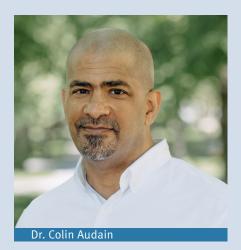


ANNUAL REPORT



Leadership Message







It has been another busy year for Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS). Concluding the association's first round of interest-based negotiations, then supporting Nova Scotia's physicians through a quick ratification vote and the implementation of the 2023 Physician Agreement and C/AFP Agreement, have been our most important work over the past 12 months.

As always, our priority is helping physicians thrive personally and professionally by working to connect, advocate on behalf of and serve the profession. In 2023–24, that meant meeting with groups of physicians from across the province as we ratified the new physician agreements and implemented the new Longitudinal Family Medicine

(LFM) payment model. This new payment model aims to provide stable, equitable funding for physicians who provide longitudinal family medicine.

Doctors Nova Scotia has been working hard to support physicians transitioning from alternative payment plans and fee-forservice work into the LFM. Staff members spent countless hours working directly with physicians to answer questions and provide guidance, whether one-on-one, in written form or via webinar.

Helping our members thrive also meant revitalizing our physician leadership offerings. Following a comprehensive review, the Physician Leadership Development Program is back and better than ever, offering a new and refreshed experience that focuses on inclusive leadership. The sixth cohort begins in fall 2024.

We also ramped up the supports we provide to international medical graduates, medical learners and new physicians, as well as continuing our advocacy work, providing additional business of medicine resources, and redoubling our efforts to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in the association and the profession at large. We also continued to provide the services you've come to depend on us for, including the extended health and dental plan, parental leave and our Professional Support Program.

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At DNS, we believe that cultivating a strong, vibrant, connected physician workforce is the key to building a high-functioning health-care system. We recognize the hard work you do to help keep Nova Scotians healthy.

Read more about our work over the last year in the following pages.

Dr. Colin Audain President, Doctors Nova Scotia

Nancy MacCready-Williams CEO, Doctors Nova Scotia

Dr. André Bernard Chair, Doctors Nova Scotia

Dr. Colin AudainPresident

Nancy MacCready-Williams
CEO

Nomay MacCready Willias

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Dr. André Bernard Chair

Doctors Nova Scotia

2023–24 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. Colin Audain, President

Dr. Leisha Hawker, Past-president

Dr. Gehad Gobran, President-elect

Dr. André Bernard, Chair of the Board

Dr. Heather Johnson, Incoming Chair of the Board

Dr. Gerard MacDonald, Audit Committee chair

FAMILY PHYSICIANS IN HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Lynn Bussey

Dr. Cindy Marshall

FAMILY PHYSICIANS OUTSIDE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Emmanuel Ajuwon (appointed)

Dr. Roshan Abid (appointed)

Dr. Deanna Field

Dr. Amanda MacDonald Green

SPECIALISTS IN HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Andrea Lantz Powers

Dr. Kelly Dakin-Hache

Dr. Jayani Abeysekera (appointed)

Dr. Nabha Shetty

SPECIALISTS OUTSIDE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Dr. Islam Eissa

Dr. Lucas Richardson

SECTION FORUM CHAIR

Dr. Michel Chiasson

MARITIME RESIDENT DOCTORS REPRESENTATIVE

Dr. Brett Ells

DALHOUSIE MEDICAL STUDENT SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE **Korede Akindoju**

CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Dr. Gerard MacDonald

Financial Report (Sep. 1, 2022, to Aug. 31, 2023)



Dr. Gerard MacDonald,

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, 2023, 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 \$3,960,334 (\$3,209,416 at Aug. 31, 2022). The operating fund reported a surplus of \$598,615 against a budgeted deficit of \$92,774 for a positive variance of \$691,400. This positive budget variance was made up of the following components:

- \$269,700 surplus from revenues higher than budgeted membership dues; new sponsorship arrangements
- \$51,500 surplus from expenses lower than budgeted honoraria costs due to virtual meetings
- \$370,200 surplus from investments higher market valuation at year end; this offsets the large market value losses reported in 2022

The future commitments fund has a balance of \$237,957 (\$892,802 at Aug. 31, 2022) after contract negotiation spending during the 2023 fiscal year.

