

**Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia
Board Meeting Minutes
Future Inns, Halifax Nova Scotia
Friday, May 31st, 2024 at 8:30 am**

A meeting of the Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia was held on May 31st at 8:30 am at the Future Inns, Halifax NS.

In Attendance: Dr. Russell MacSween (Chair)
Dr. Sunita Sharma (Vice-Chair)
Dr. Tim Silver
Dr. Sachin Seth
Dr. Erin Hennessy
Dr. Asile El-Darahali
Dr. Scott Schofield
Mr. David Melvin
Mr. Greg Fevens
Ms. Michelle Fowler
Ms. Sherry Whytewood
Dr. Doug Mackey (Registrar)
Dr. Curtis Gregoire (Deputy Registrar)
Ms. Jane Donovan (Executive Assistant)
Mrs. Kaitlynn Zegray (Administrative Assistant)
Mr. Chris Holland (IT Consultant)

Guests: Dr. Ian Cunningham (NSDA)
Dr. Tanya Cooke (NDEB) for Agenda item 8
Ms. Alida Mitchell (Baker Tilley) for Agenda item 14(b)(i)
Ms. Andrea Wilkie (Baker Tilley) for Agenda Item 14(b)(i)

Agenda 1 Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

At 8:30 am the Chair called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and proclaimed a land acknowledgement.

Agenda 1(a) Mandate of the PDBNS and Expectations for Board Members

The Chair highlighted the resources pertaining to this and verbally reviewed the Board's mandate of public protection and the expectations for Board members.

Agenda 2 Introductions

The Chair welcomed Dr. Ian Cunningham from the NSDA. Introductions were made around the table and general instructions were given. Dr. Tanya Cooke, Ms. Alida Mitchell and Ms. Andrea Wilkie were introduced during the meeting as they appeared for their agenda items.

Agenda 3 Conflict of Interest Declaration

The Chair asked the Board members if they had or were aware of any other Board members who had a conflict of interest with any of today's agenda items. None was identified.

Agenda 4 Approval of the Agenda

The Chair reviewed the Agenda.

It was moved – Dr. Sachin Seth

Motion 2024-12

“That the agenda be approved as presented.”

Motion Carried

Agenda 5 Approval of the January, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

a) Errors and/or Omissions

The Chair asked if there were any errors or omissions in the minutes from the January, 2024 meeting. None being identified, the Chair stated that the minutes of the January, 2024 meeting are approved as presented.

b) Business Arising

Business arising is incorporated into the agenda.

Agenda 6 Review of Email Motions Passed Between Meetings

The following motion was circulated by email, voted on, and passed by the Board on May 1, 2024 (moved and seconded by Dr. T. Silver and Mr. G. Fevens).

MOTION 2024-10

“That \$250,000 be transferred from unrestricted net assets to restricted net assets for the 2023 fiscal year.”

The following motion was circulated by email, voted on, and passed by the Board on May 26, 2024 (moved and seconded by Mr. D. Melvin and Ms. S. Whytewood).

MOTION 2024-11

“That Ms. Donna Rushton be nominated to serve as a Director on the NDAEB Board effective May 30, 2024.”

Agenda 7 Licensing Report

Ms. Jane Donovan provided a licensing report which was included in the resources.

The renewal process was opened for dental assistants on February 20th, 2024. At that time, DAs were to set up their accounts within Alinity. Once that was completed the renewal itself was launched. We had 838 dental assistants licensed.

- 36 dental assistants were struck from the register and 1 has since been reinstated.
- 29 dental assistants relinquished their license.
- 2 new dental assistants were licensed after May 1st.

There were very few technical issues with the renewal process. However, several dental assistants did not have the required BLS/CPR and had to obtain this prior to completing the renewal process.

Some concerns were raised that, in the renewal process, several dental assistants had submitted verification of their BLS/CPR which had been obtained through an online course. (All registrants, dentists and dental assistants, must maintain BLS/CPR certification at all times and verification of such is required upon registration and licensing and at the time of license renewal.)

It was discussed that BLS/CPR training must happen in person since physical manoeuvres such as chest compressions cannot be practised and tested with an online course. The

Registrar was directed to communicate this to all registrants in an upcoming Board Business publication.

There was also discussion that in the future the Board may be more specific about the requirement (e.g., BLS HCP versus CPR).

PDBNS IT Consultant, Mr. Chris Holland, provided a live demonstration of the new online registration and licensing application process.

Agenda 8 NDEB Update on Equivalency Process

Dr. Tanya Cooke Provided an update on the NDEB Equivalency Process.

At the NDEB's interim Board meeting on May 11th, 2024, a plan was approved to explore ways to evolve the Equivalency Process (which is part of the pathway to licensure for graduates of non-accredited dental schools).

