



BUILDING BRIDGES
ANNUAL REPORT 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Reflections from the President. 1
- Reflections from the Registrar & CEO 2

- Members of Council 2013/2014. 3

- Strategic Plan 2014-2016. 4

- Bridges to the Public**
- We register physicians. 6
- We investigate and resolve physician-related complaints 8

- Bridges to the Profession**
- We assess physician practice 10
- We develop policies and guidelines 14

- Bridges to Our Partners**
- Provincial and National Participation 16
- Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University 17
- The Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada . . . 19
- The Methadone Maintenance Support Program 20
- The Nova Scotia Prescription Monitoring Program 21
- Awards and Grants. 22

- Our Operations**
- Statement of Operations 24

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This publication reports on the work of the College over the past year in support of its mission to serve the public by effectively regulating medical practice in the province.



Elizabeth Mann, MD, FRCPC, FACP

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I come to the end of my two-year term as President, I am pleased to report to you that all is well at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia.

This past year has been a time of change, reflection, and planning, which have all served to strengthen the future of self-regulation for physicians in this province.

Several personnel changes have occurred, our internal budgeting and financial oversight have strengthened, and we are in a sound financial position. A strategic planning exercise, to be reviewed annually, has allowed us to focus on our core mandate of ensuring public safety through registration, licensing, investigations, and standard setting. The strategic plan provides focus on the ongoing assessment of physicians through the Peer Assessment, Clinical Assessment for Practice, and Methadone Maintenance Support programs.

People hold physicians in high regard, and we feel these programs will help ensure that this continues. Our national and local activities act as important bridges to the public and to the profession and help to maintain that confidence.

It has been a pleasure to work with the members of committees and Council who are dedicated, hard working, and thoughtful individuals. We have been well supported by staff in realizing the College's goals.





D.A. (Gus) Grant, AB, LLB, MD, CCFP
Registrar and CEO

REFLECTIONS FROM THE REGISTRAR & CEO

Bridges bring people together. They do so by offering a direct course to replace the roundabout route. Bridges go from firm ground to firm ground, providing safe passage over troubled waters.

It is a useful metaphor for the work of the College, which has its footings in the service of public safety and in support of the medical profession. Effective medical regulation joins these responsibilities because, quite clearly, the public's safety is best served by a supported medical profession.

This year, with the benefit of extensive stakeholder input, the Council developed our Strategic Plan, which sets our path for the next three years. Going forward, we will focus on clarifying the public understanding of our role, on enriching our approach to physician assessment, and on improving the prescribing of monitored drugs.

The issues that surround prescription drug abuse continue to make the news and, in many respects, tarnish the image of our profession. Although there are many contributors to drug abuse, the medical profession has a responsibility to take ownership of its share. By working closely with our members and partners, the College is committed to building awareness of these issues and to improving our profession's use of these important medications.

The public expects that physician performance is regularly assessed over the course of a physician's career. To meet this expectation, the College's goal is to enhance and expand our methods of assessing physician performance, and to connect physicians with the necessary tools and resources to support and improve their practice. Physicians enjoy doing their job well. The College's approach to physician performance will focus on enabling physicians to do so.

It has been a good and productive year at the College. I hope you approve of the bridges we are building and, more importantly, I hope you will use them when the opportunity presents.



MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

2013/2014

FRONT ROW *(Left to Right):*

Dr. William Stanish
Dr. Fiona Bergin
Dr. Elizabeth Mann (President)
Mr. Allan Green, Q.C.
Dr. Preston Smith
Dr. Keri McAdoo

BACK ROW *(Left to Right):*

Dr. D.A. (Gus) Grant (Registrar and CEO)
Dr. Zachary Fraser
Ms. Gwen Haliburton
Mr. Douglas J. Lloy, Q.C.
Dr. Jordan Sheriko
Dr. James MacLachlan
Ms. Mary Hamblin
Dr. Gary Ernest

ABSENT:

