




2026
**IMPACT
SUMMIT**

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2026

ANNUAL REPORT

TO COUNCIL 2025–26

Leadership Message



Dr. Shelly McNeil



Nancy MacCready-Williams



Dr. Heather Johnson

Over the past year, physicians have navigated infrastructure changes, the introduction of new digital tools and processes, and continuing changes to payment models. The way physicians deliver care continues to evolve rapidly. At the same time, a broader climate of global tension and uncertainty has added to the stress and complexity many Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) members are experiencing.

Amid this, you have shown remarkable openness and resilience. Your commitment to your patients and to your colleagues, even in the face of constant change, is appreciated.

As your professional association, DNS been focused on supporting you through this period of transformation. We have ensured your voices are heard in decision-making, advocating on your behalf and engaging at the system level on critical priorities such as compensation, e-health and practice supports. We have also strengthened our focus on physician wellness and refreshed our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, (Reconciliation) and Accessibility, or EDI(R)A,* Framework to guide continued efforts to address systemic inequities within the profession and the healthcare system.

In addition, DNS staff have directed significant effort toward preparing for upcoming contract negotiations. This work has included research, economic analysis, member engagement and strategy development. We have been connecting with physicians across the province through community visits, surveys and focus groups, and working closely with the Board and Sections to ensure our work is grounded in your experiences and priorities.

Healthcare system improvements are gathering momentum as investments in physicians through the 2023 agreements, infrastructure improvements and the implementation of One Person One Record continue to roll out. While the year ahead will bring both opportunities and challenges, our responsibility is to be ready, and we are taking that responsibility seriously.

Together, we will continue to navigate this period of change with focus and a shared commitment to a stronger healthcare system for all.

Dr. Shelly McNeil
President

Nancy MacCready-Williams
CEO

Dr. Heather Johnson
Chair

A note on reconciliation

Doctors Nova Scotia recognizes that Truth and Reconciliation is distinct work and must be guided by respect, accountability and Indigenous self-determination. The parenthesis around reconciliation in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, (Reconciliation) and Accessibility, and EDI(R)A, are one way we acknowledge that reconciliation is not a subset of EDIA work, but a distinct and vital commitment.



Doctors Nova Scotia

2025–26 Board of Directors

Twenty physicians, including a medical resident, and one medical student serve as Doctors Nova Scotia’s Board of Directors. The Board provides the association with its overall strategic direction. The Board is a diverse selection of general practitioners and specialists who practise throughout the province. Most Board members are elected through a member-wide election; three members are appointed to help ensure optimal member representation.

EXECUTIVE

Dr. Shelly McNeil, *President*
Dr. Gehad Gobran, *Past president*
Dr. Amanda MacDonald Green,
President-elect
Dr. Heather Johnson, *Chair of the Board*
Dr. Leisha Hawker, *Audit Committee chair*

FAMILY PHYSICIANS IN HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Lynn Bussey
Dr. Leisha Hawker
Dr. Muna Chowdhury

FAMILY PHYSICIANS OUTSIDE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Emmanuel Ajuwon
Dr. Deanna Field

SPECIALISTS IN HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Abraham Rudnick
Dr. Caitlin Lees
Dr. Nabha Shetty
Dr. Janice Chisholm

SPECIALISTS OUTSIDE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Jacob Puthenparuppil
Dr. Lucas Richardson
Dr. Oliva Ortiz-Alvarez

SECTION FORUM CHAIR

Dr. Christine Short

MARITIME RESIDENT DOCTORS REPRESENTATIVE

Dr. Kristin Ko

DALHOUSIE MEDICAL STUDENT SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE

Jonathan Mansvelt

CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Dr. Gerard MacDonald

Financial Report (Sept. 1, 2024, to Aug. 31, 2025)



Dr. Leisha Hawker,
Audit Committee chair

THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OVERSEES the accuracy of Doctors Nova Scotia's (DNS) financial statements by reviewing the effectiveness of accounting policies, internal controls and risk-management practices.

The financial statements for the year ending Aug. 31, 2025, were audited by KPMG in accordance with generally accepted Canadian accounting principles for non-profit organizations. No errors or omissions were reported, and the financial statements were approved by the Audit Committee and the Board of Directors.

