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May 17, 2017

**Dr. Dorothy Barnard**

Chair, Nova Scotia Association of Community Health Centres  
90 School Road  
L'Ardoise, Nova Scotia B0E 1S0  
[board@nsachc.org](mailto:board@nsachc.org)

Dear Dr. Barnard,

Thank you for your letter of April 4, 2017. Your letter and accompanying position paper provide a clear and succinct description of both the exceptional value offered by Community Health Centres and the ongoing operational problems and systemic inequities they face.

The New Democratic Party of Nova Scotia shares NSACHC's belief that Community Health Centres are an excellent model of primary health care delivery. As stated in the position paper, CHCs can meet the "complex needs of individuals, families, and communities that face greater-than-average barriers to health". CHCs have a unique capacity to respond effectively because they bring an awareness of the community's specific features and challenges, which may include poverty, lack of transportation, food insecurity, lack of services, and/or other issues.

The New Democratic Party of Nova Scotia shares NSACHC's perspective that the *status quo* for primary care delivery in Nova Scotia lacks vision and is inadequate. The social determinants of health are significant barriers to the health and well-being of Nova Scotia citizens and must be addressed through systemic strategies.

The principles underlying community health centres are very much in keeping with our Party's fundamental values. We strongly believe in developing and supporting health care initiatives that are community-centred, collaborative, inter-disciplinary, and based on a commitment to equity and social justice. These are principles that we understand and embrace.

The recommendations put forward by the NSACHC show a clear concern for primary health care delivery in Nova Scotia. The NDP is committed to consulting with communities and health care providers about how to best deliver primary health care across the province.

The NDP has a proven record of working with communities in order to improve primary health care delivery. We believe that collaboration – both between communities and government, as well as with multidisciplinary professionals – is a key component to an effective health care system. We opened Canada's first Collaborative Emergency Centre in 2011, which was quickly followed with seven additional CECs. During the current election campaign, we have made a

public commitment to spend \$120 million over four years to build new primary care clinics and to hire more doctors, nurses and nurse-practitioners.

If the New Democratic Party forms the next government of Nova Scotia, we will develop a partnership, which will draw on the expertise of the Nova Scotia Association of Community Health Centres and other relevant groups, to develop an integrated policy framework for Nova Scotia's 25 existing CHCs, in order to establish coordinated transitional plans, annual operational funding agreements, and facilitating strategies designed to help create additional community-based health centres across the province.

We look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead.

All the best,

**New Democratic Party of Nova Scotia**