Dr. Gisele Marier
Dr. Farokh Buhariwalla
Dr. Matthew Hudson



STRATEGIC PLAN

2014-2016

OUR MISSION

Serving the public by effectively regulating medical practice

OUR VISION

A trusted and respected leader committed to protecting the public while supporting the medical profession

OUR VALUES

- To promote professionalism and excellence in medical care
- To instil public confidence in the College
- To demonstrate accountability and transparency of process
- To demonstrate fairness, compassion and respect for human dignity
- To conduct ethical and responsible self-regulation
- To provide leadership
- To work well in a true spirit of collaboration
- To be innovative and flexible
- To seek continuous improvement in all that we do
- To act with trustworthiness and integrity



STRATEGIC THEME

DESIRED OUTCOMES IN THREE YEARS

A Focus on Public and Member Awareness and Understanding



- Enhanced public trust in our role as a result of effective communications
- An informed membership that understands the College, uses the College, and values the College as a resource
- An established program to educate physicians in training about the College's role

A Focus on Physician Assessment



- An established program dedicated to the assessment of competence and the enhancement of performance for members or groups of members identified to be at risk

A Focus on the College's Responsibility Regarding Monitored Prescription Drugs



- Improved physician prescribing
- The College is a respected voice on issues involving prescription drugs, achieved through an integrated approach to communication, education and assessment

A Focus on the Future of the College



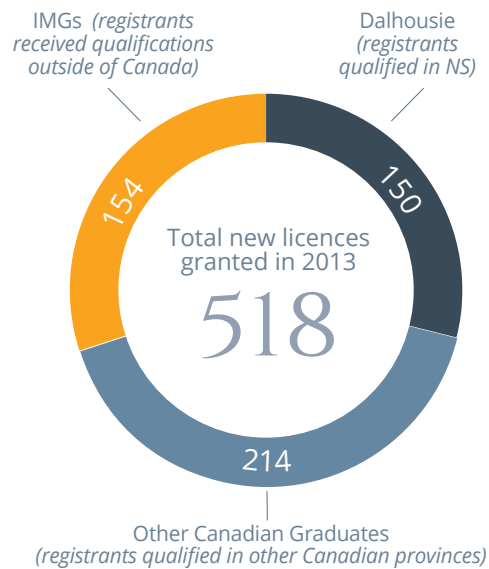
- Comprehensive data on the scope of regulation carried out by all Medical Regulatory Authorities (MRAs) in Canada including their approach to private clinics and facilities

BRIDGES

to the PUBLIC



William (Bill) Lowe, MD, FCFP, MHA,
Deputy Registrar



WE REGISTER PHYSICIANS

It is a core responsibility of the College to ensure the public that only qualified, competent, and ethical physicians are licensed to practise medicine in Nova Scotia. To do so effectively, the College must complete a broad review of an applicant's education, training, and experience. This responsibility is discharged by the College's registration staff with the direction and support of our Credentials Committee.

The Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), an interprovincial agreement signed in 2008, established mobility for licensed physicians within Canada and changed the landscape of medical registration. This led to the development of national standards for initial registration in Canada, an ongoing movement in which the College has been a leading voice. Our College is committed to meeting these national standards and to the principle of improved inter-provincial mobility of physicians under the AIT.

The Registration Department is also responsible for the Medical Education Continuing Action Plan (MEdCAP), which ensures that physicians participate in ongoing continuing medical education and professional development. As of this year, all physicians are required to meet the requirements of one of two programs, the Maintenance of Proficiency (MAINPRO) program of the College of Family Physicians of Canada or the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Physicians and the public are encouraged to visit the College's website, where information can be accessed about physicians licensed in Nova Scotia. Through the physician login, members can directly change their contact information, renew their licence, and confirm their licensure status. The College is dedicated to further enhance online services for the public and our members.

