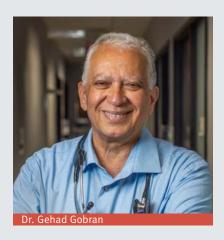


SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

TO COUNCIL 2024-25

Leadership Message







he past year has been another busy one, filled with forward momentum as we continue to support and advocate for physicians across the province.

A defining achievement was the successful implementation and first anniversary of the longitudinal family medicine (LFM) payment model. Designed to support comprehensive, continuous care, the LFM model is already showing positive trends with improved average earnings, expanded evening and weekend access, more in-person care and higher-than-required service encounters per hour. Supporting this transition has been a top priority for Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS), with staff – particularly members of the Physician Advisory Team (PAT) – working closely with members to provide guidance, troubleshoot challenges and collaborate with health-system partners.

We made strides in advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation and accessibility (EDIRA) within the association and the profession. We welcomed Basma Deef as our first senior diversity advisor; she has led key initiatives to foster a more inclusive organizational culture. Staff completed

foundational EDIRA training, the leadership team took part in an inclusive leadership series and DNS conducted policy audits and expanded partnerships with community organizations. As a part of this important work, the updated EDIRA framework has just been completed and is posted on our website.

We are proud to have also enhanced our physician wellness offerings this year through the launch of DNS Pathways. This new online hub for physician wellness support connects members to the Professional Support Program, DNS leadership training and mentorship programs, and an all-new offering: Family Plus Counselling.

This year marked the return of the refreshed Physician Leadership Development Program. The new and improved program focuses on inclusive leadership, adapting to a constantly changing health-care system, and leading and influencing people, teams and decision-makers in today's environment. The sixth cohort (the first group to experience the new program) graduated in May 2025.

While these were some key focus areas, we're also proud of the many other achievements from the past year, including on-the-ground support,

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collaboration with partners on major initiatives like the physician retirement fund, reducing red tape, recruitment and retention, and so much more. These highlights are captured in the pages that follow.

As we gather for this year's annual general meeting (AGM), we've introduced a series of improvements to the AGM motion process, aimed at making the meeting more inclusive, efficient and respectful. These include clearer guidelines for motion submissions, simplified rules of order and educational supports to help ensure everyone feels confident in the process. We have implemented confidential voting and time limits for speakers to ensure equitable participation. We're also prepared to extend the AGM business meeting if needed to ensure all business is addressed.

Together, we are building a more connected, inclusive and strong health-care system in Nova Scotia. Doctors Nova Scotia thanks you for all that you do to help keep Nova Scotians healthy.

Dr. Gehad Gobran

President

Nancy MacCready-Williams

CEO

Dr. Heather Johnson

Chair

Doctors Nova Scotia

2024–25 Board of Directors

Eighteen physicians, one 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 representation of general practitioners and specialists practising throughout the province. The majority of Board members are elected through a member-wide election; three members are appointed to help ensure optimal member representation.

EXECUTIVE

Dr. Gehad Gobran, President

Dr. Colin Audain, Past president

Dr. Shelly McNeil, 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

FAMILY PHYSICIANS OUTSIDE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Emmanuel Ajuwon

Dr. Michel Saccone (appointed)

Dr. Deanna Field

SPECIALISTS IN HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Andrea Lantz Powers

Dr. Caitlin Lees (appointed)

Dr. Jayani Abeysekera (appointed)

Dr. Nabha Shetty

Dr. Janice Chisholm

SPECIALISTS OUTSIDE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Jacob Puthenparumpil

