**ACER-CART Report for October 5, 2017**

**Telephone Conference Call**

I sent e-mails to all six of my affiliates and received written responses from Joyce McCardle (PEIRTA), Jan Langelier (QPARSE) and Jacques Albert (SERFNB). The e-mail sent to Margaret Urquhart (NBSRT) was returned indicating that she would be unavailable from September 20 to October 10. I followed up with phone messages to Doreen Noseworthy (RTANL) and John Green (QART).

The number one issue in Nova Scotia is the shortage of medical doctors and specialists in certain regions. The media estimates that 90,000 Nova Scotians do not have a family doctor. This was also an issue in the May 2017 election and why Premier Stephen McNeil was returned for a second term, but with a reduced majority.

The McNeil government tabled a budget in April, but called the election before it was debated in the Legislature. The same budget was presented on September 26 but with four additions:

1. $2.4 million to support recruitment and retention of doctors
2. $2.7 million more for a total of $6.4 million in 2017-2018 to hire more specialists to perform more orthopaedic surgeries
3. $2 million for youth mental health including $1.8 million to expand youth mental health services and outreach across the province as part of a four year $12.9 million commitment
4. $846,000 to establish take-home therapies cancer program

The situation is bad enough with the shortages, but we are now facing another crisis. The doctors are in revolt over Finance Minister’s Bill Morneau’s tax proposals! Doctors in Nova Scotia were given the right to incorporate in 1995 as a way of retaining the recruiting physicians. At the present time 75% of the physicians in the province are incorporated. Doctors Nova Scotia recently conducted an e-mail survey of its 3,515 physicians and 1,185 responded. Here is what the responses indicated:

1. 451 physicians would consider moving from Nova Scotia
2. 375 physicians would consider reducing the number of hours they work
3. 359 physicians would consider offering different services

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To compound the problem a recent report by the Canadian Institute for Health Information indicates that Nova Scotia has the lowest average gross payment per physician in the country at $262,000 in 2016 compared to the national average of $339,000 in the same year.

Joyce McCardle indicated that doctor shortages and the possible implications of Bill C-27 are the major issues for her organization at this time. She also advises that a new Executive for a two year term will be appointed at the November 2, 2017 AGM in Charlottetown.

Jan Langelier advises that there continues to be on-going discussions about improving the cost of living formula in their pension plan. She also stated that the Groupe de Travail des Associations de Retraites, on which Ed Zegray has served as the QPARSE representative, has disbanded. Ed has agreed to continue serving if a new committee is established.

Jacques Albert indicated that there are no major issues facing his organization at this time. He stated that over 200 delegates attended their recent AGM and everyone agreed it was a very productive meeting.

Bill Berryman

Eastern Rep, ACER-CART