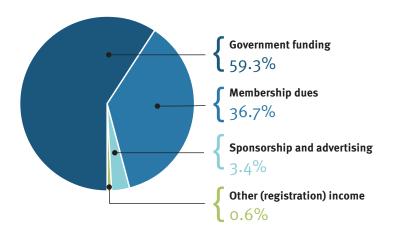
The association invested \$332,582 in capital assets (\$354,259 in 2022). This included capital repairs to the building, including new flooring and painting, scheduled computer hardware replacements and software upgrades, furniture and fixture replacements, and completion of the project to replace our enterprise resource system.

Based on the master agreement with the Department of Health and Wellness, DNS received \$8.892 million in funding toward the cost of member benefits programs (\$8.296 million in 2022). This funding was distributed to the various programs as follows:

- \$5,786,900 65% of total health and dental plan costs (35% paid by plan members)
- \$1,539,000 parental leave
- \$ 67,600 professional support
- \$1,198,000 targeted projects
- \$300,000 benefits administration

Overall, the association maintains a healthy financial position and continues to perform well against targets set annually.

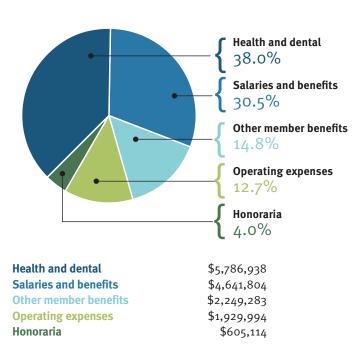
Summary of funding revenues

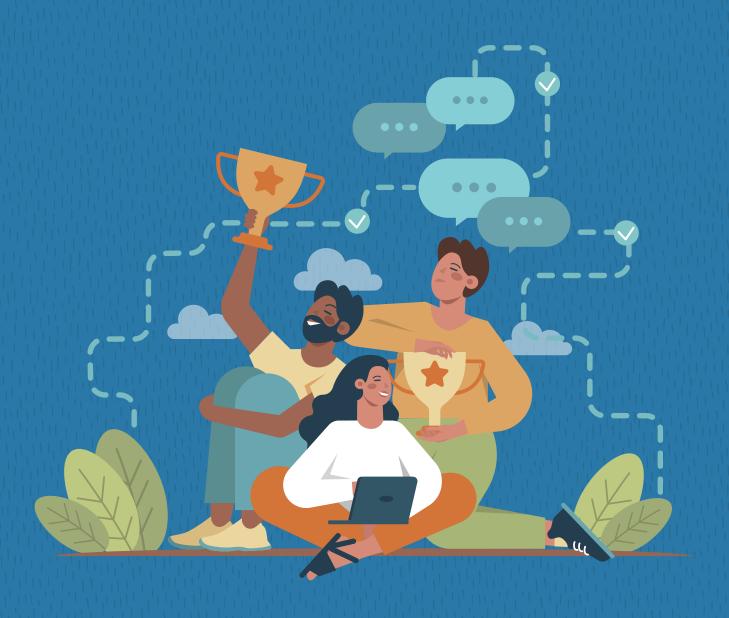


Government funding Membership dues Other (registration) income Sponsorship and advertising

\$8,892,243 \$5,508,589 \$504,484 \$92,000

Summary of expenses





2023-24 Achievements

Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) works on behalf of physicians throughout Nova Scotia, who continue to demonstrate tremendous leadership and determination in navigating a demanding health-care landscape. Here are several highlights from the association over the past year.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS



After four months of interest-based negotiations, dozens of member meetings and a quick-turnaround ratification vote, Nova Scotia's physicians approved two new, four-year agreements in July. It is anticipated that the 2023 Physician Agreement and C/AFP Agreement will result in at least \$180 million of additional annual investment in physician services over four years.

Contract implementation work took the forefront for the latter six months of 2023 as DNS staff worked closely with colleagues at the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), MSI, Nova Scotia Health (NSH) and IWK Health to bring the agreements into action.

NEW PAYMENT MODEL

A major part of the 2023 Physician Agreement was the development of the Longitudinal Family Medicine (LFM) payment model. This new payment model aims to provide stable, equitable funding for physicians who provide longitudinal family medicine, with a particular focus on access and attachment. The model offers competitive compensation and enhanced accountability, through a payment based on hours worked, services delivered and panel size.