The unrestricted operating fund has a balance of \$5,090,267 (\$5,350,103 at Aug. 31, 2024). The operating fund reported a surplus of \$1,021,279 against a budgeted deficit of \$460,000 for a positive variance of \$1,481,270. This positive budget variance was made up of the following components:

- \$650,300 surplus from revenues – higher than budgeted dues from membership growth
- \$62,500 surplus from operating expenses – lower than budgeted computer and consulting costs
- \$724,200 surplus from investments – high market valuation gains and dividend earnings
- \$44,200 surplus from depreciation – lower than budgeted capital expenditures

The future commitments fund has a balance of \$735,857 (\$169,613 at Aug. 31, 2024). During the

year, \$1.5 million was transferred into the fund for 2027 contract negotiation costs (\$500,000) and DNS staff pension supports (\$1,000,000), while \$933,800 was paid out for the staff pension transition from CMA to NSHEPP and other retirement costs.

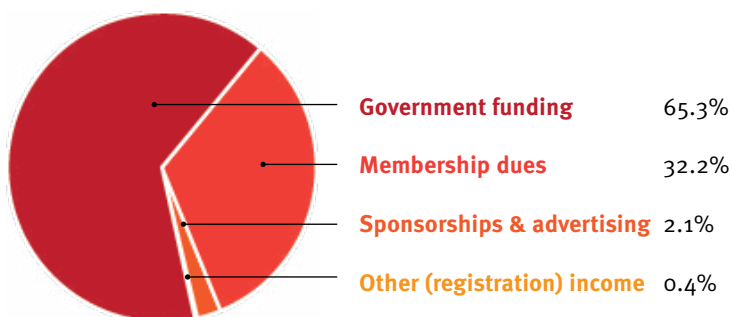
The association invested \$36,873 in capital assets (\$111,992 in 2024). This included new systems controls for the building, scheduled computer hardware replacements and software upgrades, and furniture and fixture replacements.

Based on the existing physician agreement with the Department of Health and Wellness, DNS received \$12.16 million in funding toward the cost of member benefits programs (\$11.03 million in 2024). This funding was distributed to the various programs as follows:

- \$6,831,600 – 65% of total health and dental plan costs (35% paid by plan members)
- \$3,251,000 – parental leave
- \$498,100 – Professional Support Program
- \$1,180,500 – targeted projects
- \$400,000 – benefits administration

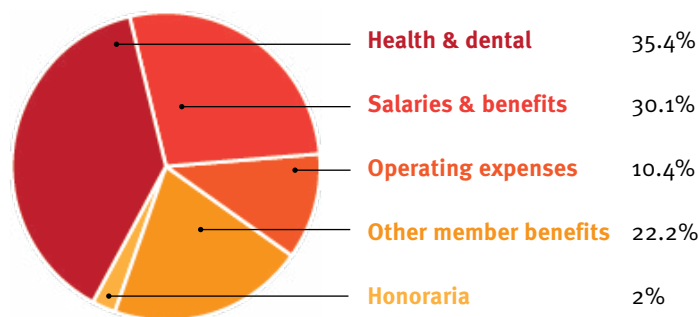
Overall, the association maintains a healthy financial position and continues to perform well against its annual budgets.

Summary of funding revenues



Government funding	12,161,156	(65.3%)
Membership dues	6,000,281	(32.2%)
Sponsorships & advertising	398,334	(2.1%)
Other (registration) income	66,950	(0.4%)

Summary of expenses



Health & dental	6,831,566	(35.4%)
Salaries & benefits	5,805,070	(30.1%)
Operation expenses	2,008,028	(10.4%)
Other member benefits	4,277,455	(22.2%)
Honoraria	386,359	(2.0%)



2025–26 Achievements

Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) works on behalf of physicians across Nova Scotia, who continue to show tremendous leadership and determination in navigating a demanding healthcare landscape. Here are several highlights from the association’s work over the past year.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, (RECONCILIATION) AND ACCESSIBILITY

In 2025, DNS continued to build momentum in its Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, (Reconciliation) and Accessibility, or EDI(R)A, work under the leadership of the association’s senior diversity advisor, Basma Deef. Meaningful progress has been made in advancing the key priorities outlined in the EDI(R)A framework.

