



# 2023

# ANNUAL REPORT

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*The Network's purpose is to foster and enable collaboration among regulated health professions in a manner that upholds and protects the public interest, through enhanced regulation by the health professions.*

*The Regulated Health Professions Network Act (section 5)*

# Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network

## 2023 Annual Report

### Report of the Chair and Executive Director

Appreciation is extended to Network members and Network Council and Executive Committee members for their continued engagement and commitment to collaborative regulation. We also recognize the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) for their active membership on the Council via its representatives and appreciate the continued communication and consultation as health profession regulation evolves to modernize and enhance access to health care in the province. Four themes predominantly describe the Network's activities and achievements during the 2022-2023 fiscal year: *evolution of professional regulation, enhanced regulators' collective voice, value association with Network membership, and transition.*

An impetus for the formalization of the Network in 2012 via the *Regulated Health Professions Act* was to enhance voluntary collaboration – in recognition of the privilege and evolution of professional self-regulation. The Network formed pro-actively, recognizing the opportunity for a unique approach where the Network itself would be leveraged to promote and ensure accountability and appropriate regulatory performance. This year, the Network continued to provide support to the DHW in its consultation on health profession modernization (HPM). Our response elaborated on how a Nova Scotia collaborative approach, via the Network, could support the objectives of the common foundation legislation (CFL). The Network expressed its support for a common legislative framework and an evolved role of the Network.

The Network continued to serve as a single point of contact for consultation and discussions with government. However, it enhanced its role to enable Network members to respond collectively to regulatory challenges and opportunities. Health regulators' collective voice was expressed in consultation on the CFL, and at the Nova Scotia Law Amendments Committee to address the *Patient Access to Care Act* (PACA). The Network expressed its support for the intent of the Bill and proposed amendments to enhance clarity and address risks of unintended potential outcomes.

A fourth theme associated with this fiscal year's activities was *value associated with Network membership*. The Network hosted educational opportunities for regulatory bodies' board members,

staff, and committee members. Additionally, it coordinated a cost-sharing approach to provide joint responses to government on CFL and PACA related consultations. This coordination and cost-sharing approach creates workload and financial efficiencies for individual regulatory bodies.

Operationally, the Network experienced a *transition* in several areas. There was a transition in staffing. Jennifer Hemeon was appointed interim executive director in September 2022, and a new bookkeeper began their role in June 2022. Appreciation is extended to outgoing Interim Executive Director, Karren Fader, for her contribution to the Network's operations. Additionally, transition to online banking, online financial software, and a cloud-based platform created workload and financial efficiencies.

We are thankful for the engagement and collaboration with regulatory bodies and with DHW as the Network's role evolves, and as legislation that directs the regulation of health professions changes, to further enhance the care the Nova Scotia public receives from health professionals.



Karl Kowalczyk  
Chair



Jennifer Hemeon  
Executive Director

## Activities and Accomplishments

### Business Plan Development

There was significant progress establishing a business plan and developing policies to enable the Network to operate effectively in the change and uncertainty that will accompany the modernization of health profession regulation (HPR). A business plan was drafted to reflect the common foundation legislation (CFL) and describe avenues to enhance the financial sustainability of the Network.

The business plan continues to include functions related to voluntary, collaborative processes, and include potential functions related to the CFL. The proposed CFL includes processes which would evolve the Network's legislated mandate. These processes address the Nova Scotia government's Action for Health Plan (2022), including increased transparency and accountability. Proposed processes also reflect the evolution of public expectations and evolving regulatory and governance practices. Proposed processes aim to standardize good governance and oversight practices across all professions to ensure public confidence.

The Network began exploring a membership fee model that would generate more income and better reflect regulatory bodies' capacity to contribute. A proposed model included a consistent base fee, fee per registrant, and a maximum fee.

### Operational Oversight

Policy development included revising and/or established policies pertaining to the Executive and Audit Committees' terms of reference, reserve fund, and signing authorities.

The Executive Committee coordinated the recruitment of a new interim executive director and managed the executive director position to execute deliverables set in collaboration with the DHW.

