

# Newfoundland and Labrador budget misses the real crisis: immediate supports needed for frontline workers <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Newfoundland and Labrador Division says the provincial budget, presented today by Minister of Finance Siobhan Coady, centralizes provincial services like Health Care and Education in St. John's to the detriment of rural Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

"This is a centralizing budget that proposes nothing concrete for the frontline workers who have carried our province through this pandemic," says CUPE NL President Sherry Hillier. "Instead, this government will add to the existing challenges we are facing with a totally unnecessary restructuring of the whole health care system that won't result in one extra minute of patient care."

"Why throw the entire system into even deeper crisis, when this government could have addressed the real issue – real pay increases that are needed to retain the trained and experienced workers we still have."

Coady announced money for the creation of new post-secondary spaces for nurses, personal care assistants and early-childhood education workers.

"The new spaces for LPNs, PCAs and ECEs won't solve the staffing problem if graduates are poured into a system that is a leaky bucket with a big hole at the bottom," says Hillier. "Real pay increases are needed to keep workers in health care, education, housing, transition and group homes from leaving their professions in droves."

The threatened economic crisis of Moya Greene and the PERT Report did not materialize in the Budget figures, as the 2021 deficit came in \$426 million lower than expected. In response to the deficit being less than half of what was predicted Hillier says, "The province's economic situation is nowhere near as bad as the government has made it out to be. There is no need for extreme measures like privatization of the Liquor Corporation or the proposed balanced budget legislation."

The budget also provided for \$400,000 in appropriations for a study of Early Childhood Educator pay.

"Instead of \$400,000 for a consultant to study what to pay ECEs, this government needs to put that money into child care workers' pockets," stated Hillier. "Child Care Now and other child care advocates have done the studies many times over. CUPE is ready to meet with government to propose a wage grid starting at a base rate of \$25 per hour."

**Region:** Newfoundland <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** wages and working conditions <sup>[4]</sup>

care economy <sup>[5]</sup>

child care workforce <sup>[6]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 13 Apr 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/04/newfoundland-and-labrador-budget-misses-real-crisis-immediate>

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