



Physician Learning,
Development & Support

Annual Report

2024 - 2025



Our Year

The Medical Affairs portfolio plays a key role in ensuring the quality of medical care provided by the physicians of Nova Scotia Health

Medical Affairs leads the management and stewardship of the medical staff governance structure, physician human resource management processes, physician learning and leadership development, the negotiation and management of physician contracts, and the management of the credentialing and privileging process. The portfolio provides provincial support across all zones.

In May 2024, a Director of Physician Learning, Development, and Support was hired to lead the existing functions of Physician Executive/Leadership Coaching and Conflict Management, with the goal to scale, operationalize, and advance directives and priorities to drive quality initiatives for learning and development programming support services from a physician's first day with Nova Scotia Health and throughout their career journey.



The outcome: an established operational team leading programs and supports; the portfolio focuses on; Executive Coaching, Physician Leader Onboarding, Physician Onboarding, Learning and Development and Conflict Management/Navigation supports.

As of May 2025, all support teams have been established and are diligently engaging with physicians, underpinning early engagement (through comprehensive onboarding), career, leadership development, and professional growth. Though still very early days in these efforts, we have already begun to see the positive outcomes of this investment in physician work satisfaction, more robust system and workplace integration, as well as physician leaders scaled capacity to lead through these challenging times in a transformational system change.

Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) Hired or Brought into the Learning, Development, and Support Team 2024–2025

- Manager of Physician Supports integrated to team July 2024
- Instructional Designer hired October 2024
- Physician Onboarding Consultants x 3 – hired between October 2024–March 2025
- Manager of Physician Learning, Development, and Support hired January 2025

Before 2024 to current – 2 x Executive Leadership Development Coaches are leading that support function. A Conflict Consultant is contracted on an “as needed” basis.



Missing: Lisa Bedford – Manager, Physician Support Services

Portfolio Key Accomplishments

Executive Coaching & Leadership Development

The 2 Medical Affairs Executive Leadership Coaches not only deliver one-on-one physician leadership coaching but also, in the last year, have scaled their programs and supports through the design and delivery of unique and engaging offerings, including community of practice models, podcasts (accessible online) with an international listening reach, and group/team seminars/coaching offering timely topics to build capacity within our medical staff.

PHYSICIAN LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE 2024-25

CPDME Program Accreditations

We proudly received 3 Continuing Professional Development and Medical Education (CPDME) program accreditations — advancing the quality of our physician learning opportunities.

Executive Coaching

Our Executive Coaches have coached 83 physicians and completed 431 coaching sessions, driving career growth and fostering leadership excellence across NSH.



Onboarding Engagement

Our onboarding team has connected with 117 Family Physicians, helping them seamlessly integrate into Nova Scotia Health.

Professional Development

We hosted 8 professional development seminars, attracting 500+ registrations — empowering professionals with knowledge and connection.



A few noteworthy accomplishments are:

- A new coaching intake process and online automated form was launched with quarterly reporting.
- Since January 2024, the Coaches have coached 83 physicians and engaged in 431 coaching sessions.
- Designed and launched in March 2025 a podcast series – Coaching Physicians: A Prescription for Leadership; 9 recordings completed to date with 705 listens.
- Designed and delivered 4 leadership workshops/retreats and presented at 2 physician conferences, engaging 100+ physicians.

Coaches Programming

Women in Medicine Community of Practice

This new community of practice program pilot was developed and kicked off in February 2025.

The vision for Women in Medicine, Community of Practice is to support, encourage, and empower female physicians at NS Health through building community and meaningful female connection. Co-led by Dr. Christine Dipchand and Medical Affairs Executive Coaches, quarterly in-person sessions focus on key topics as identified by the group. Participants will also be invited to engage in executive coaching – either in a group or individually – to support their continuous learning and growth. 4 topics and subject matter expert speakers have been identified for the 2025 Women in Medicine Community of Practice calendar, with a reach of 50+ female physicians in Central Zone.

Goals of the Community of Practice include:

1. To provide a safe and collaborative forum, and community of practice, for female physicians to discuss complex leadership topics, commune with their colleagues, and learn from one another about the supports and expertise available through their shared peer group.
2. To use the learnings from the forum to build the capacity of female physicians, and increase understanding and knowledge from one another, and facilitators, around topics of common concern to women in medicine.
3. To empower female physicians and support them in their career and life goals.

Leading Through Coaching – Supporting Others to Get Things Done

Developed and launched a 1-day professional development opportunity for Physician Leaders, offered quarterly by zone. This interactive in-person delivery session builds skills and allows physicians to learn the techniques to employ a coaching approach with teams and individuals to improve communication and leadership capacity for the sake of optimizing their team's potential.



Women in Medicine Community of Practice.

Medical Affairs Physician Leadership Development Program

The Medical Affairs Physician Leadership Development Program is an opportunity for physicians to participate in a customized leadership program with access to the world-class leadership assessment, Leadership Circle Profile™ (LCP). This program is delivered to current physician leaders or those preparing for leadership roles, who haven't previously participated in leadership development education.

- Developed a 10-module group coaching-based program (scaled from previous iteration) launched in January 2025.
- 13 physicians from Central Zone are currently participating in the program (end date of June 2025) and 8 in Western Zone completed the program in June 2024.
- January 2025: The Physician Leadership Development Program received CPDME accreditation for 1 calendar year.