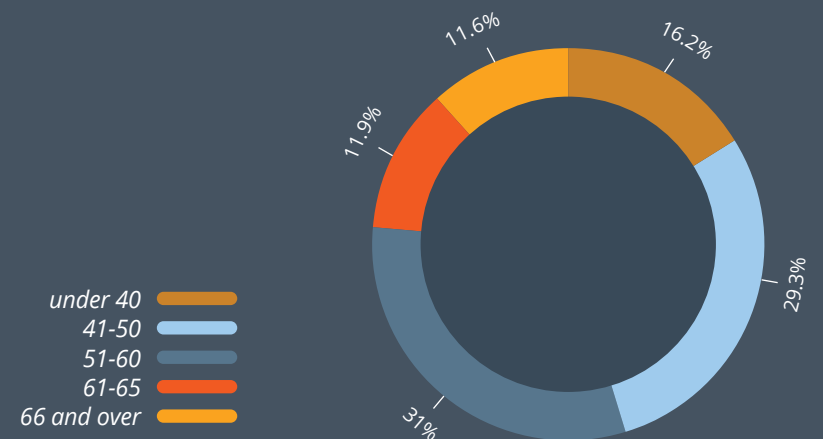
Total Specialists
1,535

Total Non-Specialists
1,723

Total Active Licences
3,258

Physician Demographics

Active Licences (Female) – 1,273
Active Licences (Male) – 1,985



Susan Williams, *Manager, Registration*

Reflects the age of physicians licensed for independent practice in Nova Scotia.



BRIDGES

to the PUBLIC

The College's mandate is rooted in **public safety** and includes a responsibility to investigate all complaints against physicians.



WE INVESTIGATE AND RESOLVE PHYSICIAN-RELATED COMPLAINTS

The College's mandate is rooted in public safety and includes a responsibility to investigate all complaints against physicians.

The College's investigation process consists of two steps established by legislation. First, all complaints are assessed by an Investigation Committee, which has both public and medical members. The committees have broad powers of investigation and disposition. However, if there are reasonable grounds to believe a disciplinary sanction is warranted, a committee may refer the matter for adjudication by a Hearing Committee, the second step in our process.

The investigation of complaints is challenging, often undertaken in circumstances of high emotion. The responsibility is taken very seriously

by the committees, in whom the public and the profession have placed its trust. In addition to the assessment of clinical performance, the physician's conduct is viewed through the lens of such instruments as the College's Policies and Guidelines and the Canadian Medical Association's Code of Ethics.

During 2013, recurrent and correctible failings of professionalism formed the basis of the disposition of most complaints, particularly inadequate documentation, breakdowns of communication, and boundary violations. By communicating in an open and sensitive manner, the College hopes that the lessons learned from the investigations experience can help the profession as a whole identify learning opportunities.

Summaries of investigation hearings can be found on the College website at www.cpsns.ns.ca



BRIDGES

to the PROFESSION

“

NSPAR allows us to share practice pearls and successes with physicians who can benefit from these pearls. It also provides a means to reach out to physicians who have self identified as experiencing stress or are experiencing challenges in their practice.

It has been a privilege to be exposed to the complexities of practising medicine in Nova Scotia and to the improvement of physician practices province-wide.

”

*Dr. Andria MacAulay, MD
Member of the Practice
Improvement Committee*



Mary Power, Manager, NSPAR

WE ASSESS PHYSICIAN PRACTICE

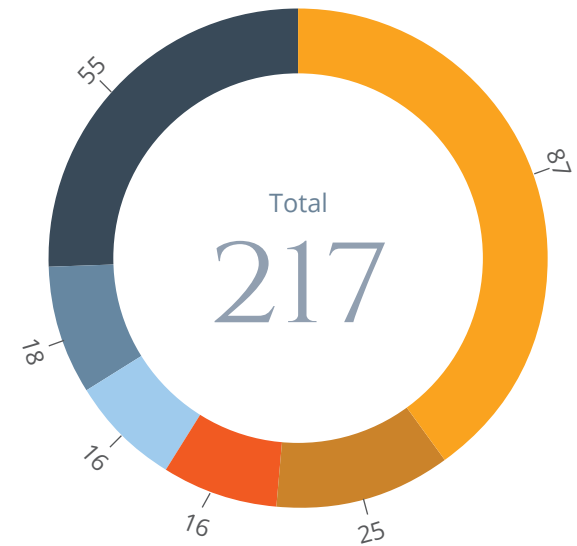
The Nova Scotia Physician Achievement Review (NSPAR) program provides physicians with a 360-degree review of their practice built on confidential input from their patients, medical colleagues, and co-workers. NSPAR targets key professional domains necessary for patient-centered care, such as medical knowledge, communication skills, and collaboration. The goal of NSPAR is to inform, enable, and enhance self-reflection on the part of the physician.

