



Strategic Plan Renewal: Discussion Prep Kit

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Background (read for helpful context)

Purpose of the strategic plan

The Department of Medicine’s (DoM) previous strategic plan, *Forward Together*, has reached the end of its lifespan.¹ Since its launch, healthcare delivery has undergone significant change, creating both challenges and opportunities. The renewal of the strategic plan sets a clear vision for 2026–2030 by strengthening clinical care, education, and research while reinforcing the foundations of wellness and organizational effectiveness that sustain long-term success.

The renewed plan aligns with the strategies of Dalhousie University’s Faculty of Medicine and Nova Scotia Health. Where appropriate, it also reflects their style and

¹ The *Forward Together* timeline was originally imagined as spanning from 2020 to 2024. However, the plan was extended to cover 2025.



structure, promoting clarity and unity. Most importantly, the plan provides direction for all divisions and programs, enabling continued progress *Forward Together*.

Outcomes of the renewal

The renewed strategic plan establishes clear priorities to guide the DoM from 2026 to 2030. The four *Forward Together* streams (or areas of priority; we use those terms interchangeably) – Clinical, Academic, Research, and Foundations for Success – remain in place, with clarified priorities and defined measures of success.

Renewal process

The renewal of *Forward Together 2026-2030* has been following a structured five-step process:

1. **Mission:** Assess whether the mission of the Department of Medicine continues to reflect its core purpose or requires refinement.
2. **Vision & Values:** Re-examine the vision for the future and determine whether the guiding values established in 2020 still serve or need adjustment.
3. **Strategies:** Define how the Department will move toward achieving the renewed vision.
4. **Actions:** Identify the strategic actions that will be prioritized between 2026 and 2030.
5. **Goals:** Establish measures to evaluate progress and determine whether objectives have been achieved.

Timeline

The process began as a modest six-month “refresh” of *Forward Together* but quickly evolved into a broader initiative. As collaboration expanded, it became evident that a simple update would not be sufficient. Instead, the process became an opportunity to renew the plan for the Department. The extended timeline reflects a commitment to thoughtful, inclusive planning, ensuring that the renewed strategy captures the priorities that matter most. Achieving the right outcomes was recognized as more important than moving quickly.

July 2024	DoM leadership reviewed <i>Forward Together</i> and determined that adjustments to the plan could sustain progress over the next five years.
October 2024	At their October 10 retreat, the DoM Executive Team revised the mission, vision, and value statements, assessed



	strategic accomplishments, and identified outstanding work.
January 2025	A 15-member strategic planning team reflected on the Executive Team’s outcomes and began shaping the <i>refresh</i> process.
April 2025	The planning team and executive leadership team concluded that a more comprehensive adjustment was required, shifting from a “refresh” to a full “renewal.”
August 2025	Meeting biweekly and working between sessions, the planning team redrafted the strategic statements and developed strategies to guide future priorities and actions.
October 2025	Executive Team Retreat will focus on strategies and preparing for physician engagement within each division and team.
November & December 2025	More fully engage DoM members in renewing the strategic plan through open house, interviews, and consultation at division/team meetings. The strategic planning team will gather information to specify actions and build SMART goals.
January 2026	Share the draft renewed strategic plan with all division members at a Town Hall and share with broader interest holders (e.g., cross-organizational committees, NSH, Dalhousie).
March 2026	Launch renewed strategic plan.

Questions to think about

Discussion prompts

During conversations with Department leadership and the Strategic Planning Committee about the strategic plan, you can expect to be asked questions like the following ones to prompt discussion.



Before you engage in that conversation (whether an individual or team-based one), please reflect on these so that you're prepared and can make the most of your time. Feel free to write your answers down in advance!

- What's working well now?
- What challenges do we face in meeting patient needs?
- What opportunities should we be ready for?
- What changes would most support our learners, staff, or colleagues?
- If you could see one major improvement in the Department by 2030, what would it be?
- What do we need more of (supports, resources, opportunities) to succeed in our work?
- Where are we at risk of falling behind, and how could we get ahead?
- What one change would make the biggest positive difference for your day-to-day work?

