

Proceedings

169th Annual General Meeting
Saturday, June 10, 2023
Digby Pines Golf Resort & Spa/Zoom



OUR PURPOSE

Helping physicians to thrive and
have a positive impact on their
patients' lives, at an individual
and system level.



AGM 2023 proceedings



The 169th Doctors Nova Scotia Annual Meeting began with the introduction of Dr. André Bernard, Chair of the Board; Dr. Leisha Hawker, President; Dr. Colin Audain, President-elect; Dr. Jean-Joseph Condé, Canadian Medical Association (CMA) French spokesperson and member of the CMA Board of Directors, and Nancy MacCready-Williams, CEO, Doctors Nova Scotia.

1. Call to Order

1.1 Opening of the Annual Meeting

The chair called the meeting to order and declared the 169th Annual General Meeting in session. He started the meeting with a land acknowledgement that we all live and work in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral, unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

At Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS), we honour and respect the Indigenous people of this land. Doctors Nova Scotia also recognizes that it has much more to learn and do to embrace the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The chair also acknowledged that African Nova Scotian history goes back over 400 years to the earliest years of Nova Scotia, starting in 1605 with the founding of Port Royal.

Doctors Nova Scotia is committed to working with the Indigenous and African Nova Scotian leaders, the medical community, physicians and system partners to disrupt systemic racism and decolonize the health-care system to improve the health-care experiences of Indigenous people and African Nova Scotians in Nova Scotia.

1.2 Review Conduct of Meetings

Dr. Bernard reviewed the conduct and rules of order for the meeting. While every effort is made to ensure a smooth meeting, sometimes technology can be unpredictable, therefore participants were asked for patience if any technical issues were experienced during the meeting.

1.3 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

The following motion was moved by Dr. Patty Menard and seconded by Dr. Heather Johnson:

Resolution – Agenda

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting approves the agenda for the June 10, 2023, meeting. CARRIED

The Chair put the resolution to a vote, and declared it carried.

2. Proceedings of June 4, 2022 Annual General Meeting

A copy of the proceedings from the 2022 Annual General Meeting were included in the registration package that was distributed to delegates before the meeting. There were no questions or comments on the record of those proceedings.

3. Moment of Silence in Memory of Deceased Members

The chair read the names of those members who have passed away since the 2022 AGM: Drs. Edison Skinner, Peter Jackson, Sarban Singh, Ivan Alban DeCoutere, Lionel d'Entremont, Everett Smith, Leo Wisniowski, Charles Taylar, James Cameron, Hershman Lakosha, Krystian Szczesny, John Abdul Sattar Ramessar, A. Emerson Dunphy, Donald Brown, William Stuart Huestis, James O'Brien, David Wills, John Quigley, Young Chun, Rusi Buhariwalla, Lorne Marsh and Shabtai Affias.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of the association's deceased members.

4. Approval of Annual Report

A copy of the 2022–23 Annual Report was included with the registration package that was distributed to delegates before the meeting. There were no questions or comments regarding the content of that report.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. Timothy Woodford and seconded by Dr. Chakshu Sharma:

Resolution – Annual Report

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting accept all narrative portions of the 2022–23 Annual Report. CARRIED

The Chair put the resolution to a vote, and declared it carried.

5. Canadian Medical Association Address

Dr. Jean-Joseph Condé, member of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) Board of Directors thanked everyone for the opportunity to attend the AGM and speak on behalf of the CMA. He began by acknowledging that the gathering is on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

Dr. Condé acknowledged that the health-care system is in crisis, and together, we can help bring forward solutions that are needed now more than ever. Whether provincially, territorially or nationally, everyone is facing similar challenges. Waitlists for family physicians and surgeries are at an all-time high, and staffing challenges have affected the ability to deliver high-quality care.

The pressure on family physicians is becoming increasingly unsustainable; from the burden of administration to gaps in compensation to the challenges of managing a population with increasingly complex care needs.

Dr. Condé expressed the CMA's desire to have a positive impact as they partner with Doctors Nova Scotia and other key stakeholders. The CMA's primary focus is on health, the health system and the health workforce; with specific priorities under each of those pillars.

The CMA has been working with Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) and with others across the health sector to call for new funding to stabilize the health care system. The release of the federal budget in March addressed many of the solutions to the health care crisis that the CMA has been advocating for, including increases to the Canada Health Transfer, federal leadership on national health workforce planning, scaled-up team-based care, expanded virtual care and reconciliation in the health system. While there is still a lot of work to be done to translate these commitments into action, the CMA is committed to following through.

There has been support for a national health workforce strategy, which is a key priority at the CMA. Access to primary care providers is foundational to the strategy. The CMA continues to provide guidance on this front, including the need for a data driven national Health Human Resources strategy.

The CMA's latest National Physician Health Survey showed a profession in distress. The data underscores the urgent need for change in areas such as work–life integration, bullying and harassment, administrative burden and professional fulfilment. The CMA also recognizes that there is a need to better protect health-care workers and played a key role in getting the federal anti-harassment legislation implemented.

