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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Nouvelle-Écosse | 57e  | 1re  | Discours sur la santé | 14 Juin 1999 | James Smith | Minister of Health |  |

Mr. Speaker, on June 1st, as part of the provincial budget presentation, we tabled a document titled the Health Investment Fund. In the almost two weeks since the investment plan was introduced, it has the overwhelming considerable support of health care professionals and organizations across Nova Scotia.

One of the key features of this investment strategy is the involvement of health care providers in the implementation process. Last week, I announced the formation of an action group on nursing. Made up of representatives from our hospitals, nursing unions and long-term care, this action team will work with government on plans to add 400 full-time nurses to the health care sector.

Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to announce the appointment of a second action team. This group of Nova Scotian health care professionals will help implement our proposed $75 million investment in a health information system. The establishment of a fully-integrated information system was identified by our health care partners as being critical to an improved delivery of health care across Nova Scotia.

With this investment, Nova Scotia will be leading the way relative to the rest of Canada. The building of an integrated information system will play a vital role in ensuring that health care in the province is being delivered by the right health care provider, at the right time and in the right place. Information will be available to care providers and Nova Scotians alike. The more information we have, the more informed decisions we can make about individual health care needs, and how the system is managed.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the health information action team represent a cross-section of care providers. The team will be co-chaired by Bob Smith, CEO of the QE II, and John Malcolm, CEO of the Cape Breton Regional Health Care Complex. I am also delighted that the Chair of the 1994 Blueprint Committee, Dr. David MacLean, of Dalhousie University Medical School has agreed to be a team member. Nursing representation will be provided by Barbara Oke-Kennedy, site manager for the Dartmouth General Hospital. There will also be representation from the Department of Health, as well as a second physician representative.

Mr. Speaker, if I could, Dr. David MacLean and Ms. Barbara Oke-Kennedy are in your gallery and I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of House, if it would be appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, at each stage of the process and before making recommendations to government, this action team will consult with and receive input from other health care professionals. The team's terms of reference include: (1) the implementation, within a very short period of time, the updating of the department's 1995 Health Information Systems Strategy; (2) by September of this year, provide recommendations and an implementation plan for an integrated, province-wide patient information system; (3) by the end of the year, team members will be asked to provide an implementation plan for the expansion of the information network across the entire health care system.

Mr. Speaker, the establishment of this action team is just part of our commitment to moving forward on making strategic investments in the future of health care in this province. With the cooperation and assistance of health care providers, I am confident that we will be able to make tremendous strides in all aspects of health care delivery. Thank you.