Dr. Lucas Richardson

SECTION FORUM CHAIR

Dr. Michel Chiasson

MARITIME RESIDENT DOCTORS REPRESENTATIVE

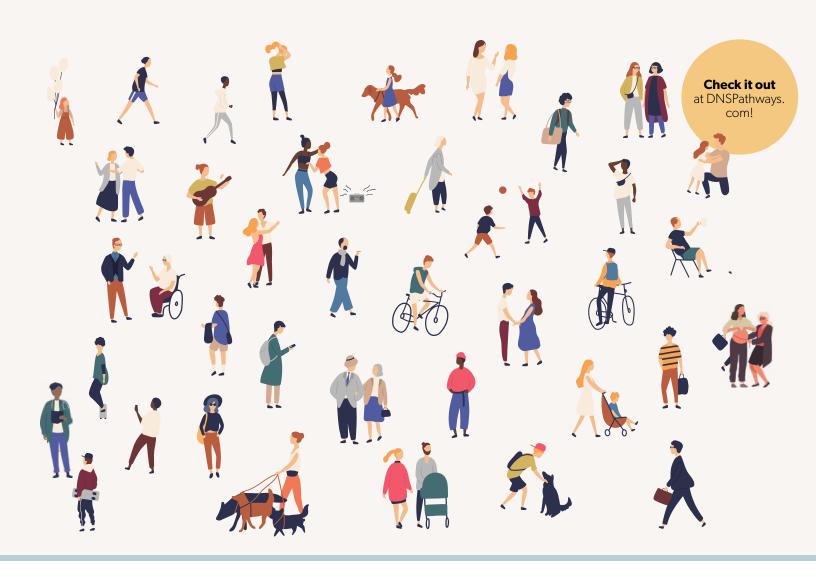
Dr. Brett Ells

DALHOUSIE MEDICAL STUDENT SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE

Nnamdi Chiekwe

CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Dr. Gerard MacDonald







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

Financial Report (Sep. 1, 2023, to Aug. 31, 2024)



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 riskmanagement practices. he financial statements for the year ended Aug. 31, 2024, and 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 \$5,350,109 (\$3,960,334 at Aug. 31, 2023). The operating fund reported a surplus of \$1,170,528 against a budgeted deficit of \$205,066 for a positive variance of \$1,375,595. This positive budget variance was made up of the following components:

- \$315,150 surplus from revenues higher than budgeted growth in membership dues.
- \$190,200 surplus from expenses lower than budgeted salary costs due to later hiring of budgeted positions.
- \$870,200 surplus from investments higher market valuation at year end; higher dividend income earned; second consecutive year with high investment results.

The future commitments fund has a balance of \$169,613 (\$237,957 at Aug. 31, 2023) after contract

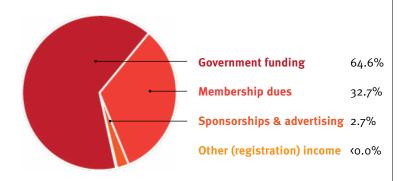
negotiation spending during the 2023 fiscal year.

The association invested \$111,992 in capital assets (\$332,582 in 2023). This included capital repairs to the building's skylights, roof and interior to prevent future leaking, scheduled computer hardware replacements and software upgrades, and furniture replacements.

Based on the 2023 Physician Agreement with the Department of Health and Wellness, DNS received \$8.892 million in funding toward the cost of member benefits programs (\$11.034 million in 2023). This funding was distributed to the various programs as follows:

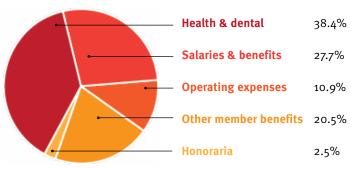
- \$6,450,155 65% of total health and dental plan costs (35% paid by plan members)
- \$2,722,050 parental leave
- \$252,362 professional support
- \$1,198,000 targeted projects
- \$410,484 benefits administration
- \$774 business of medicine legacy funding Overall, the association manages its operating budgets well and maintains a healthy financial position which has been boosted by strong investment returns in recent years.