The organization continues to maintain the internal EDI(R)A Hub on the DNS website, providing access to Monthly Minutes, practical tools and resources to staff and members. Foundational education has expanded through staff learning sessions, including twice-yearly EDI(R)A Connection Days and Board-level training to strengthen inclusive leadership.

The EDI(R)A Engagement Tour saw CEO Nancy MacCready-Williams and Ms. Deef meet with physicians across Nova Scotia. This initiative has focused on sharing the EDI(R)A framework broadly and engaging directly with communities through sessions led by and for equity-deserving physicians, helping ground the work in lived experience and community-informed priorities.

Doctors Nova Scotia has also continued its policy and governance work, auditing and updating priority policies to better reflect equity-informed practices. This has included informing updates to the Awards Committee Nominations process, DNS Respectful Workplace policy, Professional Support Program counsellor contracts, and Board governance policies, as well as creating opportunities for staff engagement and contribution.

Externally, DNS has strengthened relationships with community and health-system partners and is advancing more coordinated approaches to addressing racism and discrimination within healthcare environments. The association has also prioritized engagement with physicians from equity-deserving communities and has established a Member EDI(R)A Committee to help guide ongoing work.

These efforts reflect the association’s continued commitment to embedding EDI(R)A principles across its operations, culture and partnerships while building a strong foundation for future growth and impact.



LEARNING SERIES

In fall 2025, DNS launched a CPD-accredited learning series to increase connection among physicians, health-system leaders and other healthcare professionals, while supporting ongoing professional development. The series provides education on key topics such as DNS programs and initiatives, advocacy, billing and contracts, EDI(R)A, and media relations. Through this initiative, physicians should be able to access and utilize DNS programs and services that support their professional development at all stages of their career, identify and explain new initiatives or programs being put in place in healthcare systems across the province, apply tools and strategies to effectively manage the business aspects of their medical practice, navigate billing processes and utilize resources to enhance the financial sustainability of their practice, access and utilize resources that promote physician wellness and prevent burnout, and foster collaboration with their colleagues, health-system leaders and other healthcare professionals.

ON-THE-GROUND SUPPORT

Doctors Nova Scotia’s purpose is to help physicians thrive personally and professionally, and one way the association supports its members is through a dedicated team of physician advisors. These professionals help physicians and medical learners navigate the healthcare system. They also help resolve issues in physicians’ practices, their communities and the system itself in a confidential and supportive manner, and provide advice and guidance through all stages of practice, from recruitment and onboarding through to retirement.

The Physician Advisory Team (PAT) is the primary mode of member engagement for DNS. This year, the PAT has continued to help members operationalize many of the key programs and initiatives that arose from the 2023 Physician Agreement. Key system challenges PAT members have supported physicians with over the last year include: pathways to licensure for internationally trained physicians; onboarding and contract support (including longitudinal family medicine, alternative payment plans, general internal medicine and more); rural inpatient care service sustainability; third-party, turnkey practice overhead advice and guidance; development and integration of the Kisa’matultimkewey wjit malpale’witk (First Nations) Contract, and negotiation and implementation of the Rural Longitudinal Family Medicine model. Outside of their daily work supporting physicians, PAT members attended or supported a variety of events across all four health zones, engaging with hundreds of DNS members.



MEMBER LISTENING TOUR

Over the late fall 2025 and winter 2026, DNS carried out a Member Listening Tour that brought association leaders together with physicians in communities across the province, both in person and virtually, to discuss what’s working well, the challenges physicians are facing and priorities for the next round of contract negotiations. The tour helped DNS identify where additional professional supports, educational resources, contract enhancements or changes, and community-building efforts are needed.

NEGOTIATIONS PREPARATIONS

In addition to the Member Listening Tour, DNS has been gathering broad member input through public opinion polling, targeted virtual focus groups, and meetings with clinical and academic departments.

Most recently, the association hosted a member-wide survey focused specifically on contract negotiations. A total of 832 surveys were completed by members from across all health zones and areas of practice. The results clearly outline priorities for DNS in its upcoming negotiations for the new Physician Agreement and Clinical/Academic Funding Plan contracts.

