

# Don't make **health shortages** worse

## **80% of Nova Scotians believe strike ban won't fix pressing health care problems: poll**

(Halifax) - A new, province-wide poll shows more than 80 per cent of Nova Scotians believe the Premier's planned legislation to take the right to strike away from healthcare workers will make no difference or will make health care problems even worse.

A poll of 1,200 Nova Scotians conducted by Viewpoints research in August, shows that the vast majority believe Premier Rodney MacDonald's legislation will do nothing to address the real priorities in health care, such as long wait times and problems with recruitment and retention.

Only 14 per cent think the legislation will make healthcare better. In contrast 39 per cent say it will make things worse and 42 per cent said it would make no difference.

"These results are telling," says Federation of Labour President Rick Clarke, who released the poll results today. Mr. Clarke and the coalition of seven unions whose members would be affected by the Premier's legislation also released polling data showing that most Nova Scotians consider taking away the right to strike to be a low priority in healthcare.

More than 90 per cent cited shortages of doctors, nurses and healthcare workers as a high priority. Approximately 89 per cent cited wait times for surgeries or diagnostic tests. By contrast, only 35 per cent considered ending the right to strike a high priority, while 38 per cent considered it a low priority.

"This data shows that the Premier is misguided if he thinks his legislation will address the real problems in healthcare," Clark said. "Nova Scotians see the issue as a low priority and they know that by focusing on it, the Premier is ignoring the real problems in healthcare like shortages and wait times."

The Viewpoints poll, which is accurate within 2.8 percentage points 95 times out of 100, also showed that even those who support the legislation don't think it will improve healthcare. More than 71 per cent of people who support the legislation admit that it will either make things worse or will make no difference to the quality of healthcare.

The most significant determinant of whether someone supports or opposes the legislation is their political affiliation. Conservative supporters are the strongest supporters of the legislation. But even 75 per cent of them say the legislation will make healthcare worse (24 per cent) or no better (51 per cent).

"What this clearly tells us is that Conservative supporters are the only strong supporters of the legislation, but that support is a result of political loyalty, not because Conservatives think the legislation will make things better in healthcare," says Clarke.

### **For information:**

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