



ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE

2020-2023 PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT STRATEGY



INTRODUCTION

This report will share the progress made on the strategic goals outlined in the 2020-2023 Physician Recruitment Strategy.

The Nova Scotia Health physician recruitment team has enjoyed a successful year, returning to in-person travel, and adding new and exciting events to our roster. In addition to in-person events and activities, the team established webinars for high need specialties and to targeted recruits from specific geographical and education groups.

In summer 2022, Nova Scotia Health welcomed a formal physician asset to the physician recruitment team. The MD recruitment leads are physicians who support recruitment part-time to ensure that our candidates have dedicated support from someone with firsthand experience. Our leads are settling well into their new roles, and we have received excellent feedback from candidates about this added value to their experience.

Our team is continuing to grow with new hires as other members move to opportunities outside Nova Scotia Health. The recruitment team is such a dynamic team with a high value skillset which means that they are in high demand across several industries.

Recent changes within the provincial health system positively impacted our recruitment landscape this year. Dalhousie University and the Government of Nova Scotia added additional medical residency seats in sites across Nova Scotia and earmarked a dedicated stream of medical residency seats for students with a connection to Nova Scotia. This increased our IMG residency seats from six to 16 and was welcome news to Nova Scotians studying medicine abroad. We kicked off this announcement with a tour of Caribbean medical schools in October and Irish medical schools in February. Other recent changes to licence pathways will also support proactive recruitment work with medical students in other international locations.

We continue to build our collaborative relationship with the Office of Health Care Professionals Recruitment (OHPR) and other health system partners. This work has allowed us to leverage opportunities for physician recruitment and we are excited about the new opportunities and resources these partnerships bring to the table.

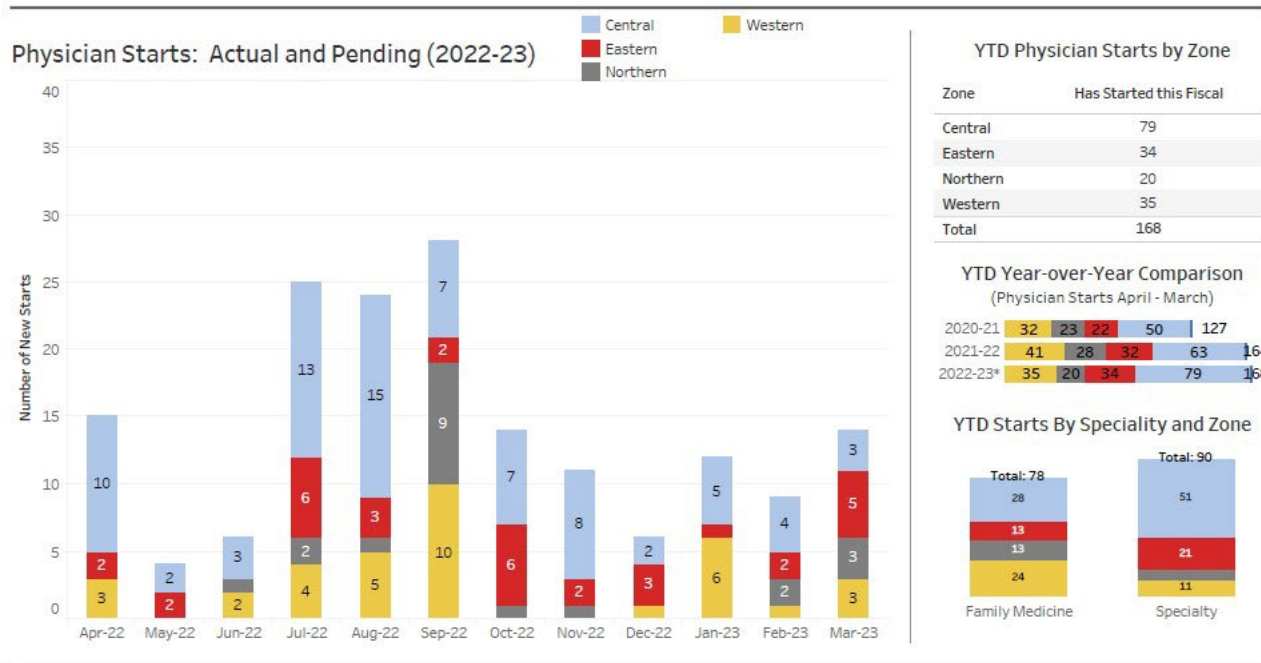
Recently, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia (CPSNS) have made some significant announcements around changes to licensure that will impact physicians practicing in Nova Scotia and those looking to come to the province. We are the first province in Canada to offer full licensure to American board-certified physicians. This allows us a competitive advantage and for many of the Nova Scotian physicians who had a different residency training program to now return home to practice.

