participate in ‘meaningful consultations’ on an integrated Health Human Resources plan.

“The representatives of the health care unions clearly stated that we are not opposed to change in the health care system, but want to be legitimate partners in that change. The fact that unions were not consulted at all as part of the Corpus-Sanchez report did not exactly get us off on the right foot in this regard,” says Clarke.

“One point that became very clear during these discussions was that there are issues and questions that impact on the ability of the health care unions to, in good conscience, participate in this process in an open and meaningful way. These questions could not be answered by those present, so we are hoping they can be fully addressed by the premier.

“We would therefore request the opportunity to meet with you and the Minister of Health, to continue this discussion on how or if the health care unions are to be engaged in this process as legitimate partners,” the letter states.

The coalition consists of seven unions, including the NSGEU (Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union), CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees), NSNU (Nova Scotia Nurses Union), CAW (Canadian Auto Workers Union), IUOE (International Union of Operating Engineers), SEIU (Service Employees International Union) and CUPW (Canadian Union of Postal Workers).

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