Summary of funding revenues



Government funding \$11,033,824 (64.6%)
Membership dues \$5,590,076 (32.7%)
Sponsorships & advertising \$462,309 (2.7%)
Other (registration) income \$7,000 (0.0%)

Summary of expenses



Health & dental
Salaries & benefits
Operating expenses
Other member benefits
Honoraria

\$6,450,155 (38.4%) \$4,649,153 (27.7%) \$1,839,529 (10.9%) \$3,443,026 (20.5%) \$421,123 (2.5%)



2024-25 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 health-care landscape. Here are select highlights from the association's work over the past year.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, RECONCILIATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

In 2024, DNS made significant strides in its equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation and accessibility (EDIRA) efforts by hiring Basma Deef as the association's new senior diversity advisor to lead initiatives and foster an inclusive culture. The organization implemented comprehensive introductory EDIRA training for all staff, aimed at raising awareness and understanding of these principles. Additionally, the association's senior leadership team engaged in a three-part EDIRA in Leadership series to enhance their inclusive leadership skills, which are essential for shaping the organization's strategic direction.

Ms. Deef conducted audits of existing policies to introduce equitable practices aligned with the association's EDIRA goals. To strengthen relationships and collaboration, DNS is deepening partnerships with regional health authorities and community organizations, ensuring diverse perspectives inform its efforts. As part of ongoing development, the organization has just updated its EDIRA framework for 2025 and is enhancing its toolkit to support effective implementation of EDIRA practices among staff and members.

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 navigate the health-care system. They also help resolve issues in physicians' practices, their communities and the system itself in a confidential and supportive manner.

The Physician Advisory Team (PAT) is the primary mode of member engagement for DNS. This year, the PAT has been working hard to help members operationalize many of the key programs and initiatives that arose from the 2023 Physician Agreement, such as the internal medicine guaranteed daily income remuneration plan, general surgery and addiction medicine APP rollout, Allied Healthcare Provider Pilot Program and more. They have also managed hundreds of physician inquiries on topics such as LFM implementation and system navigation in primary care and collaborated with system partners to support physician recruitment and retention efforts. 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.

REDUCING RED TAPE FOR DOCTORS

Doctors Nova Scotia is proud to support the provincial Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness in its nationally leading work to reduce unnecessary physician burden. As of Jan. 1, 2025, the newly renamed Office of Service Efficiency had eliminated more than 425,000 hours of red tape for doctors through work ranging from reducing paperwork to enabling technology and improving bylaws and processes that stand in the way of efficiency. This exceeds the province's goal (and is a Canadian first) to reduce red tape for doctors by 400,000 hours annually. Spending less time on red tape allows physicians to do what they do best: care for patients.

ONE YEAR OF LFM

October 2024 marked the first anniversary of the implementation of the longitudinal family medicine (LFM) payment model. Although it's been a steep learning curve for some physicians, early data is showing the model's positive impact on patients and physicians. The data has shown an increase improved average earnings, expanded evening and weekend access, more in-person care and higher-than-required 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. Asha Dawson, Ron Milne and Robyn Pierce. 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 directly with members via email and social media, highlighting excellence in the profession and the positive impact physicians have on their patients and communities. In addition, the association provided support to 12 community-based physician navigators to offer Doctors Day gift baskets and special events for physicians working in underserviced areas of the province.



DNS PATHWAYS

Doctors Nova Scotia launched DNS Pathways (DNSpathways.com), a new online hub for physician wellness support, connecting members to the Professional Support Program, DNS leadership training and mentorship programs, and an all-new offering: Family Plus Counselling, which provides six sessions of free counselling delivered by registered counselling therapists or clinical social workers to physicians and their dependent family members. Support is available to all members in any stage of practice. Clinical social worker Katelyn Junus is the association's physician wellness navigator, connecting members to programs and support that will meet their needs.

PHYSICIAN RETIREMENT FUND

In October, Premier Tim Houston announced the the launch of the physician retirement fund that was promised as part of his election campaign. The retirement fund matches a portion of physicians' retirement savings contributions, prorated against full-time clinical status, based on the number of years they have practised in the province. Over 2,300 physicians opted in to the fund; they received their payments in April and May 2025.