Physicians’ concerns focus on compensation, workload and system sustainability. Physicians are calling for compensation that is more competitive nationally and better reflects the full scope of their work, particularly administrative responsibilities, while also expressing concern about financial vulnerability during illness or work disruptions. Administrative burden is a widespread challenge, and broader system pressures such as limited locum availability, recruitment difficulties, physician shortages and long specialist wait times are straining both the quality of care and physician well-being. Concerns about equity, insufficient leave and lack of system support further contribute to lower professional satisfaction. These issues also highlight burnout and the long-term sustainability of medical practice.



REDUCING RED TAPE FOR DOCTORS

Doctors Nova Scotia continues to champion the province’s work to reduce unnecessary administrative burden for physicians. New technologies and innovation bring changes that may add new burdens to the system, but the work completed to date has raised awareness of this issue. Doctors Nova Scotia will continue to advocate for reduced administrative burden across the system and will continue to engage members in this process. Spending less time on red tape allows physicians to do what they do best: care for patients.



TWO YEARS OF LFM

October marked the second anniversary of the rollout of the longitudinal family medicine (LFM) payment model. Although it’s been a learning curve for some physicians, the data is showing the model’s positive impact on patients and physicians. The model has improved average physician earnings and increased access to care for patients (through expanded evening and weekend access), in-person care and the number of service encounters per hour.



SHARING POSITIVE FEEDBACK

To celebrate Doctors Day on May 1, DNS held its annual physician recognition campaign, showcasing the work of Drs. Peter Blaikie, Deborah Straub and Heather Poushay. The association also encouraged patients to share their appreciation of their physicians, collecting hundreds of individual messages on social media and YourDoctors.ca. Doctors Nova Scotia shared the feedback widely with members via email and social media, highlighting excellence in the profession and the positive impact physicians have on their patients and communities. The association also provided support to several community-based physician navigators to offer Doctors Day gift baskets and special events for physicians working in underserved areas of the province. This year, DNS collaborated with Nova Scotia Health to expand the number of sites supported.

MEDIA COVERAGE

From April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, DNS staff managed more than 50 media requests, connecting physician spokespeople, subject matter experts and DNS staff with journalists from local, provincial and national media outlets. News stories during this period focused on primary care access, recruitment and retention, emergency department pressures and new provincial initiatives. Doctors Nova Scotia also provided media training for more than 60 physicians.

2025

BY THE NUMBERS

Top media requests

- Primary care access
- Physician recruitment and retention
- New provincial initiatives
- Emergency department pressures

Number of member messages: 290

Media requests: 45

Blog posts released on YourDoctors.ca: 38

Webinars: 7

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Connect the profession

Commitment	Actions
Connecting physicians with each other	<p>Provided ongoing support to members in each health zone: Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) physician advisors ensured members were connected to one another, monitoring their needs and responding as appropriate.</p> <p>Supported the enhancement of the physician mentorship program for internationally trained physicians (ITPs) led by Dr. Emmanuel Ajuwon, for greater reach and impact.</p> <p>Launched new DNS Learning Series, which offers CPD-accredited events often led by physicians.</p>
Connecting physicians with DNS	<p>Enhanced supports for ITPs, including continuing to support ITPs with navigating the system.</p> <p>Supported family physicians transitioning to the Longitudinal Family Medicine (LFM) payment model.</p> <p>Increased outreach of the Professional Support Program (PSP) by focusing on upstream interventions and enhanced our physician wellness offerings through DNS Pathways.</p> <p>Launched DNS Member Listening Tour, which brought senior leaders and staff members to communities across Nova Scotia to hear from physicians about what’s going well in their practice, what’s hard, ideas for improvements and expectations of DNS.</p> <p>Launched EDI(R)A Listening Tour, bringing DNS Senior Diversity Advisor, CEO and Physician Advisors into equity-deserving communities to build meaningful relationships, share the DNS EDI(R)A Framework, and deepen understanding of how DNS can support and amplify local efforts.</p> <p>Distributed eight \$5,000 bursaries to medical students through the DNS Medical Student Bursary Program.</p>
Connecting physicians with the system	<p>Continued to support the onboarding of new physicians to the province in collaboration with Nova Scotia Health (NSH) recruitment team and municipally employed community navigators.</p> <p>Developed and nurtured strategic relationships with community-led organizations that support the association’s priority policy areas, including harm reduction, equity, diversity and inclusion, Indigenous health, social determinants of health and gender affirming care.</p> <p>Supported the development of physician leaders through program offerings and support to the Section of Physician Leaders. Implemented seventh cohort of the Physician Leadership Development Program.</p> <p>Initiated the third McCarthy/Stewart International Medical Graduate Grant, which provides a one-time grant of \$10,000 to 10 successful ITPs practising in rural areas each year.</p> <p>Continued building relationships with physician assistant associations to support the advancement of physician assistants in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>Supported the implementation and refinement of new payment models and supported physicians transitioning to new models, including the new LFM Rural (Small Sites) and First Nations Family Medicine Payment Model (or Kisa’matultimkewey wjit malpale’witk); engaged with NSH, the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and rural physicians providing inpatient services in the revision of the Community Hospital Inpatient Care Program (CHIP) into the new Community Hospitalist program.</p> <p>Evaluated the association’s Restoring the Joy in the Practice of Medicine physician wellness strategy to inform the next iteration of physician wellness strategies and the development of a new provincial working group for physician wellness.</p> <p>Supported the launch of the government’s inaugural physician retirement fund, helping 90% of eligible physicians opt in to the program.</p>