Additionally, full licensure will also be made available to international subspecialists who do not have the Royal College certification. This new pathway will have the greatest impact on internal medicine subspecialties from jurisdictions where the post-graduate training was completed in a sub-specialty only.

BY THE NUMBERS

In 2022-2023, Nova Scotia's Health's Physician Recruitment Team:

- ✓ 4.6% growth in number of physicians privileges at Nova Scotia Health during the year (2,625 to 2,745 – head count)
- ✓ Attended more than 90 conferences and events.
- ✓ The recruitment team hosted 105 in-person site visits across the province to showcase available clinic spaces and find the practice opportunity that matches our candidate's medical interests and expertise. These site visits resulted in 50 candidates accepting letters of offer. 16 candidates are currently in the recruitment process with physician recruitment consultants.
- ✓ Welcomed 155 physicians to Nova Scotia Health positions. This is 12% higher than the previous three-year average.
- ✓ IWK Health welcomed another 13 physicians in Central Zone.
- ✓ 86 net new physicians.
- ✓ Decreased hard to fill vacancies by 19% compared to the year previous.
- ✓ 13 Webinars hosted for high needs specialties, medical learners and jurisdictions with new licensure pathways
- ✓ Met with more than 400 residents studying at medical schools outside of Canada.
- ✓ International Medical Graduate recruitment consists of 20% of our total recruitment.
- ✓ Supported 13 new physicians from the Practice Ready Assessment Program to take up roles in Middleton, Shelburne, New Glasgow, Arichat, Antigonish, Digby, North Sydney, Pork Hawkesbury, and Springhill with continued growth in new cohorts entering assessments.
- ✓ Increased number of residents starting practice from 45 to 68, which is a 50% increase over last year.
- ✓ Saw more than 185,000 visits to the More than Medicine website.



*2022-23 figures include IWK Starts; 2020-21 and 2021-22 do not include IWK.

A new physician start is the culmination of months of work by the recruitment team and stakeholders in attracting and setting up physicians to work in the province. From April 1, 2022 to the end of March 2022, 168 physicians started across all zones. 78 of these starts were family physicians and 90 starts were specialty physicians. Specialty physicians include those working as hospitalists and in emergency medicine.

PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGY

STRATEGIC PILLAR | FOUNDATION

Ensure that key conditions and supports are in place to support the physician recruitment program.

Strategic Initiative One: Develop a Physician Recruitment Charter to establish a common vision, goals and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for physician recruitment for all partners involved

- ✓ The charter helped to establish a common vision, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and fosters relationship building among the partners involved. The charter was developed in 2021 and this work has now been transferred to the Office of Health Care Professionals Recruitment who are tasked with province-wide coordination of recruitment initiatives

Strategic Initiative Two: Enhance information management for evidence-based decision making, evaluation, and planning.

- ✓ In partnership with the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment, we are in the process of procuring a cloud-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Platform. This is expected to be live in summer 2023. This CRM will allow better tracking and information sharing across all our partners in respect to all communications we have with physicians/recruitment activities.
- ✓ To reflect a provincial mandate, data collection for the monthly recruitment report has expanded to include data for IWK Health.

Strategic Initiative Three: Continue physician recruitment team capacity building

- ✓ Provided team with significant training around changing licensure rules and pathways.
- ✓ Re-engaged health system our partners and engaged new partners such as immigration navigators and new community navigators and recruitment committees.
- ✓ Re-evaluated and continued training on Standard Operating Procedures for physician recruitment, onboarding, and MD replacement.
- ✓ Continued meeting and collaboration with the Office of Health Care Professionals Recruitment and Nova Scotia Health Recruitment for all other health professions.
- ✓ Hired 6 MD Leads to support physician recruiters in each Zone with a focus on retention.

Strategic Initiative Four: Ensure ongoing engagement and clear communications with all involved stakeholders and partners

- ✓ Re-aligned our strategy to ensure alignment with the Action for Health plan.
- ✓ Regular collaboration with Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment (OHPR,) College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia (CPSNS), the Department of Labour, Skills, and Immigration (LSI), and other health system partners.

STRATEGIC PILLAR | IDENTIFY

Continue to focus on finding candidates in an efficient and effective manner

Strategic Initiative Five: Continue to deepen relationships with Dalhousie University Medical School students and residents. Establish relationships with medical learners outside of the province.