New technology was introduced, including online banking, online financial software, and a cloud-based platform for enhanced communication, and hosting a shared library of resources.

### Network Responsibilities

The following activities were performed from April 1, 2022 until March 31, 2023 that served to meet deliverables set in agreement with the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), and in line with the Network's duties, as stated below, set out in the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Act (2012, section 6).

*The Network shall be a forum to share resources, information, trends and issues among the regulated health professions and others (6(a)).*

The Network hosted stakeholders to present on issues related to health profession regulation and the health system. The DHW's Project Director, Strategic Health Partnerships, Eric Hemphill, presented on the Health Equity Framework. Nova Scotia Health and DHW's Planning and Development Officer, Tabinda Sheikh, presented on Gender Affirming Care. A session on Health Profession Registration Pathways was presented by Nova Scotia Health's Senior Director of Interprofessional Practice and Learning, Cindy MacQuarrie, and Director of Academic & Community Partnerships, Nancy MacConnell. Nova Scotia Health's Acting Director of Clinical Standards, Kim Thompson, and Manager of Clinical Informatics, Laura Jean MacDermid, presented on the One Person One Record project.

Email communication and the Network's quarterly meetings present Network representatives with opportunities to pose questions and share provincial and national initiatives. A round table survey was launched to gather information about regulatory bodies' strategic plans, demographics (including number of registrants and license fees), and priority initiatives. The survey will be completed and shared on an annual basis.

*The Network shall promote best practices in health-profession regulation while preserving the regulatory autonomy of each regulated health profession (6(b)).*

The Network coordinated education opportunities for board members, committee volunteers, and staff on best regulatory practices. In February, a virtual education session was provided by Lawyer, Ryan Baxter with McInnes Cooper on the principles of sound and defensible decision-making. In March, a virtual interactive education session was offered on risk enterprise frameworks. The session was facilitated by the Network's Interim Executive Director, Jennifer Hemeon, and the Nova Scotia College of Nursing's Director of Operations & Strategy, Caroline Wolfe Stewart.

**Table 1:** Attendance and Income Associated with Education Sessions

| Education Session                                  | Attendance          |                   | Net Income |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|------------|
|  | # regulatory bodies | # representatives |            |
| Principles of Sound and Defensible Decision-making | 19                  | 100               | \$ 6,960   |
| Enterprise Risk Framework                          | 10                  | 32                | \$ 1,650   |
| Total  |                     |                   | \$ 8,610   |

*The Network shall enable Network members to build capacity for their regulatory functions by facilitating collaboration with other Network members and other bodies (6(c)).*

The Network's activities and accomplishments are realized through the many hours of Network representatives volunteering their time and expertise. Although working groups and committees continued to meet virtually, it did not diminish the Network's spirit of collaboration. The Network continued to serve as a resource to help its members liaise with one another and other organizations on specific questions. For the public, the Network website <https://www.nsrhpn.ca> is the means of communication.

*The Network shall provide a single point of contact for discussion and consultation with government and others on matters that may impact the regulation of health professions (6(d)).*

The Network continued to provide support to the DHW in its consultation on health profession modernization (HPM). The Network coordinated consultation sessions in May on standardized quality assurance, regulation of private facilities, function and organization of a multidisciplinary regulator, and process and circumstances of regulatory file referrals. In June, a report was submitted to the DHW outlining the potential impact of HPM on the Network. Consultation continued in September, and a joint response and submitted its report in November.

In March, upon introduction of Bill 256, the Network coordinated a joint response to the DHW and presented at the Law Amendments Committee. The Network expressed its support for the intent of the Bill and proposed amendments to enhance clarity and address risks of unintended potential outcomes.

*The Network shall facilitate the development of strategies and approaches that will enable Network members to respond individually and collectively to regulatory challenges and opportunities (6(e))*

Most notably in 2022-2023, the Network hosted consultation sessions and facilitated joint responses to government’s consultation on HPM. Joint responses were funded using a cost-sharing approach and were a means to collectively respond to the evolution of health profession regulation in the province. The cost-sharing approach was a means to provide regulators savings on legal costs. The collaborative approach enhanced individual regulators’ responses informed by the Network’s collective insight, wisdom, and expertise.