Now nine years old, NSPAR is overseen by the Practice Improvement Committee (PIC) of the College, made up of professional and public members. In particular, the committee has five physician advisors who teleconference with physicians identified by NSPAR for

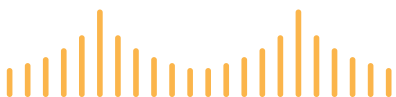
follow-up. The advisors are trained to assist physicians in understanding the feedback contained in NSPAR and to target practice improvements and learning opportunities. The identity of the physician is kept blinded to all at the College but the individual advisor involved.

The work of the PIC yields rich stories of physicians in practice, highlighting the challenges they face and the solutions they find. We enjoy celebrating these pearls on our website under the heading "What Are Great Doctors Doing?" In addition to these narratives, this year, the College conducted a statistical review and analysis of the data collected by NSPAR over the years, which we will soon be sharing to help improve our process and support our physicians.

Physicians Reviewed in 2013



- General Practitioners
- Medical Specialists
- Surgeons
- Pediatricians
- Psychiatrists
- Episodic Care



BRIDGES

to the PROFESSION

“

There are many physicians living in Canada who are foreign trained and do not meet the pan-Canadian standard for licensure. There are many Nova Scotians who do not have easy access to primary or secondary care. The Credentials Committee works very hard developing policies and procedures to integrate this valuable resource with the established need, while maintaining the highest standards.

”

*Dr. Farokh Buhariwalla,
Chair of the Credentials Committee*



WE ASSESS PHYSICIAN PRACTICE

The Clinician Assessment for Practice Program (CAPP) is focused on international medical graduate (IMG) physicians who believe they are ready for entry into family practice without any additional formal residency training in Canada.

CAPP allows physicians to enter practice to provide medical services to underserved areas, as determined by the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

“We created this program to identify internationally trained physicians ready for practice in Canada, to support their transition, and to address significant physician shortages throughout the province,” said Dr. D.A. (Gus) Grant, the College’s Registrar and CEO. “On all counts, it has been a tremendous success.”

Since its launch in 2005, CAPP has selected 76 physicians, all of whom have become licensed and gone on to provide care in rural communities.

Meeting Pan-Canadian Standards

CAPP is one of nine programs participating in the National Assessment Collaboration Practice Ready program (NAC PRA), an initiative to standardize an approach to assess international medical graduates. With our partners, we are working to create an assessment process that will be in place across the country by March 2015.

CAPP delivers value to Nova Scotia. The success of the physicians and the quality of the care they provide are measures of this.

A close-up portrait of Gwen MacPherson, a woman with short, layered blonde hair, wearing a bright red top and gold hoop earrings. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a medical or office setting.

Gwen MacPherson, *Manager, Physician Performance*



BRIDGES *to the* PROFESSION

“ Policy and standards play an important role both in guiding physician practice and ensuring public safety. As a public member, I rely upon the physicians on the committee, examples of other policy, and external experts to weigh in on practical issues, but I also advocate for the public point of view.

I am impressed by the hard work and dedication of those who serve on this committee. I believe physicians on the committee are driven to develop policy and guidelines that support excellence in their profession. ”

*Mary Hamblin, MBA, LLB
Public member, Policy and Standards Committee*

WE DEVELOP POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The College is committed to developing standards that are concise, practical and supportive to physicians while promoting good practice. It is a fundamental responsibility of physicians to be familiar with College policies. When a physician faces an ethical or professional dilemma, the College expects that he or she will turn to these documents for guidance.

The drafting and maintenance of policy documents is the responsibility of the Policy and Standards Committee. The work of this committee flows from research, extensive stakeholder input, and passionate debate.