The Equivalency Process currently takes a minimum of 18 months to complete. The NDEB is looking at ways to shorten that timeframe. Some of the initiatives being explored in this area include:

- changing registration processes to prioritize candidates (for example who have already met eligibility requirements to work in Canada and who have already passed the ACJ);
- reviewing eligibility requirements for the Equivalency Process;
- reducing the number of examinations in the Equivalency Process;
- supporting alternative pathways to certification; and
- increasing testing capacity for the NDECC.

Virtual OSCE

There are still some technical glitches happening with the administration of the Virtual OSCE. The NDEB is exploring solutions for this ongoing issue.

Agenda 9 Dalhousie Faculty of Dentistry Dean's Report

The Dean of Dalhousie University, Dr. Ben Davis, was not able to be present for the meeting but submitted two reports which were included in the resources.

Agenda 10 NSDA Report

Dr. Ian Cunningham provided a report from the Nova Scotia Dental Association and shared a verbal overview.

Much of the NSDA's efforts over the past six months have been in relation to the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP).

Dr. Cunningham shared that in June, the NSDA will be hosting members for the AGM at Fox Harb'r Resort in Wallace, Nova Scotia. For the first time, the NSDA will be providing attendees with free continuing education courses at the meeting. Dr. Cunningham reported that the venue was completely booked and they have filled all their seats for most CE courses and social events. The NSDA anticipates a busy and successful weekend at Fox Harb'r.

Agenda 11 NSDAA Report

Ms. Sherry Whytewood provided a report from the Nova Scotia Dental Assisting Association (NSDAA) and gave a verbal overview of activities:

- The NSDAA currently has 888 members.
- Dental Assistants Recognition Week (DARW) was March 3rd – 9th, 2024.
- The NSDAA offered 3 virtual CE courses over the past year.
- The NSDAA and the NSDA have a working group with a facilitator to look at the growth of industry and how the associations can support each other.
- The NSDAA has updated their system and the NSDAA office email has changed to: executivedirector@nsdaa.ca.
- The NSDAA has also created a separate email for the NSDAA president which is: president@nsdaa.ca.
- Both the NSDAA & NSDA will be supporting those NSCC-IT students, who choose to do so, to cover the cost of the writing of the NDAEB preparatory exam at NSCC-IT. The statistics show that those students who write the exam right after graduation have a higher success rate in passing the exam. NSDAA wants to support and set the students up for success.
- NSDAA held its virtual AGM on Saturday, May 25th, 2024, with 121 members in attendance.
- NSDAA Board will be starting a full review of their Bylaws and Terms of Reference in 2024.

Agenda 12 Registrar's Report

a. Functional Committees Update

Complaints Committee

Since the January 2024 Board meeting, the Complaints Committee has met 6 times for the hearing of 11 complaints. Of the 11 complaints:

- 5 were dismissed
- 2 resulted in a counsel
- 1 resulted in a letter of caution
- 1 resulted in a letter of reprimand
- 2 were referred to the Discipline Committee.

Discipline Committee

On February 16, 2024 the Discipline Committee approved a Settlement Agreement signed by the Registrar, the Chair of the Complaints Committee, and a registered dental assistant in accordance with Section 17(A) of the [PDBNS Discipline Regulations](#).

Mandatory Continuing Dental Education Committee

Early in 2024, random sampling took place to select 15% of dentists and dental assistants whose MCDE cycle ended on December 31, 2023. There were 34 dental assistants and 24 dentists who were selected for audit with submissions to be received by February 2, 2024.

The MCDE Committee met on February 9, 2024 to review the submissions. Of those audited, 5 dentists and 3 registered dental assistants (RDAs) were found to have incomplete audits, meaning that they had not submitted satisfactory verification of continuing education to meet the requirements of the guidelines. In addition, 1 dentist and 4 RDAs audited did not submit any documentation for their audits. Registrants who are deficient in their audits are required to make up for the shortfall prior to license renewal.

Dental Practice Review Committee

In accordance with the Dental Practice Review Regulations, 82 dentists (15% of licensed dentists in private practice) were selected using a random sampling process stratified by district to complete a self assessment document which was to be returned by February 15, 2024.

The Committee met on March 6, 2024 to review the documents. There were 12 dentists selected for a site visit through random, sampling in addition to 3 dentists whose self-assessment form triggered a site visit. 2 dentists had not returned their self-assessment forms and were therefore chosen for site visits. 18 dentists will soon be sent letters from the Chair requesting that they confirm that certain modifications to their practices were implemented by a particular date.

