Proceedings

172nd Annual General Meeting
Saturday, June 6, 2026
Delta Hotels Dartmouth/Zoom

MISSION STATEMENT

To maintain the integrity and honour of the medical profession, to represent all members equitably, and to promote high quality healthcare and disease prevention in Nova Scotia.

Doctors Nova Scotia

AGM 2026 proceedings

The 172nd Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) Annual General Meeting (AGM) began with the introduction of Dr. Heather Johnson, Chair of the Board; Dr. Shelly McNeil, President; Dr. Amanda MacDonald Green, President-elect, Nancy MacCready-Williams, CEO, Doctors Nova Scotia, and DNS staff.

The Chair introduced the special guests from the other provincial and territorial medical associations and the Canadian Medical Association (CMA):

- Dr. André Bernard, Chair of the Board
- Dr. Margot Burnell, Past President
- Owen Adams, Senior Advisor to the CEO
- Sheila Beehler-Walsh, Strategic Relationships and Alliances

The Chair also introduced and welcomed the medical learners attending the AGM who have been sponsored by DNS, including learners from Promoting Leadership in health for African Nova Scotians (PLANS) and Keknu'tmasiek Ta'n Tel Welo'ltimk.

1. Call to Order

1.1 Opening of the Annual General Meeting
The chair called the meeting to order and declared the 172nd AGM in session. She started the meeting by delivering a land acknowledgment, noting that we all live and work in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

At DNS, we have much more to learn and do to embrace the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The chair encouraged everyone to engage with the Commission's Calls to Action, reflect on their own role in reconciliation and take meaningful steps toward change. Doctors Nova Scotia recognizes that statements and acknowledgments are symbolic in nature and must be accompanied by meaningful work and action. We celebrate the rich heritage and continued presence of African Nova Scotians, whose influence is deeply woven into the history of Nova Scotia.

Doctors Nova Scotia is committed to working with the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian leaders, the medical community, physicians and system partners to disrupt systemic racism and decolonize the healthcare system to improve the healthcare experiences of Indigenous people in Nova Scotia. This work requires building and sustaining relationships grounded in trust, respect and accountability. We are all Treaty people.

1.2 Meeting Guidelines
The Chair reviewed the meeting guidelines, including the process for voting on motions and engaging in discussion.

1.3 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.
The following motion was moved by Dr. Gehad Gobran and seconded by Dr. Lynn Bussey:

Resolution – Agenda
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting approves the agenda for the June 6, 2026, meeting. CARRIED

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

2. Proceeedings of June 7, 2025, Annual General Meeting

A copy of the proceedings from the 2025 AGM were included in the registration package that was distributed to delegates before the meeting. There were no questions or comments regarding the record of those proceedings.

3. In Memoriam

The Chair asked the delegation to pause to honour and remember the members of Doctors Nova Scotia who are no longer with us, with special reflection on those lost over the past year. Their dedication and contributions made a lasting difference, and their impact will not be forgotten. The chair also acknowledged the recent passing of a long-time DNS staff member, Shirley Miller. Shirley

dedicated 44 years of service to DNS before retiring in 2014.

A moment of silence was observed.

4. Approval of Annual Report

A copy of the 2025–26 Annual Report was included with the registration package that was distributed to delegates in advance of the meeting. There were no questions or comments regarding the content of that report.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. André Bernard and seconded by Dr. Lynn Bussey:

Resolution – Annual Report
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting accept all narrative portions of the 2025–26 Annual Report. CARRIED

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

5. Canadian Medical Association Address

Dr. Margot Burnell, Past President of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), addressed the delegation. She delivered a land acknowledgment and thanked the delegation for the opportunity to speak.

Dr. Burnell highlighted the shared challenges and opportunities facing physicians across Canada, with particular relevance to Atlantic regions. Key system pressures include limited access to primary care, heavy administrative burdens, disconnected digital tools and physician burnout, all of which contribute to moral distress and hinder patient care.

Despite these challenges, Dr. Burnell emphasized the profession's strengths –collaboration, commitment to improvement and a shared goal of better patient outcomes. Priority areas for change include expanding team-based care, improving access, supporting physician well-being, addressing misinformation, advancing reconciliation with Indigenous communities, responding to climate-related health impacts and responsibly integrating AI into healthcare.

A central theme was the importance of relationships, between providers, patients and communities, as the foundation for meaningful system change. Dr. Burnell expressed optimism for a future where all patients are connected to primary care teams, care is equitable and culturally safe, and innovation supports better outcomes.

Dr. Burnell concluded with encouragement for physician engagement and leadership, noting the upcoming CMA presidential election and the importance of a strong, collective physician voice in shaping the future of healthcare.

6. Audit Committee Report

Dr. Leisha Hawker, Chair of the Audit Committee, presented the Audit Committee report, which included an overview of the Audited Financial statements for the year ending Aug. 31, 2025.

6.1 Review Audited Financial Statements for 2024–25
The detailed audited financial statements for the year ending Aug. 31, 2025, were included with the delegate registration package and were also available online prior to the meeting.

Dr. Hawker provided an overview of committee's governance responsibilities, financial performance and a proposed dues increase. She outlined its role in overseeing accounting policies, internal controls, risk management and compliance. All annual objectives were successfully completed, and the audited financial statements for the year ending Aug. 31, 2025, received an unqualified opinion from auditors, confirming accuracy and adherence to accounting standards.