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Advocate for the profession

Commitment	Actions
<p>Help make positive changes in population health and healthcare policy through collaboration with the provincial government, NSH, IWK Health and the DNS Healthy Tomorrow Foundation</p>	<p>Continued engagement with system leaders in primary healthcare strategic planning and implementation.</p> <p>Launched the Allied Healthcare Practitioner Pilot Program, which allows family physicians to hire allied health professionals (e.g., nurses, social workers, physiotherapists) to provide care to their patients.</p> <p>Doctors Nova Scotia President, Dr. Shelly McNeil, and President-elect, Dr. Amanda MacDonald-Green, attend the Standing Committee on Health to discuss primary care attachment.</p> <p>Continued to enhance relationships with e-health decision makers at the DHW and NSH to influence e-health direction and establish governance models that will support enhanced physician engagement.</p> <p>Through involvement in provincial One Person One Record (OPOR) committee(s), continued to ensure physician engagement is prioritized throughout the OPOR initiative and provided critical input into emerging issues such as the need for an income stability program for fee-for-service physicians, an integrated billing solution, supports and access to OPOR for administrative team members, recognition of the increased administrative burden on physicians arising from OPOR and enhanced communication.</p> <p>Participated in YourHealthNS working group with the government, supported a family physician and community specialist advisory committee, and supported the initiative through effective communications and physician engagement advice.</p> <p>Contributed to provincial discussions about the implementation of AI scribes in Nova Scotia, including the best approach for implementation and identification of new opportunities through federal infrastructure.</p> <p>Engaged regularly with system leaders in primary healthcare strategic planning and implementation, including payment models, service deliverables, team-based care, conflict resolution, operational policy development and governance in primary care.</p> <p>Supported the DNS Healthy Tomorrow Foundation with its efforts to create a culture change in Nova Scotia, so that everyday simple movement becomes part of our daily lives, contributing to enhanced health and well-being, longevity, social connectedness and vibrant local economies. In-kind supports from DNS continue and enhanced communications updated members about the work of the foundation.</p> <p>Continued to advocate for compensation models to support the appropriate use of asynchronous virtual care. Participated on a national virtual care committee with other PTMAs; the committee shares progress and best practices across the country. Continued to interact with the CMA, Canada Health Infoway and other organizations that are focused on expanding the use of virtual care for the benefit of patients.</p>
<p>Government relations</p>	<p>Focused on building and nurturing relationships with key decision-makers in the health system, with a particular focus on DHW and the NSH to support the implementation of 2023 physician agreements.</p> <p>Developed an advocacy framework to guide the association's decisions on when and how to engage in advocacy or public statements, particularly around complex societal issues.</p> <p>Marked the opening of the new Cape Breton medical campus; DNS President Dr. Shelly McNeil represented DNS at the event.</p>

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Advocate for the profession (cont.)