The LFM payment model brings significant change for primary care physicians, and DNS is working hard to implement the model while supporting physicians through this transition time. The Physician Advisory Team (PAT) and Physician Compensation Team have spent countless hours working directly with physicians to answer questions and provide guidance on billing inside and outside the LFM, panel size changes, claiming hours, fee-for-service conversion and more. The association has also produced written resources that outline and explain the model in detail, and has facilitated several webinars to connect physicians with one another to discuss learning curves and best practices.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Doctors Nova Scotia continued to advance equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in medicine by providing programs, education and resources for members and staff. The association established an EDI working group and a Truth and Reconciliation working group.

Doctors Nova Scotia also began the biennial revision of the EDI framework, which also defines annual and ongoing priorities.

As part of its larger EDI work, the association published a policy paper on harm reduction. Doctors Nova Scotia also hosted a harm reduction education session as a part of its annual conference in June 2023; more than 50 physicians attended.

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 the Physician Advisory Team (PAT). 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 PAT is the primary mode of member engagement for DNS. This year, the PAT managed hundreds of physician inquiries on topics such as LFM implementation, contract ratification, system navigation in primary care, the IMG Welcome Collaborative (an initiative of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia, or CPSNS), 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.

ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN WORK

Doctors Nova Scotia continued to support the provincial Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness in its efforts to reduce physician administrative burden. In a Canadian first, Nova Scotia set a target to reduce physician red tape by 400,000 hours a year by end of 2024. This represents 80% of the unnecessary administrative burden doctors estimate they encounter.

ONE PERSON ONE RECORD

In 2023, DNS continued its advocacy for an integrated e-health system for the province. The launch of One Person One Record (OPOR) will see the province move toward improved health-system governance, integration of patient information across the care continuum, and standardized processes and practices. Doctors Nova Scotia will continue to bring the physician perspective to discussions around the development of OPOR.

SHARING GRATITUDE FOR PHYSICIANS

To mark Doctors Day on May 1, DNS held its annual physician recognition



Dr. Onyebuchi "Stephanie" Ofoegbu

campaign, highlighting the work of Drs. Reza Mehrpooya, Joe Gillis and Onyebuchi "Stephanie" Ofoegbu. The association also solicited thank-you notes from Nova Scotians to their physicians. Acknowledgments flooded in, with hundreds of Nova Scotians sharing kudos for their physicians. Doctors Nova Scotia shared the feedback directly with members via emails and postcards, and with the public on social media, highlighting excellence in the profession and raising the profile of physicians. The association also partnered with community physician navigators and recruiters to provide funds for Doctors Day gift baskets, food and special events for doctors and medical learners working in underserviced areas of the province.

REVITALIZED LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Doctors Nova Scotia continues to roll out its multipronged approach to leadership training, with Section of Physician Leadership meetings, multi-day Physician Leadership Institute courses, and more in-depth training through the Physician Leadership Development Program (PLDP). Following a comprehensive review, the PLDP is back and better than ever. The application process for the sixth cohort of the eight-month program launched in April 2024 and the course will begin in the fall.

Over the past year, DNS has worked with the physician community, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), educators and the PLDP advisory committee to reimagine the PLDP while remaining true to the core leadership values the program has espoused since it launched. The sixth cohort will enjoy a new and refreshed experience that 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.

ENHANCING VIRTUAL EDUCATION

Over the last several years, DNS has developed expertise on planning and hosting webinars. In 2023, the association developed a webinar strategy, putting in place a framework and plan to ensure the association can provide enhanced virtual education opportunities for members. Since

the plan was developed, DNS has hosted approximately 20 webinars, providing information or discussion on current health-care issues, connecting and engaging physicians, providing supports to help physicians with the business of medicine and supporting physician wellness. These webinars were in addition to another 20 webinars that were organized to facilitate contract implementation.

Doctors Nova Scotia looks forward to continuing to implement this plan with support from partners such as the DHW, NSH, IWK Health, Dalhousie University, MSI, CPSNS, and physicians who are interested in bringing forward common issues for discussion.

MEDIA COVERAGE

From April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, DNS staff managed over 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 unattached patients/primary care access, negotiations and the new contracts, and physician recruitment and retention. In addition, staff provided background information and context for numerous opinion articles.





STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Connect the profession

Commitment	Actions
Connecting physicians with each other	 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. Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) continued support of the physician mentorship program for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) led by Dr. Emmanuel Ajuwon. Staff evaluated the Doctors Lounge, the online member discussion forum, and adjusted to ensure the tool meets the needs of members.
Connecting physicians with DNS	 Developed a new member engagement strategy to define member engagement for the association, outline engagement strategies and measure success. Built on the success of DNS's COVID-19 Webinar Series to develop a webinar strategy, including a webinar content plan and calendar of events to ensure we continue to deliver value to members. The Physician Advisory Team continued to build and enhance relationships with physicians in each zone. A particular focus this year was supporting family physicians considering or transitioning to the new Longitudinal Family Medicine (LFM) payment model. The Professional Support Program (PSP) increased outreach by focusing on upstream interventions, added a new Physician Wellness Navigator position, and enhanced physician wellness offerings. Hosted dinners for physician members, including learners, IMGs, residents and others, across the province.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Connect the profession, cont.

Commitment	Actions
Connecting physicians with the system	 Continued to support the onboarding of new physicians to the province in collaboration with Nova Scotia Health (NSH), the NSH recruitment team and 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 genderaffirming care.
	 Continued to support the development of physician leaders through various program and educational offerings and the Section of Physician Leaders. Revamped the Physician Leadership Development Program to meet the evolving needs of physician leaders.
	• Continued to implement the physician wellness strategy ("Restoring the Joy in the Practice of Medicine"), with a particular focus on enhancing the Professional Support Program in response to increased investment in physician wellness through the 2023 Physician Agreement.
	• Initiated the second McCarthy/Stewart International Medical Graduate Grant, which provides a one-time grant of \$10,000 to each of 10 successful IMGs each year.
	• Continued building relationships with provincial and national 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' interest with respect to tariff implementation.
	 Participated in an NSH-led review of the existing hospitalist payment model; provided feedback and support to DNS members engaged in the development of the proposal for the new model.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Advocate for the profession

Commitment	Actions
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 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. Appeared before the Law Amendments Committee representing physicians' concerns about the amendments to the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) tabled under
	 Bill No. 419, the Financial Measures (2024) Act. Actively participated in the Primary Health Care Partners Table and continue to advocate for the table to meet more regularly and be part of decision-making process within primary health care at the system level. Engaged regularly with system leaders in primary health care strategic planning and implementation, 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
	 a fourth iteration of a 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 unstructured movement into their daily life. In-kind supports from DNS continue and enhanced communications updated members about the work of the foundation. Published a research paper in February 2024 titled "Patient Engagement in Provincial and Territorial Medical Association Decision-Making: A Rapid Scoping Review" in the Cureus Journal of Medical Sciences.
Government relations	 Focused on building and nurturing relationships with key decision-makers in the health system, with a particular focus on the DHW and NSH, to support interest-based negotiations. Continued to strive to secure the investments and initiatives committed by the Progressive Conservative government. Responded to requests to meet with opposition parties and legislative committees.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Advocate for the profession, cont.

Commitment

Pursue fair compensation for physicians by negotiating provincial and local agreements and advocating for members' economic interests.

Actions

- Concluded a successful round of negotiations using an interest-based approach that helped to secure both a stronger outcome and stronger relationships with key decision-makers. It's anticipated that the 2023 Physician Agreement and C/AFP Agreement will result in at least \$180 million of additional annual investment in physician services over the four years of the contracts.
- Conducted and concluded contract ratification, which included dozens of member meetings, the development of educational materials and significant one-on-one support from DNS Physician Advisors. Nova Scotia's physicians approved both new four-year agreements.
- Began implementing new contracts, working closely with the DHW, MSI, NSH and IWK Health to bring the agreements into action.
- Supported implementation of the new LFM payment model, which aims to provide stable, equitable funding for physicians who provide longitudinal family medicine.
- 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 two Physician Administrative Burden Advisors, who work
 with ORASE to help quantify the hours saved and/or validate measures completed.
 They will 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.
- Continued to support members in fee applications and billing audits, including work
 to improve the billing audit process and clear the backlog of audit appeal cases in the
 queues.

Advocate for effective recruitment and retention of physicians

- Continued to work with NSH and the Office of Physician Recruitment and Retention
 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, the
 DHW, the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, Dalhousie, community
 groups and physician leaders.
- Worked with the College of Physician and Surgeons of Nova Scotia to develop and deliver Welcome Collaborative Physician Orientation Program, an onboarding course for new-to-Nova Scotia physicians.
- The association's Physician Advisory Team has established and continues to nurture relationships with NSH recruiters, in addition to working with all other stakeholders involved in recruitment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Advocate for the profession, cont.