Dr. Condé highlighted the CMA's work on reducing the many administrative burdens physicians face in clinical practice, including the implementation of an administrative burden working group led by CMA president-elect, Dr. Kathleen Ross. Dr. Condé also commended Nova Scotia for their leadership in this area.

Dr. Condé spoke on the issue of pan-Canadian licensure and noted that there has been some significant progress made. In Eastern Canada, the Atlantic Physicians Registry launched in May, thanks to DNS's leadership. In Ontario, the proposed "as of right" rules will see credentials of health-care workers registered in other provinces and territories recognized, without the need to

register with a regulatory college in this province. These are important steps toward a national licensure model.

Another commitment of the CMA is advancing reconciliation in health care in allyship with Indigenous Peoples. To identify areas of focus, the CMA convened a Guiding Circle, a group of First Nations, Inuit and Métis experts and knowledge-keepers that represents the diverse and broad perspectives of communities across the country. The feedback received has shaped the CMA's work in this area.

Under Dr. Alika Lafontaine's leadership as president, the CMA has also expanded its network of stakeholders and anticipates working with them toward an official apology for the harm caused to Indigenous Peoples in Canada by the medical profession. The CMA Foundation is also supporting Indigenous-led organizations through giving, most recently with a \$2-million contribution to the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund and a \$1-million grant to the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada. Dr. Lafontaine has been hosting a series of intimate discussions to dive into many of these issues with Indigenous patients, providers and leaders.

Dr. Condé highlighted some upcoming CMA events and encouraged participation, including the Annual General Meeting and the Health Summit taking place in August. Through the fall and winter, the CMA will host Canada-wide consultations on the role of private providers in the public health system, as more patients struggle to gain access to care in Canada; the consultations will include polling, and virtual and in-person events. In closing, Dr. Condé thanked the delegation for the opportunity to speak and reinforced the CMA's continued commitment to working with DNS and many other partners who share a passion for a better health system..

6. Audit Committee Report

Dr. Gerard MacDonald, Chair of the Audit Committee, presented the Audit Committee report, which included an overview of the Audited Financial statements for the year ending August 31, 2022, and an update on how the association is trending for the 2022–23 year.

He noted that from a governance perspective, the Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring that internal controls are in place and executed properly. It represents the Board by overseeing the establishment and implementation of accounting policies and internal controls which promote good financial stewardship, managing overall risk including investment policies, tax compliance, adequate insurance and overseeing that compliance is adhered to.

6.1 Review Audited Financial Statements for 2021-22

The detailed audited statements for the year ending Aug. 31, 2022, were included with the registration package that was distributed to delegates and were also available online prior to the meeting. Dr. MacDonald explained that DNS's fiscal year, which runs from September to August, does not align well with the timing of the Annual meeting, making the reporting less timely.

The association has two main ongoing sources of funds: the Operating and the Member Benefits fund. Operations are funded by annual dues from members, staff recoveries from DHW and the CMA, and payments from third parties for magazine advertising and sponsorships. The Member Benefits fund consists of payments from the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) that are provided via the Master Agreement to cover the cost of member benefits. Revenues always equal expenses in this fund, resulting in a net of zero. There is also a Capital fund, which is used for property and equipment upgrades and maintenance.

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KPMG successfully performed the annual audit and found no errors or omissions resulting in an unqualified opinion. The financial statements are presented in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. The Audit Committee reviewed the audit process and resulting statements with KPMG. The statements required no adjustments, so a recommendation was made to the Board of Directors for approval. KPMG presented the audited financial statements to the Board of Directors in December 2022, and they were approved as presented.

There was an operating deficit of \$34K after investments and depreciation against a budgeted surplus of \$234K. The surplus budget was planned as per the Board-approved business plan and the amount is typical for a year in which a dues increase is implemented. The negative variance from the budget is mainly attributed to unrealized market value losses with investments, however net investment gains from last year were offset by losses this year.

Dr. MacDonald noted that the association is in good financial health and is well positioned to remain that way into the future. Funds from previous surpluses have been set aside to cover future spending.

Overview of Fiscal Year 2022-23

Dr. MacDonald provided a brief overview on how the association is trending for the 2022-23 fiscal year, which closes on Aug. 31, 2023. Management is projecting a surplus as opposed to the \$93K deficit originally budgeted. The surplus will roughly offset the budgeted capital costs for the year.

Over the next 2 years (2023 and 2024), CMA Affinity funding will support the cost of several initiatives under the banner Restoring the Joy in the Practice of Medicine, including leadership development, virtual care, and physician wellness. This funding is short-term and must be directed to specific projects; it cannot be used

to fund operations. Likewise, physician development funding from the CMA was renewed for 2022-23.

KPMG will perform the 2022-23 audit at the end of October and the audited financial statements will be available for review by the Board at their December 2023 meeting, then presented at the 2024 AGM. Doctors Nova Scotia will continue its relationship with KPMG until after the audit in the Fall 2023. After that audit is completed, DNS will issue a request for proposals for the next five-year term, covering 2024-29.

