

Terms of Reference
Policy and Health Issues Committee

1. Purpose

On behalf of the Doctors Nova Scotia Board of Directors, the Policy and Health Issues Committee will develop and review evidence-based policies, positions and perspectives on issues of interest and importance to Doctors Nova Scotia.

2. Definitions

Policy

A statement of guiding principles adopted by the Board that provides broad strategic direction to the Board and to Association members on a specific topic or issue. Principles may also be identified that are relevant to the actions of other stakeholders to achieve, in the Board's view, an effective, broader response to the topic or issue under consideration. Policies are formally adopted by the Board and are reviewed at a minimum every three years, but may be reviewed and amended at any time, as directed by the Board.

Position

A statement of key considerations adopted by the Policy and Health Issues Committee. A position represents the Association's views on an important topic or issue to broadly inform staff, stakeholders, the media, and the general public.

Perspective

A statement of the Association's outlook on an emerging topic or issue of concern, developed by the Policy and Health Issues Committee to assist staff in providing timely response to questions from stakeholders, the media, and the general public.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- To develop, identify and address critical issues or key areas that include but are not limited to: public policy, legislation, and health promotion initiatives which affect the mandate of the Board and recommend further action to the Board, including the development of a policy, position or perspective.
- To create an action plan that identifies critical issues and proactive approaches for the committee to pursue.
- To ensure policies, positions, and perspectives remain current by conducting regular reviews and recommending appropriate revisions to the Board.
- To participate, in consultation with the Board Chair, the President, CEO and others, in community-based discussions regarding critical areas of public policy affecting the mandate of Doctors Nova Scotia.

- To form working groups, or sub groups, as necessary in order to advance the work of the Committee.
- To review, consult and recommend a position or perspective on proposed legislative changes.
- To review, consult and recommend actions to support health promotion activities.
- To oversee and coordinate Doctors Nova Scotia representation on external working groups or committees.

4. Committee Membership

The Policy & Health Issues Committee is comprised of a broad representation of physicians across the membership. There shall be a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 25 committee members of Doctors Nova Scotia, including at least one Board member. All Committee members will be appointed by the Board of Directors. The Board will strive to ensure the committee membership is representative of the general membership and includes members with an interest in health policy and health promotion.

There will be two co-chairs, one of whom must be a Board member. At least one co-chair must be present for each meeting. In the event neither chair is able to attend, a designate chair will be appointed by committee members to conduct the meeting.

Terms

The initial terms of office will have staggered end dates to ensure a required level of continuity. All subsequent terms will be for a three-year period, and will end on June 15th of the 3rd year. A member may be reappointed for a second three-year term. A member cannot serve more than two terms or six consecutive years on the Committee.

Ex-Officio Members

The CEO and the President are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Committee.

Staff Resources

The Director of Health Policy and IT Strategy, the Director of Strategy and Partnerships and other members of the Health Policy department are assigned to the Committee as a resource and to provide committee support.

5. Committee Meetings

The Chair(s) of the Policy & Health Issues Committee will convene meetings as required.

There will be a minimum of six meetings per years of which one will be a dedicated action planning meeting for the entire committee. A schedule of meetings for the year will be distributed in advance.

Committee members are encouraged to attend all meetings. However, there will be instances where specific committee members will be sought out when their expertise is needed to discuss particular topics.

Quorum and Voting

A minimum of six voting members will comprise a quorum. A motion is passed by a majority vote of members in attendance. The Chair will cast the deciding vote only if required in the event of a tie.

6. Review and Evaluation

The Policy and Health Issues Committee will complete

- (a) a review of the committee’s terms of reference every two years; and
- (b) a committee evaluation at least once a year.

7. Accountability

The Policy & Health Issues Committee is advisory to, and accountable to the Board of Directors of Doctors Nova Scotia. Board approval will be required for any formal policies or positions, as well as any external communications on behalf of Doctors Nova Scotia.

Committee business will be reported at regularly scheduled Board meetings. Minutes of Committee meetings shall be maintained and made available to the Board upon request.

Last approved by the Board of Directors: May 8, 2015