

2021 AGM – Board Motion

New Membership Category – Clinical Assistants

A few years ago, the College of Physician and Surgeons of Nova Scotia (CPSNS) added a Clinical Assistant license to their licensing structure. Clinical assistants are registrants under the Conditional Register with the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia (the College). A clinical assistant acts as a ‘physician extender’ in the hospital environment.

All potential candidates for clinical assistant positions must have their credentials assessed and approved by the College prior to accepting job offers from Nova Scotia Health. Eligible candidates must complete a 12-week probationary assessment under a time-limited Clinical Assistant – Term Licence. Each assessment must be performed within the intended clinical department and include approved training and teaching goals. Currently there are 29 clinical assistants who are considered full members with DNS and pay full member dues of \$1,650 (increased to \$1,950 in September 2021).

The Governance Committee has reviewed and approved the creation of a new category of membership for clinical assistants as a revision to the Rules & Regulations. The Audit Committee reviewed the impact to the association’s operating revenue and determined they would be in favour of reducing dues for clinical assistants to 50% of the full member dues. Both recommendations have been endorsed by the Board of Directors.

The following points were considered in arriving at the recommendations:

- Clinical assistants operate under a special license with the College under strict guidelines, unlike a full practicing member (but are required to pay the same fees as full practicing members with the College and DNS).
- Their income is significantly lower comparable to full members and they have no ability to increase their income after they reach the top level on their pay scale.
- DNS does not negotiate on behalf of clinical assistants through the Master Agreement, as they are NSH employees and are managed by the College (through licensing) and the NSH.
- Most clinical assistants have no need to access DNS benefits as they have those benefits through the NSH.
- Several of the clinical assistants have expressed concerns about paying full membership dues given the factors outlined here.
- There are currently 29 clinical assistants; the annual financial impact of reducing those dues would be a little less than \$29,000.

Implications for other member groups

There are other member groups who feel they shouldn’t be expected to pay full member dues, but their situations differ from clinical assistants:

- Physicians in administrative roles, Medical Officers of Health and Military physicians – DNS doesn’t negotiate on behalf of these groups and they have access to benefits through their

employer; however, in most cases the employer covers the cost of dues and they have the ability to make significantly more income than clinical assistants.

- Part-time physicians – we negotiate on behalf of these physicians and they access DNS benefits.

Dues for the various membership categories must be set by the AGM, therefore a resolution is required to implement these changes.

The following motion will be presented at the AGM:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting approves the reduction of membership dues for clinical assistants to 50% of full member dues effective September 1, 2021.