7. Nominating Committee Report

7.1 President-elect

Dr. Leisha Hawker, President and Chair of the Nominating Committee, delivered the Nominating Committee report. She explained that the Committee is responsible for reviewing the nominations for President-elect and recommending a candidate for the Board's endorsement and for approval at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

This year the Nominating Committee recommends Dr. Gehad Gobran for President-elect. The Committee has determined that Dr. Gobran meets the selection criteria and agreed that he will bring a valuable perspective to the Board and the association's leadership.

Dr. Gobran is a community family physician who immigrated to Halifax as a fully licensed cardiologist and worked as a clinical associate before becoming a family doctor. He is an assistant professor at Dalhousie Family Medicine and has been with the Duffus Health Centre since 2005. He practices at the Newcomer Health Clinic, is the medical director at Sagewood Continuing Care Centre in Sackville and a member of the Care by Design program. Dr. Gobran has been personally impacted by the many barriers faced by immigrant physicians and wants to ensure equity and diversity are incorporated into Doctors Nova Scotia's practices and policies.

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Dr. Gobran served on the DNS Board of Directors (2019–22), during which time he was the Board representative on the e-Health Committee and the Board liaison with the Family Doctors Council. He is also a founding member and Chair of the Long-Term Care Section.

The Board of Directors passed a motion at its May 12, 2023, meeting to endorse the committee's nomination of Dr. Gobran. If approved, Dr. Gobran will formally step into the role of President-elect following the AGM and will become President in June 2024.

Members of the delegation expressed their support for the committee's recommendation, agreeing that Dr. Gobran is an excellent candidate for the role.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. Leisha Hawker and seconded by Dr. Cheryl Pugh:

Resolution – President-Elect

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting approve Dr. Gehad Gobran as President-elect for 2023–24. CARRIED

The Chair put the resolution to a vote, and declared it carried.

7.2 2023–24 Board of Directors

Dr. Hawker reported that this year the Board welcomed the following new members:

- Drs. Dianna Field and Nabha Shetty, both elected for a three-year term
- Drs. Jayani Abeysekera, Roshan Abid and Emmanuel Ajuwon as this year's Board appointments, each for a one-year term
- Dr. Michel Chiasson as the Section Forum Chair for a two-year term
- Mr. Korede Akindoju as the student representative for the Dalhousie Medical Students' Society

A complete list of the 2023–24 Board of Directors can be found on the DNS website.

Additionally, on behalf of the association, Dr. Hawker extended a special thank you to those Board members whose terms concluded this month: Ms. Chloe Blackman, Drs. Courtney Gullickson, Mike MacDonald, Shelly MacNeil, Patricia Menard, Chakshu Sharma, Chadwick Williams and Jason Williams.

Donations will be made in each person's name to the Halifax Refugee Clinic.

8. By-laws Revisions

The Governance Committee reviewed the By-laws to ensure they:

- are in line with our governing legislation;
- are current and reflect any recent changes and governance updates that have been made; and
- have simple and easy-to-read language.

This year, there were a few suggested revisions to the By-laws. The majority of the changes would be considered "housekeeping" in nature, meaning it's an update or it's being revised to reflect something we already have in other governance documents (rules and regulations, policies, procedures). The remaining revisions provide clarity around Special Meetings. We can call Special Meetings (Section 8.9), but we needed some clarity in other sections regarding quorum and the ability to make By-law changes at Special Meetings.

The Governance Committee and the Board have endorsed these revisions.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. Cindy Marshall and seconded by Dr. Kelly Dakin Hache:

Resolution – Approval of Revised By-laws

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting approves the creation of the Section of Planetary Health. CARRIED

The Chair put the resolution to a vote, and declared it carried.

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9. Member Motion

A member motion submitted by Drs. Michael Mindrum and Helena Piccinini-Vallis was approved. The motion called on the Board of Directors to recognize that obesity is a chronic medical disease requiring enhanced research, treatment and prevention efforts. The rationale for the motion states that several prominent health organizations have declared obesity a chronic disease. A declaration of obesity as a chronic disease by DNS will support a unified voice across our country's medical associations to help change the way our province's medical community supports and cares for the 37% of Nova Scotians living with obesity.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. Helena Piccinini-Vallis and seconded by Dr. Michael Mindrum:

Resolution – Obesity is a chronic medical disease
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting asks the Board of Directors to recognize that obesity is a chronic medical disease requiring enhanced research, treatment and prevention efforts. CARRIED

The Chair put the resolution to a vote, and declared it carried.

It is the responsibility of the Board to identify implications and determine the association's ability to carry out the resolution. The Board will take the several factors into consideration, such as the motion's alignment with the association's strategic plan and direction, as well as the financial and staff resources required to carry out the work.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Announcements

The Chair advised that a meeting evaluation will be circulated to attendees after the meeting and encouraged everyone to provide their feedback.

12. Adjournment

The 169th annual meeting of Doctors Nova Scotia was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. Fiona Bergin and seconded by Dr. Alison Wellwood:

Resolution – Adjournment

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the 169th Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting be adjourned. CARRIED

The Chair put the resolution to a vote, and declared it carried.