

Jila's story

On professional employment for immigrants in Nova Scotia

My husband and I and our two children moved here from Iran three years ago. I didn't have any English when I came here, but I had education. I am a professional. My husband is an electrical engineer and I am a physician. When we were applying to immigrate to Canada, we got a very high score because we are professionals. "Congratulations. Welcome to Canada."

But when we came here, what happened? My husband went to work as a technician, and I have to go through a process that will take at least three years to practice as a physician. I'm frustrated because what is happening to professional immigrants is not fair. We are a part of this society and we want to help people and we can, but we're not allowed.

I am on a physician committee through MISA and we have 100 physicians from other countries who can't work here. I know a physician from Russia who is working for \$8 an hour. Who is this benefiting?

You need people to work in health care. People work beyond their ability and they are tired. How can we use immigrants' abilities?

On the health care experience

I was less than one year in Halifax and was in level six English. My teacher told me that another Kurdish student who was only level three was in the Emergency Department. My teacher asked me if I could go sit with her and translate. We sat for four hours, waiting. I went to a nurse and asked how long it would be. She said, "This is not your business." I told her my friend was having pain and she needed help. She said, "I told you this is none of your business." I told her I was a physician. She looked at me He jab (scarf) and my different appearance and said, "*You* are a physician?"

Later, when I told my Canadian friends, they said I should write a letter and complain. I did. But no one called me.

The first time I went for blood tests a man took my blood and he took it in front of everyone. I didn't have enough English to tell him I wasn't comfortable with a man taking my blood and I didn't want to be in front of everybody. The next time I went, I was ready to tell the person I wanted a woman to take my blood and I wanted it taken in private. A lady came and took me to an area with a curtain. I asked her if she could pull it across and she did. I liked that.

On Diversity at Capital Health

We need to see more people who are different at Capital Health. When you go into a department and you see someone from Iran and someone from Egypt and someone from Africa, you will know it's diverse.

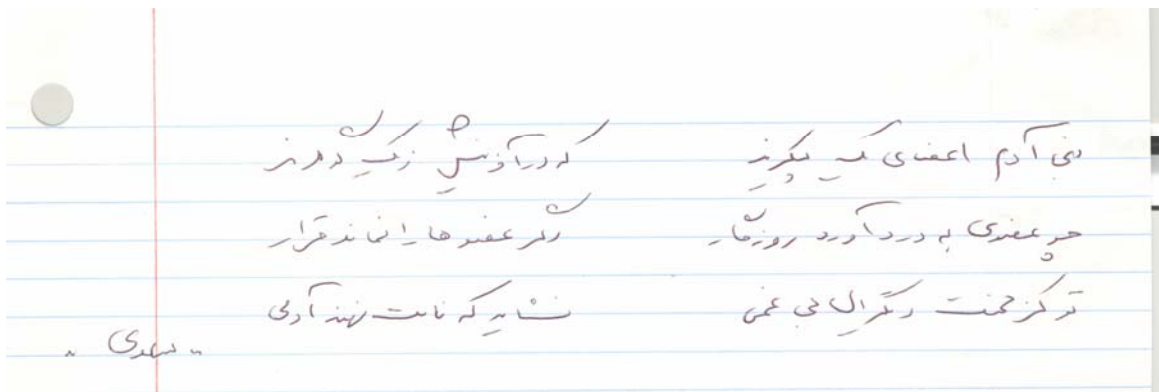
The first year I came to Nova Scotia I didn't see so many different faces. Now I see more.

It's not enough to say welcome. Talk is cheap. Behaviour is very important.

Poems by Jila:

Human beings

Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul,
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.
If you have no sympathy for human pain,
The name of human you cannot retain.



A drop of water

A drop of water is just a drop of water,
When it joins the ocean it becomes ocean.