- ✓ 50 resident events; 42 in-person, 8 virtual

- ✓ 850+ *Instagram Medical Resident Channel* followers
- ✓ 4 webinars offered to medical students studying abroad, including Australia, Ireland, US, and the Caribbean.
- ✓ In-person visits to medical students and campus tours in Ireland and the Caribbean.

Successful recruitment of 68 residents to permanent positions in high needs areas in comparison to 45 residents last year—a 50% increase:

- ✓ **Western Zone:** Family Medicine- Berwick (1), Clare (3), Greenwood (1), Kentville (1), Yarmouth (2); Specialties- Dermatology (1), Internal Medicine (1), Geriatric Psychiatry (1), Neurology (1), Plastic Surgery (1)
- ✓ **Eastern Zone:** Family Medicine- Antigonish (1); Specialties- Anesthesiology (2), CA Psychiatry (1), OB/Gyn (1), Pediatrics (1), PM & R (1)
- ✓ **Northern Zone:** Family Medicine- Truro (2), New Glasgow (3), Tatamagouche (1), Amherst (1); Specialties- General Surgery (2), Pediatrics (1), Psychiatry, (1)
- ✓ **Central Zone:** Family Medicine: Halifax (5), Tantallon (1), Musquodoboit (2), Dartmouth (2), Windsor (1) Specialties: Anesthesiology (1), Cardiology (2), Dermatology (2), Diagnostic Imaging (4), Gastroenterology (1), Geriatrics (1), Hematological Pathology (2), Infectious Diseases (1), Internal Medicine (1), Medical Oncology (1), Neurology (2), Nuclear Medicine (1), Psychiatry (4), Radiation Oncology (1), Respiriology (1), Urology (1)

Recruitment in Action: Meet Dr. Kathryn Binnersley and Dr. Jasmine Waslowski

Ciad Mìle Fàilte (Gaelic for one hundred thousand welcomes) to two of Cape Breton's newest family medicine specialists, Dr. Kathryn Binnersley and Dr. Jasmine Waslowski who are set to start practices in Inverness this fall. This was a recruitment steeped slow and steady, over a two-year residency program filled with plenty of memorable experiences in the community and with local physicians.



Dr. Kathryn Binnersley and Dr. Jasmine Waslowski

To attract and train future physicians to practice family medicine in rural communities, Dalhousie University's Cape Breton Family Medicine Training Program offers medical residents the opportunity to complete their two-year family medicine residency training in locations across Cape Breton, including Inverness. The program is centered in Sydney, but residents can elect to complete their training at participating rural locations and facilities across Cape Breton.

Dalhousie University has worked with Nova Scotia Health to expand the reach of rural residency training because it has been demonstrated that many medical students elect to practice where they train. This innovative program allows medical students to experience different practice opportunities and foster an interest in working in rural areas through hands-on training.

Learn more [here](#).

Strategic Initiative Six: Expand and enhance the engagement with existing Nova Scotian physicians to tap into their networks and connections with others.

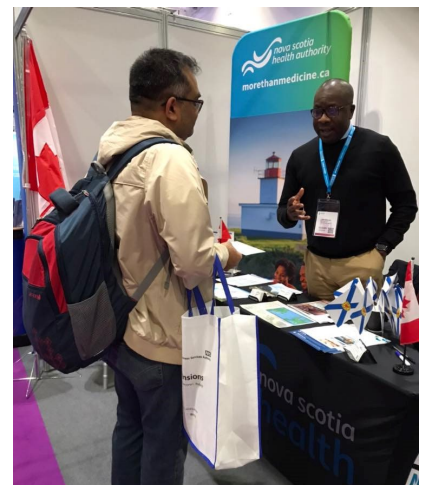
- ✓ Recruitment Consultants connected potential physician candidates with physicians currently living and practicing in Nova Scotia. MD Recruitment Leads profiled with contact form on website and in Direct Marketing campaigns for those who prefer to connect with a physician.
- ✓ Recruitment team have developed and launched a Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn pages and are encouraging physician followers to help grow our contacts by leveraging their own social media and professional networks.
- ✓ Physician referral has demonstrated our best opportunity for candidate sourcing.

Recruitment in Action: Meet Dr. Ade Akindele

After practicing medicine in the United Kingdom for 17 years, Dr. Ade Akindele decided it was time to seek a new challenge and met with physician recruiters at Nova Scotia Health. Four years ago, Dr. Akindele and his family relocated to Nova Scotia. He is currently a family physician in Bedford.

Last November, Dr. Akindele's journey came full circle when he attended the Acute and General Medicine Conference at ExCel London as a member of Nova Scotia Health's physician recruitment team to meet physicians and describe his experience practicing and living in Nova Scotia.