With delivery of this promised retirement fund for physicians, the provincial government is sending the message that physicians are valued and wanted here. The fund will help set Nova Scotia apart from other provinces when recruiting new physicians, and it supports physicians who have already begun building their career and life in Nova Scotia.

MEDIA COVERAGE

From April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, DNS staff managed 100 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. In addition, staff provided background information and context for numerous opinion articles.

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Connect the profession		
Commitment	Actions	
Connecting physicians with each other	Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) physician advisors provided ongoing support to members in each health zone, ensuring they were connected to one another, monitoring their needs and responding as appropriate.	
	Continued support of the physician mentorship program for internationally trained physicians (ITPs) by Dr. Emmanuel Ajuwon.	
	Evaluated the Doctors Lounge, the association's online member discussion forum, and made adjustments to ensure the tool meets the needs of members.	
Connecting physicians with DNS	Enhanced supports for ITPs, including continuing to support ITPs with navigating the system.	
	Focused on supporting family physicians transitioning to the new longitudinal family medicine (LFM) payment model.	
	Increased outreach of the Professional Support Program (PSP) by focusing on upstream interventions and enhanced physician wellness offerings by introducing DNS Pathways and counselling services through Family Plus.	
Connecting physicians with the system	Continued to support the onboarding of new physicians to the province in collaboration with Nova Scotia Health (NSH), NSH recruiters and the municipally employed Community Navigators.	
	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.	
	Continued to support the development of physician leaders through various program and educational offerings and support to the Section of Physician Leaders. Hosted sixth session of the refreshed Physician Leadership Development Program.	
	Initiated the second annual McCarthy/Stewart International Medical Graduate Grant, which provides a one-time grant of \$10,000 to 10 successful ITPs each year.	
	Continued building relationships with physician assistant associations to support the advancement of physician assistants in Nova Scotia.	
	Participated on the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia's advisory committee to represent physicians' interests with respect to tariff implementation.	
	Supported the implementation and refinement of new payment models and supported physicians transitioning to new models, including the new LFM Rural for Small Sites, the revised regional hospitalist model, Addictions Alternative Payment Plan, and the General Internal Medicine daily stipends.	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Advocate for the profession

Commitment

Help make positive changes in population health and health-care policy through collaboration with government, Nova Scotia Health and IWK Health.

Actions

Continued to enhance relationships with e-health decision makers at the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and Nova Scotia Health (NSH) to influence e-health direction and establish governance models that will support enhanced physician engagement

Through involvement in provincial One Person One Record (OPOR) committee(s), continued to ensure physician engagement is prioritized throughout the OPOR initiative.

Advocated for enhanced supports, outreach and education for physicians required to transition to e-Referral and advised that it not be made mandatory for physicians.

Actively advocated for physician engagement as NSH launched the YourHealthNS (YHNS) app. Explored and responded to PHIA regulations legal framework, assessed member risks, participated in YHNS working group with the government, established a family physician and community specialist advisory committee, and supported the initiative through effective communications and physician engagement advice.

Engaged regularly with system leaders in primary health care strategic planning and implementation, on items including payment models, service deliverables, team-based care, conflict resolution, operational policy development and governance in primary care.

Supported the charitable arm of DNS, the Healthy Tomorrow Foundation, in launching its provincial social marketing campaign designed to encourage Nova Scotians to interrupt sedentary behaviour and take steps toward a healthier life by implementing short bouts of movement every day. In-kind supports from DNS continue and enhanced communications updated members about the work of the foundation.

Continued to advocate for compensation models to support the appropriate use of asynchronous virtual care. Participated on a national Virtual Care PTMA Committee that shares progress and best practices across the country. Continued to interact with the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), Canada Health Infoway and other organizations that are focused on expanding the use of virtual care for the benefit of patients.

