

A TAXING SITUATION

Survey says: 451 physicians would consider leaving Nova Scotia

Here's what Nova Scotia's Doctors had to say:

On how patient care could be affected

“I can see physicians trying to earn more gross income to make up for the loss of income caused by the proposed taxation changes. They may do so by seeing a larger volume of patients, resulting in shorter patient encounters and less access to quality care. They may also do this by altering their practice to offer services that are more lucrative. It could also result in increased physician billings and therefore increased health care costs.”

On recruitment and retention in Nova Scotia

“My speciality is already 40 percent below the national average in terms of income. We have one of the highest provincial tax rates. Recruitment of new staff will be impossible and that will ultimately affect patient care/ access to services.”

On changing their practice location

“I practise in a rural area, covering obstetrics, emergency, hospitalist and family practice...I would have to consider moving to the U.S.”

What's at issue?

On July 18, the federal government proposed tax changes on private corporations. A 75-day public consultation process is underway, closing on Oct. 2.

75% of physicians in Nova Scotia are incorporated.

Tax survey highlights

Doctors Nova Scotia launched a survey to assess the sentiments of physicians. We asked them what actions they might take if the proposed tax measures are implemented by the federal government. In total, **864 physicians responded to the survey**. Here are some highlights from their responses.



If the proposed tax measures are implemented:

451 physicians would consider moving from Nova Scotia



375 physicians would consider reducing the number of hours they work



359 physicians would consider offering different services

Conclusion

- Physicians believe **patient care will be affected** if the proposed tax changes are implemented.
- Physicians believe physician **recruitment and retention in Nova Scotia will be even more challenging**.
- **Physicians may choose to leave Nova Scotia** to practise elsewhere in the country or internationally.
- **Physicians may choose to change the way they work** in order to offset the loss, for example, by reducing hours, reducing unpaid work, choosing specialty work rather than primary care, or doing more private pay work.
- Physicians are concerned for their **financial well-being and their ability to practise** in Nova Scotia.

Survey method

Doctors Nova Scotia emailed the invitation to participate in the Federal Tax Survey to 3,515 physicians (practising physicians, physicians on leave, retired physicians, residents and medical students). In total, 864 physicians completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 25 percent. The survey questions were composed and circulated by Doctors Nova Scotia through an online web tool. The survey was open for the three-week period from Aug. 18 to Sept. 8, 2017.