In 2013, a number of new documents were approved, including *Guidelines for Physicians Regarding Referral and Consultation* and the *Policy Regarding Review of Monitored Drug History before Prescribing*, all of which are available on the College website. In addition, the website maintains endorsed and recommended readings, which the Committee believes might assist a physician trying to work through a thorny issue.

The College knows that practising medicine rarely presents as a black and white undertaking. The work of the Policy and Standards Committee aims to help physicians sort through the many shades of gray.



BRIDGES *to our* PARTNERS

PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL PARTICIPATION

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia participates with organizations and programs in a variety of health-related initiatives including:

- **Department of Health and Wellness
Nova Scotia**

- Physician Resources
 - › Physician Resource Planning Advisory Committee
 - › Physician Resource Planning Recruitment Action Team
 - › Mental Health, Children's Services, and Addiction Treatment Branch
 - › Provincial Opiate Dependency Working Group
 - › Methadone Maintenance Support Program Committee

- **Department of Labour and Advanced Education**
 - International Labour Mobility
 - › International Medical Graduate (IMG) Working Group
 - Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA) Office
 - › FRPA Ad Hoc Advisory Group
- **Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada**
- **Medical Council of Canada**
- **Atlantic Mentorship Network-Pain and Addiction**
- **Nova Scotia Prescription Monitoring Program**
- **Dalhousie University, Faculty of Medicine**
- **Nova Scotia District Health Authorities**
- **Doctors Nova Scotia**





FACULTY OF MEDICINE, DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

The Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine's seat on the Council of the College is required by the *Medical Act*, a fact that speaks to the important link between the work of the faculty and the College. I have enjoyed my tenure at the College and believe strongly that the connection between the Faculty of Medicine and the College is growing ever stronger.

Over the continuum of a physician's career, the faculty and the College share a commitment to the physician to help develop, assess, and maintain clinical competence and professionalism.

The Faculty of Medicine contributes to the College's physician peer assessment, clinician assessment of international medical graduates (IMGs), and continuing professional development initiatives.

The College's Clinician Assessment for Practice Program (CAPP) is designed to assess the competence of IMGs wishing to enter family practice. The Learning Resource Centre at the Faculty of Medicine, with the College, manages the annual administration of the Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) for the CAPP.

The Faculty of Medicine plays a significant role in the Nova Scotia Physician Achievement Review (NSPAR) program administered by the College. As Chair of the Practice Improvement Committee, and with help from my colleague and fellow committee member, Dr. Joan Sargeant (Head, Division of Medical Education), we have conducted research on multi-source feedback. This research has contributed to the foundation of the NSPAR program. The Faculty of Medicine also provides traineeships for Nova Scotia physicians based on their perceived needs or NSPAR results.

The College has actively worked with the Faculty of Medicine, students, and residents to contribute to curriculum on professionalism and the regulation of our profession. The Dalhousie Office of Continuing Professional Development provides remediation for physicians as required by the College.

Dr. Preston Smith
*Senior Associate Dean
Faculty of Medicine
Dalhousie University*

BRIDGES *to our* PARTNERS



FMRAC is the national and international voice for medical regulation in Canada. It is a member-based organization that comprises all 13 provincial and territorial medical regulatory authorities.



THE FEDERATION OF MEDICAL REGULATORY AUTHORITIES OF CANADA (FMRAC)

FMRAC is the national and international voice for medical regulation in Canada. It is a member-based organization that comprises all 13 provincial and territorial medical regulatory authorities. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia is a valued member of the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FMRAC).

Dr. D.A. (Gus) Grant was re-elected to the FMRAC Executive Committee for 2013-14, to which he was first elected in 2012-13. During that time, the Executive Committee was FMRAC's main governance body between the annual meetings of the Board of Directors, meeting six to seven times a year.