**Table 2:** Cost-sharing on Joint Submissions

| <b>Initiative</b>   | <b>Total Expense Shared</b> | <b># Network Members</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Joint Submission to Department of Health and Wellness Re: Proposed Additional and Evolved Concepts for the Modernization of the Legislative Model for Regulation of Health Professions in Nova Scotia (November 2023) | \$ 45,581                   | 20                       |
| Joint Submission to Department of Health and Wellness Re: Bill 256 <i>Patient Access to Care Act</i> (March 2023)   | \$ 28,896                   | 20                       |

*The Network shall provide information to other bodies that will facilitate improvements in health-care delivery or regulation (6(f)).*

The Network coordinated education opportunities for Network members and extended the invitation to non-health regulatory bodies. Representatives from three external regulatory bodies attended.

The Network’s executive director served as a resource to non-regulated health professions, upon request, to enhance their understanding of professional regulation.

*The Network shall encourage voluntary collaboration among Network members for any purpose that serves the public interest (6(g)).*

In collaboration with the DHW, a project commenced to identify data points for the collection of information from health professionals who represent equity-seeking groups. Data points will be identified, and communiqués will be drafted for health professionals and regulatory bodies that clarify a common purpose and rationale for data collection.

## **External Membership and Collaboration**

The Network is a member of CLEAR (Council on Licensure, Enforcement & Regulation (<http://www.clearhq.org>) and CNAR (Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation <http://www.cnnar.ca>). Both organizations provide international and national perspectives on regulation and offer the opportunity to share resources.



## Governance

The governing Council consists of representatives from 22 Network members.

| Member Representatives (Voting)  |   |
|--|---|
| College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists<br>Cindy Wheeler, Registrar   | Nova Scotia College of Medical Laboratory Technologists<br>Janice Jones, Executive Director/Registrar         |
| College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia<br>Stacy Bryan, Registrar/CAO  | Nova Scotia College of Nursing<br>Sue Smith, CEO & Registrar  |
| College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia<br>Kevin Wong, Executive Director/Registrar  | Nova Scotia College of Optometrists<br>Carl Davis, Past Chair   |
| College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia<br>Karl Kowalczyk, Executive Director/Registrar   | Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists<br>Bev Zwicker CEO & Registrar   |
| College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia<br>D.A. (Gus) Grant, Registrar/CEO   | Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists<br>Mark Williams, Registrar   |
| Denturist Licensing Board of Nova Scotia<br>Maureen Hope, Registrar  | Nova Scotia College of Respiratory Therapists<br>Tara Boudreau, Registrar                                     |
| Nova Scotia College of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals<br>Julie Avery, Executive Director/Registrar  | Nova Scotia College of Social Workers<br>Alec Stratford, Executive Director/Registrar                         |
| Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology<br>Gordon Butler, Registrar   | Nova Scotia Dental Technicians Association<br>Christian Hall, President                                       |
| Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists<br>John Hubert, Registrar & Executive Director   | Nova Scotia College of Dietitians and Nutritionists<br>Amanda Connors, Executive Director/Registrar (Interim) |
| Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors<br>Janis Noseworthy, Registrar  | Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia<br>Jenny Wright, Registrar/Executive Director                     |
| Nova Scotia College of Dispensing Opticians<br>Cavell Ferguson, Registrar  | Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia<br>Doug Mackey, Registrar  |
| Member Representatives (Non-Voting)  |   |
| Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness<br>Mark Lucas, Manager, Legislative Policy and Health Profession Regulation<br>Melissa Sponagle, Senior Legislative Policy Analyst |   |