FAQs

The following questions are common ones we've heard throughout the planning process so far. You may share some of these questions, so please review our responses – and don't hesitate to let your supervisor or anyone from the Strategic Planning Committee know if you have follow-up questions.

Why are we doing this now?

Our previous *Forward Together* plan (2020–2024) has reached the end of its lifespan. Since then, the healthcare landscape has changed significantly, creating new challenges and opportunities. Renewing the plan now allows us to reflect on what we've achieved, adapt to today's realities, and set clear priorities that will guide us into 2026–2030.

How will this change what I do day-to-day?

For most people, the strategic plan will not dramatically change daily responsibilities. Instead, it will provide clearer priorities, help align resources, and strengthen supports across the Department. You may see new initiatives or programs emerge, but the plan is about enabling you to do your work more effectively, not creating unnecessary new tasks.

Will our input actually influence decisions?

Yes. The renewal process has been designed to be inclusive and collaborative. Feedback from surveys, interviews, meetings, and consultations is being reviewed directly by the planning team and executive leadership. Input from across the Department will directly inform the priorities, strategies, and goals in the final plan.



How will resources be allocated to new priorities?

Resource allocation decisions will follow once the priorities and goals are finalized. The plan will help guide leadership in identifying where to invest time, funding, and personnel to achieve the agreed priorities. Having a clear, shared strategy makes it easier to advocate for and secure resources from Dalhousie, Nova Scotia Health, and other partners.

What happens if we disagree with the priorities?

Diverse opinions are expected and valued. If disagreements arise, they will be considered alongside other perspectives to ensure a balanced outcome. The planning team's role is to integrate feedback in a way that reflects the Department's collective needs. While not every idea can become a formal priority, all input will be acknowledged and will help shape the direction of the final plan.

How will the renewed plan be different from the last one?

The new plan builds on the foundation of the 2020-2024 *Forward Together* strategy, but with updated mission, vision, and values; clarified priorities; and measurable goals. It reflects lessons learned over the last five years and addresses the evolving realities of clinical care, education, research, and organizational wellness.

What if my team or division feels underrepresented in the plan?

That's exactly why this engagement process is so important. Every division and program has the chance to contribute, ensuring the final plan reflects the breadth of our Department. If you feel your team's voice isn't reflected, we strongly encourage you to share input now so it can be incorporated.

How will we measure success?

Each stream / area of priority of the plan will include clear, measurable goals (SMART goals). These indicators will help us track progress, celebrate achievements, and identify areas where additional focus is needed. Updates will be shared regularly so all members can see how we're advancing.

How will this plan align with Dalhousie and Nova Scotia Health?

The renewed plan is being developed in close alignment with both Dalhousie's Faculty of Medicine and Nova Scotia Health strategies. This ensures our Department's work is coordinated with broader institutional priorities, making us stronger advocates for resources and support.

What opportunities will there be to stay updated after the plan launches?

Progress will be communicated through newsletters, town halls, divisional updates, and annual reporting. Transparency and accountability are central to this renewal, so regular updates will ensure everyone can see how the plan is being implemented.



What happens after the plan is launched?

Once the plan is finalized in early 2026, we'll shift into implementation. This includes rolling out initiatives, tracking progress, and celebrating successes along the way. The plan is meant to be a living document, guiding our actions and evolving as needed to stay relevant.

Further reading

Forward Together 2020-2024

As our renewed plan directly builds on our former plan, it's a great idea to review it to familiarize yourself with our core areas of priority, as well as our former mission and vision.

Thinking about what worked or what needed improvement from our 2020-24 plan will help us ensure we continue in the right direction and make improvements where they're needed.

Forward Together 2020-2024:

<https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/medicine/departments/department-sites/medicine/about/strategic-plan/DoMStratPlan2020-2024.pdf>

Summary of Achievements

This (draft) document provides a high-level overview of what the Department of Medicine achieved under its previous strategic plan, *Forward Together (2020-2024)*.

Reviewing this gives helpful context for strategic-planning because it shows how strategic planning has had positive benefits, where the DoM built momentum, and where challenges or gaps remain.

[DoM-2020-24-Achievements-Summary_DRAFT.pdf](#)