

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

OCTOBER IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH IN CANADA. It's a time to celebrate women and girls, who contribute to a better and more inclusive Canada. The government of Canada designated October as Women's History Month beginning in 1992. October was chosen because it was on Oct. 18, 1929, a date now celebrated as "Persons Day," Canada's highest court of appeal made the historic decision to include women in the legal definition of "person." This decision gave some women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada and paved the way for women's increased participation in public and political life.

The Canadian Medical Association estimates that by 2030, half of all physicians in Canada will identify as women, and yet much of the history of medicine is focused on their male counterparts. Many women in the medical field face systematic challenges such as pay and leadership inequity, sexual assault and harassment, opposition to career advancement, gendered stereotypes, unfair role expectations and unconscious bias. These challenges are further amplified for women who also belong to a racial minority, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community or who have a disability.

At the 2020 Canadian Women in Medicine conference, 77% of the participating physicians and medical students said they had experienced gender inequity in their training or practice setting; 99% of those women reported that the inequity had a negative effect on their well-being.

Connection to Doctors Nova Scotia's Work

Supporting female physicians in Nova Scotia impacts not only the wellness of the physician workforce, but also the patient population. As we continue to work toward stabilizing primary care in our province, it's important to remember that physicians who are women or gender diverse are more likely to practise family medicine than any other medical specialty. Family physicians in Canada (and Nova Scotia specifically) are increasingly women, with most under the age of 40.

Celebrating and supporting women in medicine calls for more than storytelling; it requires action at both the individual and system level to confront inequity in medicine. Doctors Nova Scotia continues to champion this work through contract negotiations, including items like parental leave and compensation, as well as providing resources and support and leadership training, developing policies and advocating on key issues that affect women physicians in Nova Scotia.

Resources:

- Canadian Women in Medicine: www.cwimorg.com/home



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Find more EDIRA resources, videos and tools in the DNS SharePoint EDIRA Hub.