



Annual General Meeting Remarks – Steve Parker, Board Chair **September 13, 2016**

This has been a very successful first year, especially considering it began with a nine-way merger, new Management and Board, and failures in equipment, plus flooding in our largest facilities.

In the midst of this, many good things happened.

On behalf of the Board, our heartfelt thanks to everyone involved. Our health system and Nova Scotians certainly benefit from what you do. Thank you so much.

Janet has spoken about the many benefits of a province-wide focus on health.

Vicki has talked about the \$70 million in first-year efficiencies that resulted from this.

But the biggest achievement would be, if we could be successful together, in building a better health system and greater population health.

What if we could do better?

What if, working all of us together, we would take approaches based on people's needs?

By together, I don't mean just Nova Scotia Health Authority, I mean all of us, including physicians, other health professionals, our partners in research and education, communities and government. But not just government.

And, not just in health care – What if Nova Scotians could be healthier in the first place? Wouldn't that be worth the effort?

So, let's do it together. We can, you know.

Together, NSHA and all of us should work on getting better, day-by-day. Better service, better outcomes, better access, better information.

We are convinced that if we concentrate on doing things better, efficiencies will follow. This is a big learning from our year-one experience.

We believe there are many areas where we can focus on quality, and get cost savings as a by-product.

We know there are places where by making an initial investment, we can improve the quality of service and get the financial investment back many times over.



A province-wide Health Authority with a mandate to operate a complex health system cannot be well run on a single-year budgeting and planning basis.

NSHA is moving to a multi-year business plan for both capital and operating expenses.

This is a big shift from the past, but the benefits of being able to plan longer term, and allocate priorities on return on investment, are foundational for the changes we will make.

The health system is starved for modern technology. Health Professionals and citizens need more timely and accurate information to make good health choices.

Things are starting to move on the technology front but we all know there is a long way to go.

As this happens, we need to work more effectively with the information we already have.

Waiting for the better system of the future is not a way to get better. Getting better is something we all need to do, day by day.

And, we must continue to embrace knowledge from our academic research partners.

The people of NSHA are rightly celebrated for their commitment, professionalism and the care they provide.

Working with our union partners and others, we need to create an enhanced environment for them and for the people we serve.

While governance of our Health Authority structure has been consolidated, our labour structure is fragmented with 50 collective agreements.

We need a structure that allows employees to deliver quality health services to meet the needs of the entire province, not restricted by the former district geographic boundaries.

Employees will benefit from more consistent employment terms and conditions, and increased opportunities for movement and career progression.

And, all Nova Scotians will benefit from having a more agile system. More appropriate for their needs today and tomorrow.

We all have a job to do – helping Nova Scotians be healthier and caring for them when they are sick.

The best way to do that is by working together, as one province, one system.



NSHA needs to listen better . . . as a process and as a culture. The more we listen, the more we learn. Perhaps we all need to listen more.

Collectively with you, we need the courage to adjust our thinking and spending to what works best for people today.

Over the next two years and beyond, we will be engaging with you to reconsider, re-imagine and reorganize key aspects of health care and wellness. “Healthier together” will be our theme.

What and how, can we do things better?

Here is a fact: Nova Scotians want a better health system.

Nova Scotia Health Authority wants a better health system. So do you.

Let’s view this as the opportunity to get better each day. Those opportunities are all around us.

Each of us can do what we can do. Together though, we can do almost anything.

A province-wide Health Authority, supported and strengthened by our excellent partners at the IWK, provides a platform to facilitate a better system.

A platform, however, is only that . . . it is people with determination and will who create change.

Thank you.