In addition, FMRAC considers itself fortunate to have meaningful engagement from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia on its various committees, working groups, and other activities, specifically:

- Dr. D.A. (Gus) Grant – *Working Group on Physician Performance Enhancement*
- Dr. William (Bill) Lowe – *Registration Working Group and Working Group on Assessment & Supervision*
- Ms. Kellie Skelhorn – *Risk Management Committee*
- Ms. Gwen MacPherson – *Working Group on Assessment & Supervision*

Dr. Elizabeth Mann, President of CPSNS, was the voting representative for CPSNS at the FMRAC Annual Meeting of the Members in June 2013.

Dr. Rocco Gerace
President, FMRAC
Registrar, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

BRIDGES *to our* PARTNERS



THE METHADONE MAINTENANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM (MMSP)

The Methadone Maintenance Support Program (MMSP) is a peer-review initiative of the College and the Atlantic Mentor Network – Pain and Addiction. It is built on the premise that physicians enjoy doing their job well and that direct feedback helps them to do so.

The MMSP reviewer visits physicians whose Health Canada exemptions to prescribe methadone for dependence are expiring. The reviewer assesses the physician's methadone practice against the standards set out in the College's own *Methadone Maintenance Treatment Handbook*. At the end of the day, the reviewer sits down with the prescriber and provides direct feedback.

The whole process is overseen by a committee with public and expert representation. The review is for the benefit of the doctor only. As such, the identity of the physicians reviewed is not made known to the College and, like all peer review initiatives, the documents produced by the process are privileged.

Methadone maintenance treatment is a difficult clinical field, with challenging, complicated patients struggling with addiction. We believe the MMSP will help support physicians in this important area of health care. We are delighted the provincial government has extended funding of this program for the coming year.

Dr. D.A. (Gus) Grant
Chair, MMSP
Registrar and CEO
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia



THE NOVA SCOTIA PRESCRIPTION MONITORING PROGRAM (NSPMP)

The College is committed to the NSPMP's dual mission of promoting the appropriate use of monitored drugs and reducing their misuse and abuse in the province. The issues that surround prescription drug abuse are critical public safety concerns involving many stakeholders. The medical profession must take ownership of its share.

In partnership with the NSPMP, the College is working to improve physician prescribing. This year, we launched the High Prescriber Initiative which delivered support to 100 family physicians who most rely on opioids in their practice. The information included a comprehensive prescribing profile for each physician, with profiles for specific drugs, dosages, dispensing intervals, and other variables central to good prescribing. The goal is that these physicians will conduct an informed reflection of their prescribing.

The NSPMP offers a secure web application that allows prescribers and pharmacists to access patient profiles 24/7. This database will soon expand to include benzodiazepines. We will continue to work with the NSPMP to turn this data into information to help prescribers.

Dr. D.A. (Gus) Grant
Chair, NSPMP
Registrar and CEO
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia

BRIDGES *to our* PARTNERS

AWARDS AND GRANTS

The College supports a number of programs and initiatives through scholarships and grants annually. Some of the programs supported during 2013 included:

WK Kellogg Health Sciences Library

The WK Kellogg Health Sciences Library grant helps to build clinical collections for practitioners throughout the province. Titles have been book-plated to acknowledge the College.

Medical History Museum

The grant to the Medical History Museum is to help preserve Nova Scotia's medical history.

Dr. Robert F. Maudsley Grant

A grant open to researchers working in medical or allied health disciplines, professional assessments, adult education, health law or regulation, international studies, medical ethics, and public policy.

In 2013, Elaine Gibson received this grant for her research into best practices for destruction of electronic medical records. Ms. Gibson was Associate Director of the Health Law Institute and is

Associate Professor at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University. Her research aims to identify best practices for legislation and policies concerning physicians' obligation as to the destruction of health information, with a particular focus on electronic medical records (EMRs).

Canadian Medical Hall of Fame TD Discovery Days

Encouraging and inspiring the next generation of Aboriginal scientists and health professionals in Nova Scotia by introducing them to a wide array of careers within the health sciences.

Gold-Headed Cane Award

The College, in partnership with the Humanities in Medicine Program at Dalhousie University Medical School, has established an annual province-wide award to honour a Nova Scotia physician who exhibits outstanding professionalism in the practice of medicine.