"Having a physician who has practiced in the country that we are recruiting from and made the decision to move to Nova Scotia is invaluable," said Karma Chickoski, physician recruitment consultant at Nova Scotia Health. "Dr. Akindele was not only able to speak to what it is like to practice in Nova Scotia but also the process to obtain your medical license and immigrate to Canada."



Dr. Ade Akindele is pictured here at the Acute and General Medicine Conference at ExCel London

Chickoski fondly recalled Dr. Akindele having a conversation with a physician attending the conference and Dr. Akindele was asked, “Was it worth it?” and Dr. Akindele proudly responded with “Yes!”

Learn more about Dr. Akindele [here](#).

Strategic Initiative Seven: Continue targeted and enhanced strategic recruitment efforts at physician career fairs, and medical conferences, as well as, finding new avenues being adaptive to changing global realities.

- ✓ Attended/hosted 90 recruitment events (including resident events and excluding webinars for all audiences).
- ✓ 13 Webinars hosted for high needs specialties, medical learners and jurisdictions with new licensure pathways which included: Psychiatry (2), Family Medicine (1), Emergency Medicine (1), Palliative Care (1), US audience (2), Medical Learner focused (6).
- ✓ Worked closely with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the province to develop a streamlined service to review the qualifications of physicians from Ukraine.
- ✓ Developed and implemented high-needs recruitment plans for each zone.
- ✓ 13 physicians recruited this year for the Nova Scotia Practice Ready Assessment Program (NSPRAP) in Middleton, Shelburne, New Glasgow, Arichat, Antigonish, Digby, North Sydney, Pork Hawkesbury, and Springhill.

Recruitment in Action: Meet Dr. Dalia Eldol

From being born in Sudan and growing up in the United Arab Emirates, to establishing her own practice in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, Dr. Dalia Eldol has been on a journey to make a difference in her community.

Dr. Eldol graduated from the Ahfad University for Women, School of Medicine in the capital of Sudan, and completed her post-graduate medical training and experiences in Sudan and the United Kingdom before becoming licensed to practice medicine as a general practitioner (or family doctor).



Dr. Dalia Eldol

Prior to coming to Nova Scotia, Dr. Eldol completed a Master of Science in Health Promotion at the University of Alberta. Dr. Eldol has over ten years of experience in primary health care, emergency medicine, tropical medicine, infectious diseases, and public health.

In July 2022, Dr. Eldol began practice at the Bridgewater and Area Family Health Centre in the Western Zone of the province after completing the Nova Scotia Practice Ready Assessment Program (NSPRAP) and moving with her family from Alberta to Nova Scotia. Learn more about Dr. Eldol [here](#).

Strategic Initiative Eight: Update, evolve, and promote the Nova Scotia More than Medicine + distinct brand.

- ✓ Ensured consistency in branded materials for all events and presentations.
- ✓ Maintained Google search marketing to ensure NS physician opportunities are featured in the job search market alongside and, in many cases, superseding our competitors.
- ✓ Ran targeted digital marketing through billboards in Alberta; this saw an increase of over 800% traffic to our website specifically from Alberta and other western provinces.
- ✓ Initiated a targeted Digital Marketing strategy in the United States to leverage new license pathways for American board-certified physicians. This campaign just began one week before year-end, but initial results were trending positive and generating physician contacts.
- ✓ The More than Medicine website received more than 185,000 views over the past year.
- ✓ Created wholesale partnership with East Coast Lifestyle (a local lifestyle brand that aligns with the More than Medicine+ brand) and now working on co-branding opportunities for team uniforms, promotional events, and physician incentives.



Billboards, like the one shown here, contributed to a 948% increase in web traffic from Alberta; with 83% increase in conversions once the billboards launched

STRATEGIC PILLAR | RECRUIT

Keep candidate physicians engaged throughout the recruitment process

Strategic Initiative Nine: Develop and implement consistent processes for physician recruitment throughout the province.

- ✓ Developed and implemented physician recruitment standard operating procedure (Nov 2020).
- ✓ In 2022/2023 fiscal year, successfully recruited 168 (FM: 78, Other Specialties: 90) physicians to Nova Scotia. This is 12% higher than the previous three-year average.
- ✓ International Medical Graduates made up 20% of our recruitment (27 candidates)
- ✓ There were 82 physician departures this year (48 retirements, 22 relocations out of province, 12 resignations due to other reasons for example due to family or illness).
- ✓ The recruitment team hosted 105 in-person site visits across the province to showcase available clinic spaces and find the practice opportunity that matches our candidate's medical interests and expertise. These site visits resulted in 50 candidates accepting letters of offer. 16 candidates are currently in the recruitment process with physician recruitment consultants.