Commitment	Actions
Pursue fair compensation for physicians by negotiating provincial and local agreements and advocating for members' economic interests	<p>Continued implementation of the 2023 Physician Agreement and C/AFP Agreement and began preparations for 2027 contract negotiations, including member engagement, research and strategy development.</p> <p>Continued to support improved accountability structures and processes within alternate funding models, including the C/AFP and APP frameworks.</p> <p>Continued to advocate and work toward reducing administrative burden for physicians through the work of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness (ORASE). Participated on the CMA-PTMA Advocacy Working Group to collaboratively advance the reduction of administrative burden at a national level while supporting other provinces to learn from Nova Scotia's success.</p> <p>Continued to support members in fee applications and billing audits, including work to improve both the billing audit process and the Fee Committee process, in order to clear the backlog of audit appeal cases and fee applications in the queue.</p>
Advocate for effective recruitment and retention of physicians	<p>Continued to work with NSH and the Office of Recruitment to support better coordination of efforts supporting recruitment and onboarding of new physicians to the province, collaborating with all stakeholders involved in recruitment, including the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia, ISANS, community groups, physician leaders, the DHW, Dalhousie, etc.</p> <p>Worked with the College of Physician and Surgeons of Nova Scotia to develop and deliver the "Welcome to Medicine Collaborative," an onboarding course for new-to-Nova Scotia physicians.</p>
Enhance the reputation of physicians and of DNS as their professional association	<p>Developed and implemented public relations and digital marketing strategies to enhance trust and confidence in Nova Scotia's doctors, and measured the effectiveness of these strategies.</p> <p>Developed and implemented a strategic media relations plan that resulted in topical media interviews featuring the DNS President and physician subject matter experts and leaders speaking on a range of issues, including physician recruitment and retention, e-health initiatives and issues, patient access, emergency department pressures, systemic racism in healthcare, virtual care, wait times, mental health, influenza, scopes of practice and more.</p> <p>Launched a social media campaign for Doctors Day. The theme was "Your Doctors Care," emphasizing that physicians are here for Nova Scotians and are central to the healthcare they receive. Doctors Nova Scotia collected hundreds of messages of gratitude from Nova Scotians and shared those with physicians through an email campaign. Launched a media advertising campaign to support the digital campaign.</p>

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Serve the profession

Commitment	Actions
Provide practice supports to help physicians with the business side of practising medicine	<p>Supported physicians through various issues and conflicts impacting their ability to practise effectively, including support with contract matters, help navigating system processes and securing decisions, support with billing and audit appeals, support with retirement planning and the orientation of new physicians.</p> <p>Provided practice supports to help individuals and groups of physicians with the business side of medicine, as well as individual member benefits to help physicians achieve a happy, healthy and productive lifestyle. New guides, posters and resources were developed and shared with members. Education and guidance on the new LFM payment model was prepared and shared with family physicians.</p> <p>Provided enhanced e-health, privacy and security support to physicians through the association's E-health Committee, strategic e-health support and an e-health advisor.</p>

OPERATIONAL

Commitment	Actions
Ensure financial sustainability	Ended the 2024–25 fiscal year ahead of budget and stayed on track in 2025–26 to meet budget targets. The association’s investment portfolio continues to perform well.
Information systems	Continued to support office staff with working in a hybrid model to ensure employees maintain high engagement, productivity and positivity in the workplace.
Communications	Developed and implemented member communications strategy, using the following tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • magazine, direct email, weekly e-newsletter • DNS Learning Series • public/member awareness and education campaigns • other: FAQs, one-pagers, quick resource guides, etc.
Benefits and services	Administered the following member benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extended health and dental plan • Professional Support Program • enhanced Parental Leave Program
Equity, diversity and inclusion	Continued to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, (reconciliation) and accessibility, or EDI(R)A in medicine by providing education and resources for members and staff. Launched a refreshed EDI(R)A Framework, which defines annual and ongoing priorities. Delivered several staff, Board and member-facing EDI(R)A education sessions, engaging subject matter experts on specialized topics. Launched a Member EDI(R)A Committee to ensure member voices are heard, considered and contribute to the work of DNS. Established partnerships with multiple advocacy organizations focusing on Mi’kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities.

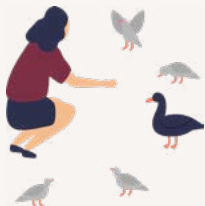


 **Doctors**
Nova Scotia

Pathways

Supporting physicians
on their journey

Promoting wellness, support, connection and
growth for Nova Scotia physicians



Reach out today

Contact Katelyn Junus
Physician wellness navigator

DNSPathways@doctorsns.com | 902-329-8689