



COUNTY *of* ANNAPOLIS  
NATURALLY ROOTED

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October 22, 2023

Honourable Michelle Thompson  
Minister of Health and Wellness  
Province of Nova Scotia  
P.O. Box 488  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 2R8  
[health.minister@novascotia.ca](mailto:health.minister@novascotia.ca)

### **Re: Parking Fees at Hospitals**

Dear Honourable Minister Thompson:

Health care is on the forefront of minds of every Nova Scotian everyday. It takes up time on every news broadcast and factors greatly in every on-line and print media publication each week. Social media is aghast with posts about health care and residents' struggles to access timely health care.

Your government has gone to great lengths to improve health care in this province over the past two years and has invested heavily in health care professionals and facilities. However, one critical aspect of your investments has been missing and needs your immediate support.

There are 41 hospital facilities across Nova Scotia from east to west and north to south. Despite a reasonable and fair distribution of facilities and properties, what is not fair is that some health care facilities charge residents for parking while others do not. Our research shows that the reason for such was established decades ago by local district health authorities which no longer exist. The money generated back then was re-invested into local hospitals.

Today, we understand that the revenues go into general government revenues and the province then decides if it wishes to use the money for health care or some other provincial service. In the past, the money has been used to provide training and send health care workers away to conferences. Even those facilities that did not charge parking fees were, and may still be, receiving this additional funding despite not contributing to the fund.

Parking fees now range from free in nearly half of the health care facilities to between \$2 and \$4 in all other facilities without any rationale reason as to why. The fees are even higher in downtown Halifax.

As you are well aware, many of our hospital and health care facilities are used proportionately more by low-income residents. This financial burden is increased when individuals must make multiple trips for tests, blood work, or to visit sick family members. We have been provided with no reason why some facilities are charging \$3-\$4, while many others are free.

While the public may expect that some community hospitals are charging this fee to be able to buy more equipment or provide additional services, we understand that the Province is actually receiving in excess of \$10 million annually in only select parts of the province to redistribute to all areas of the province or not at all on health care.

Parking fees at public hospitals are unfair and should not be used as a barrier for low-income people to access vital and needed health care services.

A review of parking fees at Nova Scotia 41 hospitals has revealed the following parking fees:

<b>18 Hospitals</b>	<b>FREE</b>	<b>44%</b>
2 Hospitals	\$1/hr.	5%
5 Hospitals	\$2	12%
10 Hospitals	\$3	24%
6 Hospitals	\$4	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>

Surprisingly, the Annapolis Valley, South Shore, and South West Shore all pay the most, \$3-\$4 per visit with only one free hospital facility. This despite, Western Nova Scotia having some of the lowest average incomes per household and highest poverty rates. Clearly, charging residents in the Western part of Nova Scotia the highest fees for parking while nearly 50% of all others receive free parking is unfair.

Our focus needs to be on providing world class health care for all residents, including attracting more front-line health care workers, and less on the administrative burdens of charging, collecting, and accounting for community loonies and toonies in some communities and not others. Investing in staff training and needed medical equipment must be funded by all taxpayers through normal Harmonized Sales Tax and not parking fees at "some" hospitals.

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We encourage you and your government to seriously consider removing all parking fees from publicly funded hospitals immediately to show your true compassion for hundreds of thousands of low-income Nova Scotians who shouldn't have to decide if they can seek medical treatment or required blood work today for fear of not being able to pay for parking. We need to remove this preventable barrier today. We are sure there are more appropriate ways to raise additional health care revenue if that is your desire.

We know it is not your intention to unfairly penalize certain residents of Nova Scotia and re-distribute this money to those who do not need the funding. We look forward to your positive and timely response to our request.

If you would like any clarification of our concerns, we would be pleased to have those discussions at your convenience. I can be reached by phone at (902) 638-3416 or email at [amorrison@annapoliscounty.ca](mailto:amorrison@annapoliscounty.ca).

Yours sincerely,



Alex Morrison  
Warden

- c. Council
  - Honourable Jill Balser, Digby-Annapolis MLA
  - Carmen Kerr, Annapolis MLA
  - Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton, President, NSFM
  - John McKinnon, President, AMANS

## SCHEDULE "A"

### Health Care Facility

### Parking Fee

#### **Annapolis and Kings Counties**

<b>Annapolis Community Health Centre</b> , Annapolis Royal	\$3
<b>Eastern Kings Memorial Community Health Centre</b> , Wolfville	\$3
<b>Soldiers Memorial Hospital</b> , Middleton	\$3
<b>Valley Regional Hospital</b> , Kentville	\$3
<b>Western Kings Memorial Health Centre</b> , Berwick	Free

#### **Cape Breton County, Northern and Central Inverness County and Victoria County**

<b>Buchanan Memorial Community Health Centre</b> , Neil's Harbour	Free
<b>Cape Breton Regional Hospital</b> , Sydney	\$3
<b>Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital</b> , Inverness	Free
<b>New Waterford Consolidated Hospital</b> , New Waterford	\$3
<b>Northside General Hospital</b> , North Sydney	\$3
<b>Sacred Heart Community Health Centre</b> , Cheticamp	Free
<b>Victoria County Memorial Hospital</b> , Baddeck	Free

#### **Halifax Regional Municipality and Hants County**

<b>Cobequid Community Health Centre</b> , Lower Sackville	\$1/hr.
<b>Dartmouth General Hospital</b> , Dartmouth	\$2/hr.
<b>Eastern Shore Memorial Hospital</b> , Sheet Harbour	Free
<b>Hants Community Hospital</b> , Windsor	Free
<b>Musquodoboit Valley Memorial Hospital</b> , Middle Musquodoboit	Free
<b>QEII Health Sciences Centre</b> , Halifax	\$3/hr.
<b>The Nova Scotia Hospital</b> , Dartmouth	\$1/hr.
<b>Twin Oaks Memorial Hospital</b> , Musquodoboit Harbour	Free
<b>IWK Health Centre</b> , Halifax	\$3/hr.

#### **Colchester County and Municipality of East Hants**

<b>Colchester East Hants Health Centre</b> , Truro	\$2/hr.
<b>Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital</b> , Tatamagouche	Free

#### **Cumberland County**

<b>All Saints Springhill Hospital</b> , Springhill	Free
<b>Bayview Memorial Health Centre</b> , Advocate Harbour	Free
<b>Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre</b> , Amherst	\$3
<b>North Cumberland Memorial Hospital</b> , Pugwash	Free
<b>South Cumberland Community Care Centre</b> , Parrsboro	Free

**Guysborough, Antigonish and Richmond Counties and the southern portion of Inverness County**

<b>Eastern Memorial Hospital, Canso</b>	Free
<b>Guysborough Memorial Hospital, Guysborough</b>	Free
<b>St. Martha's Regional Hospital, Antigonish</b>	\$2
<b>St. Mary's Memorial Hospital, Sherbrooke</b>	Free
<b>Strait Richmond Hospital, Evanston</b>	\$2

**Pictou County**

<b>Aberdeen Hospital, New Glasgow</b>	\$2
<b>Sutherland Harris Memorial Hospital, Pictou</b>	Free

**Lunenburg and Queens Counties**

<b>Fishermen's Memorial Hospital, Lunenburg</b>	\$4
<b>Queens General Hospital, Liverpool</b>	\$4
<b>South Shore Regional Hospital, Bridgewater</b>	\$4

**Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties**

<b>Digby General Hospital, Digby</b>	\$4
<b>Roseway Hospital, Shelburne</b>	\$4
<b>Yarmouth Regional Hospital, Yarmouth</b>	\$4