Recruitment in Action: Meet Dr. Lilly Lines

In February, psychiatrist Dr. Lilly Lines traveled across the pond from England to the Northern Zone for a site visit. During her visit, Dr. Lilly Lines took in the beautiful sites in Caribou, Nova Scotia. It was a chilly, but sunny, beautiful day! She also attended a lunch (and enjoyed Merigomish Oysters!) with Mindy Leblanc (Physician Recruitment Consultant), Dr. Lilly Lines, Karen Putnam (Community Navigator in Truro), and Lindsey Mattinson (Physician Recruitment Consultant) at Jimolly's in Truro. We are looking forward to welcoming Dr. Lines at the Colchester East Hants Health Centre in fall 2023.



Strategic Initiative Ten: Enhance the on-boarding of physicians.

- ✓ Completed work on the Standard Operating Procedures for onboarding and created content for physicians and medical learners on the Medical Affairs Physician Portal.
- ✓ Initiated a physician leadership onboarding project and this is currently underway.

STRATEGIC PILLAR | RETAIN

Support Physicians within their role and community to maximize longevity.

Strategic Initiative Eleven: Help new physicians establish roots in their community.

- ✓ Established 6 MD Recruitment Leads to support zone recruitment activities and retention efforts of current and incoming physicians.
- ✓ In November 2022, the Office of Health Care Professionals Recruitment (OHPR) announced an enhanced community recruitment fund. To recognize the impact of local community level recruitment initiatives, OHPR made two streams of funding available for this work: the Community Identified Projects stream and Community Readiness Supports stream.

Recent communities receiving funding include:

Cultural/Geographic Community	Zone
Cumberland County	Northern
Amherst	
Pugwash	
Truro	
Pictou	
Antigonish	Eastern
Cape Breton	
Cape Breton – Accessibility	
Cape Breton Regional Municipality	
Inverness	
South Shore – Multicultural Community and community at large	Western
Digby	
South Shore	
Yarmouth	
Annapolis (Kings/Wolfville/Kentville/Lawrencetown)	
Lawrencetown	
Shelburne	
Mid Valley Region and African Diaspora	
Bear River (Digby)	
Sheet Harbour	Central
Halifax	
Eastern Shore	
Eastern Shore/Musquodoboit	
Lawrencetown	
First Nations (Mi'kmaw)	Provincial
African Nova Scotians and African Diaspora	
Internationally Educated Nurses	
Acadian and Francophone	

- ✓ Partnership with Labour Skills and Immigration (LSI) community navigators.
- ✓ Enhanced collaboration and communication with communities, committees, community navigators and physician leaders.

Recruitment in Action: Meet Dr. Erica De Clemente

With her mother hailing from Cape Breton and many relatives living close by, Dr. Erica De Clemente has strong family ties to Cape Breton. She regularly traveled between her home in New York to Cape Breton since childhood, spending many summers at her family's summer home in Middle Cape.

It was these childhood experiences that drew Dr. De Clemente to return to Cape Breton to practice after starting her career in the United States.

She has been practicing as a family physician at Victoria County Memorial Hospital in Baddeck since arriving in October 2021. Dr. De Clemente treats patients in her office and provides support to the hospital's emergency department and inpatient unit.



Dr. Erica De Clemente

Born and raised 25 minutes outside of Manhattan, New York, Dr. De Clemente completed her undergraduate degree at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey. She then attended medical school at the University of Medicine and Health Sciences located in Saint Kitts, an island in the West Indies.

Learn more about Dr. De Clemente [here](#).

Strategic Initiative Twelve: Assist physicians with professional development and advancement opportunities

- ✓ Supporting the implementation of the Dalhousie Physician Leadership Development Action Projects
- ✓ 8 physicians completed the NZ Leadership Development Program

STRATEGIC PILLAR | CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Ensure continuous improvement through a continuous feedback loop

Strategic Initiative Thirteen: Work with the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) to create a Physician Resource Plan.

- ✓ Attended regular operational meetings with DHW Physician Services representatives.
- ✓ Engage new Office of Health Care Professional Recruitment to better understand roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Participated in the Health Human Resources work stream of the Action for Health provincial workforce initiatives.

Strategic Initiative Fourteen: Understand and continuously evaluate the competitive physician recruitment landscape.

- ✓ Recruiters attend CASPR Conference to continue focus on learning and understanding competitive recruitment landscape.
- ✓ Completed ongoing and continuous jurisdictional reviews of target regions and recruitment markets.

Strategic Initiative Fifteen: Development and implementation of an evaluation framework for the physician recruitment strategy.

- ✓ Work in progress.