Government relations

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.

Pursue fair compensation for physicians by negotiating provincial and local agreements and advocating for members' economic interests Continued to advocate for improved accountability structures and processes within the C/AFP framework.

Continued to advocate and work toward reducing administrative burden for physicians through the work of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness (ORASE). Hired Physician Administrative Burden Advisors, who work with ORASE to help quantify the hours saved and/or validate measures completed. They ensure physicians' perspectives are included when determining the impact of ORASE initiatives by engaging with their colleagues, providing general advice and input, and championing the work. The province met its target to reduce physician red tape by 400,000 hours at the end of 2024. This represents 80% of the unnecessary administrative burden doctors estimate they encounter.

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.

Advocate for effective recruitment and retention of physicians

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, ISANS, community groups, physician leaders, DHW, Dalhousie, etc.

Worked with the College of Physician and Surgeons of Nova Scotia to develop and deliver the Welcome Collaborative, an onboarding course for physicians new to the province.

9

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Advocate for the profession, cont.

Commitment

Enhance the reputation of physicians and of DNS as their professional association

Actions

Developed and implemented public relations and digital marketing strategies to enhance trust and confidence in Nova Scotia's doctors, and measured effectiveness of these strategies.

Developed and implemented a strategic media relations plan that resulted in hundreds of media interviews featuring the DNS President and physician subject matter experts and leaders speaking on a range of issues, including physician recruitment and retention, ehealth initiatives and issues, patient access, systemic racism in health care, virtual care, wait times, mental health, influenza, scopes of practice, and more.

Launched a social media campaign for Doctors Day. The theme was "Your Doctors Care." Doctors Nova Scotia collected hundreds of messages of gratitude from Nova Scotians and shared those directly with physicians through a targeted email and posted mail campaign. Launched a media advertising campaign to support the digital campaign.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Serve the profession

Commitment

Provide practice supports to help physicians with the business side of practising medicine

Actions

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.

Provided practice supports to help individuals and groups of physicians with the business side of practising medicine, as well as individual member benefits to help physicians achieve a happy, healthy and productive lifestyle. Delivered billing education seminars, with recordings posted to the DNS website for on-demand viewing. 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.

Provided enhanced e-health, privacy and security support to physicians through DNS's E-health Committee, strategic e-health support and an e-health advisor.

Provide practice supports to help physicians with the business side of practising medicine 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.

Provided practice supports to help individual and groups of physicians with the

business side of practising medicine, as well as individual member benefits to help physicians achieve a happy, healthy and productive lifestyle. Delivered billing education seminars and posted recordings to the DNS website for on-demand viewing.

Developed how-to guides on topics including how to close a practice and shared those guides with members.

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.

Refreshed the "E-health Privacy and Security Guide" to offer at-a-glance resources to help physicians understand privacy legislation and prevent or respond to privacy breaches and cyberattacks in their practices.

OPERATIONAL	
Commitment	Actions
Ensure financial sustainability	Ongoing work to modernize DNS's enterprise resource systems, including its membership database, finance and accounting systems, and their integration with each other.
Information systems	Continued to support office staff with working in a hybrid model to ensure the association maintains high engagement, productivity and positivity in the workplace.
Communications	Developed and implemented member communications strategy:
	Magazine, direct email, e-newsletter
	Webinar series
	Public/member awareness and education campaigns
	Other: FAQs, one-pagers, quick resource guides, etc.
Benefits and services	Administered the following member benefits:
	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 (EDIRA) in medicine by providing education and resources for members and staff. The association established an EDIA Committee and a Truth and Reconciliation Committee.
	Hired a new Senior Diversity Advisor and began the development of a refreshed EDIRA Framework, which defines annual and ongoing priorities.
	Applied an EDI lens to hiring practices and prioritized EDIA in 2024–25 recruitment for new staff positions.