Dr. Hawker reported that the organization had

a $252,000 operating surplus, outperforming a planned deficit due to higher-than-expected membership dues revenue, lower expenses and strong investment returns. Operating costs were about $6.4 million, largely driven by staff salaries and physician honoraria. The member benefits fund totaled $12.2 million, covering health, dental, parental leave and physician support programs, with most costs funded through the Department of Health and Wellness.

Investments generated over $1 million in net income, though market volatility remains a factor. The organization maintains a low-risk, long-term investment approach.

Looking ahead, Dr. Hawker shared that early forecasting for the 2025–26 fiscal year indicate a smaller-than-budgeted deficit, stable membership growth and continued cost control.

6.2 Dues increase effective September 2026
A recommended dues increase of $300 effective Sept. 1, 2026, was presented to the delegation for consideration. The increase aligns with the organization's five-year financial strategy and is intended to support a growing membership, expand services based on member feedback, strengthen organizational capacity and prepare for upcoming negotiations. With the increase, dues remain around the mid-range nationally. The increase only applies to the full membership dues category; other categories remain the same. The increase has been endorsed by both the Audit Committee and the Board of Directors.

Following discussion and questions, primarily about how additional funds would be allocated and the impact of inflation on operations, the motion to approve the dues increase was passed.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. Leisha Hawker and seconded by Dr. Michel Chiasson:

Resolution – Dues increase
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting approves an increase to full member dues, from $1,950 to $2,250, effective Sept. 1, 2026. CARRIED

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

7. Nominating Committee Report

7.1 President-elect
Dr. Shelly McNeil, DNS 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 AGM.

This year the Nominating Committee recommends Dr. Christine Short, a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Specialist based in Halifax for 2026–27 President-elect. The Committee determined that Dr. Short meets the selection criteria and expressed strong confidence in her leadership abilities, noting that she is highly respected by colleagues within the medical community.

The Board of Directors passed a motion at its March 27, 2026, meeting to endorse the committee's nomination of Dr. Short.

Members of the delegation expressed their support for the committee's recommendation, agreeing that Dr. Short is an excellent candidate for the role. Dr. Short will formally step into the role of President-elect following the AGM and will become President in June 2027.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. Shelly McNeil and seconded by Dr. Amanda MacDonald Green:

Resolution – President-elect
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting approve Dr. Christine Short as President-elect for 2026–27. CARRIED

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

7.2 2026–27 Board of Directors
Dr. McNeil reported that this year the Board welcomed the following new members:

- Drs. Travis Carpenter and Michal Chiasson, both elected for three-year terms
- Drs. Natasha Harlow, Chakshu Sahi and Ngozi Ezeanozie, each appointed for a one-year term
- Dr. Brent Young, CMA Board representative, for a three-year term
- Mr. Maximilian van Zyl, Dalhousie Medical Student Society Representative, for a one-year term

A complete list of the 2026–27 Board of Directors can be found on the DNS website.

Additionally, on behalf of the association, Dr. McNeil extended a special thank you to the Board members whose terms concluded this month: Drs. Muna Chowdhury, Deanna Field, Gehad Gobran, Kristin Ko, Gerard MacDonald, Oliva Ortiz-Alvarez, Abraham Rudnick, Nabha Shetty and Mr. Jonathan Mansvelt.

Donations will be made in each person's name to the Foundation for the Hospice Halifax.

8. By-law Revisions

The Governance Committee review the By-laws annually 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 are proposed revisions to Section 11, pertaining to referendums. The revisions were thoroughly reviewed and approved by the Governance Committee, then endorsed by the Board of Directors.

The changes focus on clarifying when a membership referendum is required, particularly for agreements with government and modifications to programs and benefits. The addition of new sections 11.4 and 11.5 in the By-laws specify that DNS can make beneficial adjustments to existing programs without a referendum, while still ensuring member involvement for significant or contentious changes.

With no questions raised or debate, the motion proceeded to a vote.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. Lynn Bussey and seconded by Dr. Leisha Hawker:

Resolution – Approval of Revised By-laws
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting approves the revised By-laws as presented at the June 6, 2026, meeting.
CARRIED

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

9. Approval of New Section

9.1 Section of Public Health
Dr. Ryan Sommers presented a motion for the creation of a new Section of Public Health. Dr. Sommers explained that public health concerns are increasingly relevant to clinical practice in Nova Scotia. Addressing communicable diseases, emergency preparedness, harm reduction, health equity, environmental health, and the effects of social and economic conditions requires coordinated physician engagement at the population level. Although many DNS members contribute to these efforts, DNS currently lacks a formal structure to support collaboration and coordinated physician input on public health issues, and the creation of this section would address this need.

With no questions or debate, the motion proceeded to a vote.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. Ryan

Sommers and seconded by Dr. Joel Cox:

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

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

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 172nd annual meeting of Doctors Nova Scotia was adjourned at 9:55 a.m. The President Installation and Members Forum were held following the meeting.

The following resolution was moved by Dr. André Bernard and seconded by Dr. Mike Fleming:

Resolution – Adjournment
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the 172nd Doctors Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting be adjourned. CARRIED

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