## 2022-2023 Executive Committee

|                 |   |                               |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Karl Kowalczyk  | Nova Scotia College of Paramedics                 | Chair                         |
| Jennifer Hemeon | Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network  | Ex-officio                    |
| Mark Williams   | Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists           | Member-at-Large               |
| Stacy Bryan     | College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia       | Member-at-Large               |
| Kevin Wong      | College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia | Smaller Member Representative |
| Alec Stratford  | Nova Scotia College of Social Workers             | Larger Member Representative  |

## 2023 Audit Committee

|                 |  |                       |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------|
| Julie Avery     | Nova Scotia College of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals | NSRHPN representative |
| Tara Boudreau   | Nova Scotia College of Respiratory Therapists                              | NSRHPN representative |
| Leslie Dixon    | Nova Scotia College of Nursing   | External member       |
| Jennifer Hemeon | Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network                           | Ex-officio            |

## 2023 Nominations Committee

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Karl Kowalczyk  | Nova Scotia College of Paramedics                             |
| Mark Williams   | Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists                       |
| Stacy Bryan     | College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia                   |
| Kevin Wong      | College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia             |
| Alec Stratford  | Nova Scotia College of Social Workers                         |
| Amanda Connors  | Nova Scotia College of Dietitians and Nutritionists           |
| Jennifer Hemeon | Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (Ex-officio) |

# Financial Statements

## Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network Statement of Financial Position *As at March 31, 2023*

|  | 2023    | 2022    |
|--|---------|---------|
| <b>Assets</b>                          |         |         |
| <b>Current</b>                         |         |         |
| Cash (Note 6)                          | 114,247 | 101,854 |
| Accounts receivable (Note 3)           | 41,415  | 15,608  |
| Prepaid expenses                       | 3,074   | 2,710   |
|  | 158,736 | 120,172 |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                     |         |         |
| <b>Current</b>                         |         |         |
| Accounts payable and accruals (Note 4) | 40,068  | 4,064   |
| Deferred revenue (Note 5)              | -       | 38,300  |
|  | 40,068  | 42,364  |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                      |         |         |
| Operating fund                         | 19,044  | 10,479  |
| Reserve fund (Note 6)                  | 99,624  | 67,329  |
|  | 118,668 | 77,808  |
|  | 158,736 | 120,172 |

Approved on behalf of Council

e-Signed by Jennifer Hemeon

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Chair, Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions  
Network

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Executive Director

**Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network**  
**Statement of Revenues and Expenses**  
*For the year ended March 31, 2023*

|   | 2023<br><i>Budget</i><br><i>(Unaudited)</i> | 2023           | 2022    |
|---|---|----------------|---------|
| <b>Revenues</b>                         |   |                |         |
| Membership fees <i>(Note 5)</i>         | 38,300                                      | 38,300         | 38,300  |
| Government assistance <i>(Note 5)</i>   | 64,110                                      | 64,110         | 64,110  |
| Special projects                        | -   | 83,043         | 7,150   |
| Interest income                         | -   | 771            | 84      |
| Gain on sale of equipment               | -   | 2,225          | -       |
|   | <b>102,410</b>                              | <b>188,449</b> | 109,644 |
| <b>Expenses</b>                         |   |                |         |
| Bad debts                               | -   | 2,154          | -       |
| Bank charges and interest               | 600   | 65             | -       |
| Computer and website                    | 560   | 520            | 247     |
| Insurance                               | 2,625                                       | 2,670          | 2,625   |
| Meeting costs                           | 255   | 73             | 259     |
| Membership fees                         | 1,000                                       | 1,745          | 1,309   |
| Office supplies                         | 1,500                                       | 2,007          | 3,879   |
| Professional development                | -   | -              | 42      |
| Professional fees                       | 50,200                                      | 81,672         | 3,761   |
| Rent                                    | -   | -              | 1,289   |
| Salaries and benefits                   | 45,670                                      | 53,098         | 67,828  |
| Special projects                        | -   | 3,585          | 1,371   |
| Telephone                               | -   | -              | 691     |
|   | <b>102,410</b>                              | <b>147,589</b> | 83,301  |
| <b>Excess of revenues over expenses</b> | <b>-</b>                                    | <b>40,860</b>  | 26,343  |