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RESPONSE TO 2022 PROVINCIAL BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT

The Government of Prince Edward Island released its \$2.7 billion-dollar operating budget on Thursday and the PEI Nurses Union is disappointed the province didn't consult them about member needs for the 2022-2023 budget.

The announcement included just over four-million dollars invested in recruitment of healthcare staff, as well as stabilizing the healthcare system by designating several nurses to fill urgent needs and short-term vacancies, but there was no focus on retention for the nurses who are currently on the front lines.

"Our focus is really on retention, and it didn't seem to hit the mark there. They still seem to be focused on recruitment and while that's important, we're losing nurses all the time and that really needs to be where our government should be focusing." – Stephanie Gallant, PEINU Executive Director

Last week's provincial budget plan also included a centrally managed float pool of approximately 25 RNs based out of four zones. The government says the nurses will be assigned based on the most urgent needs and will fill short term vacancies. This announcement came to a surprise to PEINU as we lacked any consultation in the process of this plan. PEINU firmly believes any hires should be done through Health PEI, not the provincial department.

"It is worth exploring, for sure. I think it was pre-emptive to put it into the budget and indicate to the public that there were going to be 25 new RN's when they haven't even been able to fill the vacancies that we have." - Stephanie Gallant, PEINU Executive Director

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