Dr. Geoffrey Turnbull of Halifax was selected as the 2013 recipient. A Professor of Medicine at Dalhousie University and Active Staff Gastroenterologist with Capital District Health Authority, Dr. Turnbull's extensive research in gastrointestinal motility disorders has made him a world expert in Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

Ambassador Program “Key to Caring”

The Music-in-Medicine initiative, through the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University, designed an outreach tour for their recently-formed men’s cappella group that tours long-term care facilities and nursing homes in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. This annual contribution provides support for the students’ province-wide tour each year.

Discovery Days in Health Sciences

The Canadian Medical Hall of Fame has been introducing young people, including those from bilingual, Aboriginal, and rural communities, to the joys of a health-related career through Discovery Days. To date, this impactful initiative has acquainted over 22,000 talented high school students with world-class health clinicians and scientists – a recognized strategy to nurture more Canadian health professionals.

Dalhousie Continuing Medical Education

The College sponsors tables at the Gold Headed Cane Gala for approximately 14 medical students, the Gold Head Cane award recipient, plus his/her sponsor and guest.



OUR OPERATIONS



Kellie Skelhorn, COO

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

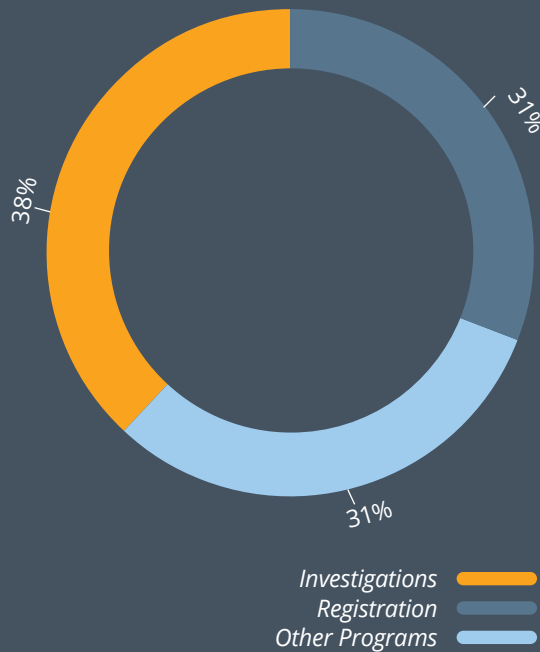
Years ended December 31, 2013,
with comparatives figures for 2012

	2013 \$	2012 \$
Revenue:		
Licensing fees	4,523,335	4,697,202
Certificates of professional conduct	37,325	36,595
Professional incorporation fees	179,150	168,600
Other income	29,467	1,820
Investment income - unrestricted	29,263	31,962
Investment income - internally restricted	42,333	40,376
CAPP program	465,365	395,690
Methadone Maintenance program	48,172	-
Review of qualifications	55,205	50,325
	5,409,615	5,422,570
Expenses:		
Council	193,191	210,477
Investigations	927,841	879,827
Administration	1,728,282	1,659,860
Occupancy	321,172	332,960
Communications and policy	324,837	235,319
NSPAR program	356,001	302,580
Physician performance	35,601	13,959
CAPP program	377,234	370,131
Registration	767,233	774,845
	5,031,392	4,779,958
Excess of revenue over expenses	378,223	642,612

The complete audited financial statements can be found on the College website at www.cpsns.ns.ca

In 2013, the College undertook a significant database upgrade. In an effort to continue to improve operational efficiencies, to improve our services to physicians within the province, and to replace out-dated technology, the College's IT team led the development of a new database management system. Internally, this initiative was affectionately dubbed DORIS (database of regulatory information system). The new database was successfully launched in early 2014.

Expenditures by Core College Functions



Other programs include:

Nova Scotia Physician Achievement Review (NSPAR) program; Clinician Assessment for Practice (CAPP) program; Methadone Maintenance Support (MMSP) program; and Physician Assessment.



Ann Chipman, *Manager IT*
Greg Goodie, *Systems Administrator*





COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS
OF NOVA SCOTIA

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