

Agenda Item# 2.1

Report on 2024 Member Motions

At the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM), delegates voted in favour of the following member motions:

1. *BE IT RESOLVED that the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting asks the Board of Directors to support Doctors Nova Scotia conducting a comprehensive review to identify and address structural gender-based bias in fee codes and physician remuneration.*
2. *BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia annual general meeting recommends that the Board of Directors adopt and support the [World Medical Association's \(WMA\) resolution on the protection of healthcare in Israel and Gaza, from the 226th WMA Council session held April 2024.](#)*

After a motion is passed at the AGM it becomes a resolution. It is then the responsibility of the Board to identify implications and determine the association's ability to carry out the resolution.

When making that decision the Board will take the following factors into consideration:

- Alignment with the strategic plan and direction;
- Financial resources required;
- Staff resources required;
- Best interests of the association;
- Legal implications; and
- Alignment with best practices in business and governance.

Gender-bias in fee codes and physician remuneration

The Board approved the following actions in response to this resolution:

1. **Department of Health & Wellness (DHW) advocacy** - In 2023, DNS staff were in conversations with the DHW to consider completing a gender-based analysis of physician compensation. This was being explored outside of the DHW physician services team. Unfortunately, this work has stalled. DNS staff will revitalize our advocacy efforts with those leading the work within DHW.
2. **Fee Committee** - The Fee Committee is responsible for providing decisions on all matters pertaining to the MSI Physician's Manual. The Fee Committee has decision-making authority to approve adjustments to the MSI Physician's Manual, including the introduction of new fees, revisions or deletions of existing fee codes, and additions, revisions or clarifications of the Preamble to the MSI Physician's Manual. As Co-Chair of the Fee Committee, DNS will:
 - Advocate that future Committee discussions should include gender equity in remuneration, ensuring that potential biases are carefully reviewed and addressed.

- Focus on identifying the more egregious biases in existing fee codes and submit applications to Fee Committee to prioritize those inequities for correction.
 - Ensure an intentional pause during future Physician Agreement negotiations to identify and address any gaps or unintended impacts on gender equity, thereby reinforcing our commitment to fair and equitable compensation for all physicians.
3. **Review PEI's new contract** – MSPEI has recently reached an agreement with the PEI government. They've secured a sizeable increase in pay for family physicians in longitudinal practice. The introduction of the longitudinal family medicine (LFM) payment model, overhead support and the opportunity to bill for prolonged visits are expected to have a similar impact in Nova Scotia. DNS staff will review PEI's newest contract with an equity lens to inform future work together.
 4. **Communication support** – The DNS communication team, with an intention to highlight pay inequity, will continue to look for opportunities to feature women, and individuals with diverse backgrounds/practices.
 5. **Modernize the Physician Manual** – DNS will continue to advocate to modernize the Physician Manual, while being mindful that – this will be a significant initiative that will divert time and resources from other priorities. In the meantime, DNS will continue to pursue increased alternate funding for specialties where fee code disparities are a significant issue, which has to date proven to be a more effective and efficient way to remedy gender pay disparity.
 6. **Connection with OMA Leadership** – We will connect with the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) to explore their work and strategies in addressing the gender pay gap and pay inequity. By learning from the OMA's initiatives, we can strengthen our own approach to reducing pay disparities and advancing gender equity in physician remuneration.

WMA resolution

The Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) Board of Directors decided not to support the WMA motion. However, the motion and ongoing discussion between the Board and staff created an important opportunity for DNS to reflect, learn, and identify areas within the organization that require attention and improvement. The Board recognized the value in the initial motion coming forward, as it inspired important discussions and highlighted the need for DNS to improve the process around member resolutions so that all delegates at the annual general meeting understand the process for submitting motions and rules and procedures for debate. Most importantly, it highlighted the need for DNS to lay the groundwork for how the association can effectively support its members in the face of increasing conflicts and crises. We are committed to using this experience to strengthen our practices moving forward. As a result, DNS will be undertaking the following actions based on the insights gained from the member and Board discussions around this motion:

1. **Impact on Nova Scotia physicians** – DNS staff will look for opportunities to educate physicians on the impact that international conflicts have on Nova Scotia physicians, such as physician wellness, connection to community, recruitment and retention, etc.

2. **Advocacy** – Given the complexity of this issue, DNS has limited ability to effect change on a national and international scale. However, it does have influence with specific partners and audiences. DNS staff will consider the impact of advocating to the CMA to speak at the national level on behalf of physicians. DNS staff will also look for additional impactful opportunities to advocate on this issue.
3. **Learning opportunity** – DNS staff will request a meeting with the WMA to learn more about how they developed their motion and the impact they feel it has had. This will help inform how we approach future work relating to this motion, and others as they arise.
4. **Explore a position on DNS’s role on geopolitical conflict** – DNS staff will explore the organization’s stance and potential role regarding geopolitical conflicts and their impact on the health-care system in Nova Scotia. This exploration will involve examining the implications for physician wellness, community connection, and recruitment and retention efforts. By understanding our position, DNS can better advocate for Nova Scotia physicians and respond effectively to the challenges arising from international conflicts.

To date, DNS staff, working closely with the Policy and Health Issues Committee, have developed key principles for this work, literature review, communication audit, and physician engagement opportunities.

5. **Establishing a physician EDIRA committee** – DNS currently has two EDIRA-related committees: 1) EDIA Committee 2) Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC). Both are staff led. A physician EDIRA committee is being established. The terms of reference has been developed and recruiting for members will take place in fall 2025. This work is not directly related to the motions; however, it could help inform future work in the EDIRA space and the association’s approach and response to future motions.

As a result of this motion, and the process surrounding it, DNS has revamped its motion process. This is a direct result of the experience of those who participated in the 2024 motion process.

AGM Motion Process

Although not directly related to acting on these motions, there were lessons learned from some processes that didn’t work well at last year’s AGM. The Governance Committee has reviewed and updated the process for debating and submitting motions. The following actions have been taken:

- A Member Motions Committee has been put in place to review member motions in advance, share feedback with the mover and seconder, and educate the mover and seconder on the motions process at the AGM.
- Starting in 2025, the rules of order for debating member motions at the AGM have been simplified. This is to ensure the process is easy to understand and give everyone an equal opportunity to participate to the degree possible. These changes involve relaxing some of the rigid procedural rules to allow the group to debate and consider amendments or details without the same time constraints and strict rules of the formal assembly.

- An outline has been developed to educate members on the new process for debating motions and is provided in advance on the Annual Conference website and with the meeting materials.
- The *Guidelines for Preparing Motions for the AGM* has been updated to include these changes.