Physician Onboarding and Leader Development

General Physician Onboarding

In 2024, a Medical Affairs Onboarding team was established with a designated Manager role and 3 Onboarding Consultants hired to focus on all zones, with initial focus on Family Medicine Physicians and, in 2025, extension of scope and outreach to support Specialist Physicians. Initially, the emphasis and focus were on leveraging and coordinating with existing zone operational onboarding resources, processes, structures, and community partners. Once a quality improvement cycle was attained, specializations are now being supported.

An onboarding framework and supporting tools used by Onboarding Consultants were developed and implemented to support new physicians from signed letters of offer through their first year of practice.

Since implementation, the Onboarding team has connected with 117 family physicians across the province, with 84 actively engaging in the onboarding process. In 2025, we have begun to move on to further outreach and connect with specialty physicians.

This program will also have a Learning Management System (LMS) component providing 14 modules to support physician onboarding, projected for rollout in May 2025.

Physician Leader Onboarding

In 2024–2025, a new Physician Leader Onboarding Program (new framework and learning modalities) was developed to support physicians as they transition into leadership roles within Nova Scotia Health. The program and designated resources have a provincial reach to support physicians across all zones, including PHC and specialty physicians.

The goal of the new leader onboarding program is to provide learning and resources to physicians stepping into leadership roles. This is structured learning (in a platform) and easily accessed information to assist the ease of moving into a leadership role. The onboarding program materials and resources are self-directed, and “just-in-time” modules housed in our Learning Management System and are accessible via physicians' preferred devices (phone, laptop, etc.).

Since January 2025, we have connected with 56 physicians stepping into leadership roles to provide resources while we work towards program implementation projected for spring 2025, including 9 learning modules to be housed in the Learning Management System.

In May 2025, the Physician Leader Onboarding Program received CPDME Accreditation for one year.



| Learning and Development

Medical Affairs Learning Management System

Identified and purchased an agile and user-friendly Learning Management System (LMS) – LearnUpon – a learning tool exclusively designed for physicians that provides numerous resources and complements and underpins programming and physician engagement initiatives. The platform provides just-in-time, on-demand learning, accessed by physicians when and where required. The LMS, LearnUpon, is projected to be implemented in September 2025.

Built program frameworks and designed in-house (some in progress) a total of 20 learning modules for the Physician Onboarding, Physician Leader Onboarding, and Leadership Development Programs. Moving forward, we have identified other program areas and courseware that we will design and develop into learning modalities, including the Conflict Community of Practice and Trauma Informed Care.

Medical Affairs Seminar Series – Leadership in Focus: Empowering Physicians as Change Leaders

Launched a monthly virtual learning opportunity designed to inspire and empower physician leaders in Nova Scotia Health.

- Secured subject matter experts to deliver 8 × 1–1.5-hour informational seminars from September 2024 to May 2025.
- 500+ registrations received.
- Offered sessions hosted by physicians and healthcare experts. These sessions explore timely and relevant topics that reflect the evolving landscape of healthcare and support professional growth for physicians.

Conflict

Management and Navigation Support

Medical Affairs is committed to a positive and proactive approach to mitigating and managing conflict that may arise involving physicians. The goal with our programming and skill-building opportunities offered to physicians is to support capacity building and cultivate a culture of effective and respectful conflict navigation and management.

We have seen a considerable decrease in conflict being flagged that has been formally raised to Medical Affairs over 2024–2025.

An external Conflict Consultant has engaged in approximately 12 hours of conflict management and support in 2024–2025.

Doctor's Lounge: Conflict Community of Practice

The Doctor's Lounge is a virtual forum where Senior Physician Leaders across the province can connect and build skills, competencies, and confidence around complex leadership topics. The forum provides leaders an opportunity to build a network of support through colleagues and other experts in leadership development, workplace conflict, and resilience.

- 75 physicians have been invited to participate.
- Developed and currently delivering a 10 topic/themed session-based program launched in September 2024.
- January 2025, the Doctors Lounge Community of Practice received CPDME accreditation for 1 calendar year.

Doctors Nova Scotia Physician Leadership Development Program (PLDP)

Under the direction and sponsorship of Dr. Nicole Boutilier, Executive Vice President of Medicine and Clinical Operations; Grayson Fulmer, Senior Director of Physician Services; and Tanya Lush, Director of Physician Learning, Development, and Support, Medical Affairs supported a cohort of six physicians in a Physician Learning Project titled 'A Best Practice: Using the CanMEDS Framework for Physician Evaluation and Performance Assessment.'

This project was developed in response to the need for continuous professional development for physicians; an essential element in maintaining excellence in clinical care, leadership, and collaboration. It promotes individual growth while reinforcing a culture of continuous improvement across the physician workforce.

In early May, the PLPD program concluded with the presentation of the final project and findings by the Medical Affairs sponsored cohort. A final report was presented, including recommendations on process, training, and implementation of the proposed performance evaluation solution.



Doctors' Day 2025

To cap off a year of growth in our learning and development portfolio, the team came together on May 1 to celebrate and recognize our exceptional and dedicated Nova Scotia Health physicians during a special Doctors' Day event at the Nova Scotia Health Innovation Hub in Halifax. The event was offered both in person and online, featuring keynote speaker Dr. Tina Atkinson, a Sport and Exercise Medicine physician.

Dr. Atkinson shared insights from her experience as team physician for the Women's Gold Medal Hockey Team at the Beijing Olympics, highlighting themes of leadership, resilience, and the power of positive team dynamics. Honouring our 3,000 Nova Scotia Health physicians was a fitting culmination to a year of accomplishments—advancing physician wellbeing and performance through learning, coaching, and engagement.



Dr. Tina Atkinson Speaking on Doctors' Day 2025.



Dr. Atkinson's gold medal.