Commitment

Actions

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

- 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.
- 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, e-health 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 Care is Our Calling." 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 Doctors Day campaign.
- Refreshed and relaunched YourDoctors.ca, the association's public-facing marketing website, with a new design and enhanced functionality to support the goals and objectives of the digital marketing strategy.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Serve the profession

Commitment

Actions

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 individuals and groups of physicians with the
 business of 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 new guides, posters and resources and shared with members. Prepared
 and shared education and guidance on the new LFM payment model with family
 physicians through a webinar and special interest publication.
- Provided enhanced e-health, privacy and security support to physicians through the association's E-health Committee, strategic e-health support and e-health advisor.

OPERATIONAL

Commitment	Actions
Ensure financial sustainability	 Continued ongoing work to modernize the association's enterprise resource systems, including its membership database, finance and accounting systems, and their integration with each other and the website.
Information systems	 Continued to support office staff with working in a hybrid model where they balance working from home and working in the office.
Communications	 Developed and implemented member communications strategy, with communications assets including: magazine, direct email, e-newsletter, webinar series, public/member awareness and education campaigns, 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 and inclusion (EDI) in medicine by providing programs, education and resources for members and staff. The association established an EDI working group and a Truth and Reconciliation working group. Began the process for the biennial revision of the EDI framework, which also defines annual and ongoing priorities. Applied EDI lens to hiring practices and prioritized EDI in 2023–24 recruitment for now staff positions.
Atlantic register	 Worked with Atlantic Provincial/Territorial Medical Associations and professional colleges to develop an approach to Atlantic licensure. A pilot project launched in 2023 and will be evaluated after one year.

In Memoriam March 5, 2023 – March 5, 2024

Dr. Bryan B. Quinn on March 5, 2023, in Piper's Cove

Dr. John Frederick O'Connor on March 21, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. Hesham Lakosha on April 9, 2023 in Halifax

Dr. Krystian M. Szczesny on April 16, 2023, in Amherst

Dr. George A. Sapp on April 29, 2023, in Chester

Dr. Raymond P. LeBlanc on July 10, 2023, in Martins River

Dr. Philip C. Bagnell on July 15, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. James H. Oxner on July 28, 2023, in Dartmouth

Dr. K. Michael Schmidt on Aug. 20, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. Rajender Parkash on Aug. 21, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. Magdalena Walentynowicz on Aug. 29, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. Robert B. MacWhirter on Sept. 1, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. John N. A. Atia on Sept. 14, 2023, in Amherst

Dr. Denis M. Falvey on Sept. 14, 2023, in Rose Bay

Dr. Simon A. L. Brooks on Sept. 15, 2023, in Lunenburg

Dr. Edward C. Ross on Sept. 22, 2023, in Amherst

Dr. Allan V. Wilkie on Oct. 19, 2023, in Port Williams

Dr. Leonard S. O'Neil on Oct. 21, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. Roland D. Saxon on Oct. 24, 2023, in Middleton

Dr. G. Brian Ferguson on Oct. 26, 2023, in Amherst

Dr. Yasmine David on Oct. 28, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. Navin M. Patel on Nov. 12, 2023, in Sydney

Dr. Terry A. Rohland on Nov. 15, 2023, in Pubnico

Dr. Gregory L. Roy on Nov. 16, 2023, in Dartmouth

Dr. Keith E. Walling on Nov. 19, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. Edward V. Rafuse on Nov. 26, 2023, in Chester

Dr. Michael D. Evans on Nov. 28, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. Alistair Munro on Dec. 1, 2023, in Halifax

Dr. Sean Davis on Dec. 5, 2023, in Dayton

Dr. Christian L. Belcourt on Dec. 21, 2023, in Dartmouth

Dr. Rose A. Johnson on Jan. 15, 2024, in Pictou

Dr. Curtis A. Steele on Jan. 25, 2024, in Halifax

Dr. E. Carl Abbott on Feb. 8, 2024, in Halifax

Dr. Thomas G. Hydorn on Feb. 13, 2024, in Amherst

Dr. Rolf-Dieter Neu on Feb. 27, 2024, in Halifax

Dr. Philip B. Jardine on March 5, 2024, in Musquodoboit Harbour