Office site visits for the 2023 DPR process are almost completed, and work is underway to plan for the 2024 visits. The majority of these have been conducted by the Chair of the DPR Committee, Dr. Mariette Chiasson. As has been communicated previously, where concerns arise, they most often tend to be in the realm of recordkeeping.

Registration Appeal Committee

The Registration Appeal Committee has had no activity since the last Board meeting.

External Organizations

The Registrar provided an overview of the activities of and interactions with several external organizations and regulatory partners including:

- the Canadian Dental Regulating Authorities Federation (CDRAF),
- the National Dental Examining Board (NDEB),
- the National Dental Assisting Examining Board (NDAEB),
- the Royal College of Dentists of Canada (RCDC),
- the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC),
- the Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry (ACFD),
- the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network ("The Network"),
- the Office of the Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA), and
- the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW).

Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC)

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Sunita Sharma / Dr. Asile El-Darahali

Motion 2024-13

"That the grants for the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) for 2024 in the amounts of \$ 16,542.90 and \$8,334.51 for dental assisting be approved."

Motion Carried

Within the Registrar's presentation, Ms. Sherry Whytewood provided a report on her participation in the recent CDAC accreditation survey visit to Cape Breton Business College for their distance education program.

Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry (ACFD)

Dr. Mackey shared that the Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry (ACFD), with the support of the CDRAF and the NDEB, has secured \$8.9 million in federal funding to develop, implement, and evaluate a new pathway to certification for "Internationally Trained Dentists (ITDs) whose knowledge, skills and abilities are comparable to graduates of accredited dental programs".

Dalhousie's Faculty of Dentistry will be one of the three sites where this pilot will be launched. This new pathway would not replace the existing pathways. Rather, it would be an alternate pathway for individuals who need some gap training, but not necessarily a full 2-3 year program at a Canadian faculty of Dentistry.

Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (the "Network")

Dr. Mackey outlined the work of the Network which has been heavily focused on matters related to legislative changes.

On May 8, 2024, the Network hosted an online course on "Bias" led by Mr. Ryan Baxter of MacInnis Cooper. It built upon last year's session, "Sound and Defensible Decision-making", and took a deeper dive into the topic of bias.

Of almost to 100 attendees from the 21 health regulators, over 20 attendees were members of the PDBNS Complaints or Discipline Committee.

Agenda 13 Chair

Chair's Report

Dr. MacSween provided a verbal overview of the report which he had submitted.

In late February, Dr. Russell MacSween had the opportunity to attend a standard setting workshop for the NDEB's Assessment of Fundamental Knowledge (AFK) as an observer. The AFK is the first of three assessments which dentists who are graduates of non-accredited programs must complete to gain eligibility to take the VOSCE leading to licensure.

In March, Dr. Russell MacSween spent time in Ottawa as an evaluator for the National Dental Examination of Clinical Competence (NDECC) for graduates of non-accredited dental training programs.

From April 11-13, Dr. Doug Mackey and Dr. Russell MacSween attended the AGM of the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) in Toronto where there were valuable discussions with representatives from national organizations on matters of mutual concern.

During the winter and into spring there were several meetings with DHW staff moving us along with the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA). These have included development and review of the general regulations under the Act. On May 23 Dr. MacSween met with DHW for the first follow-up meeting since the April 2, 2024 submission of our questionnaire regarding the profession-specific regulations.

Board Proceedings 2023

The Board Proceedings for 2023 were incorporated into the resources.

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Erin Hennessy / Mr. David Melvin

Motion 2024-14

“That the Board Proceedings for 2023 be approved as presented.”

Motion Carried

Agenda 14

Board Committee Reports

a. Human Resources and Governance Committee

Dr. Sunita Sharma provided a report from the Human Resources and Governance Committee which was included in the resources.

i. Creation of ad hoc Committees

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Sachin Seth / Dr. Erin Hennessy

Motion 2024-15

“ That an *ad hoc* Code of Ethics Committee be created to develop an updated PDBNS Code of Ethics.”

Motion Carried

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Sunita Sharma / Mr. Greg Fevens

Motion 2024-16

“That an *ad hoc* Nominating Committee be created for the appointment of a new Chair and Vice- Chair for 2025-2026.”

Motion Carried

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Sunita Sharma / Ms. Sherry Whyte

Motion 2024-17

“That Dr. Russell Macsween, Mr. Greg Fevens, and Dr. Doug Mackey be appointed to the ad hoc Nominating Committee.”

Motion Carried

ii. **Appointments and Reappointments**

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Sunita Sharma / Dr. Sachin Seth

Motion 2024-18

“That Dr. Mark Vallee and Dr. Tom Steeves be appointed to the PDBNS Discipline Committee for three-year terms commencing June 1, 2024.”

Motion Carried

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Sunita Sharma / Dr. Asile El-Darahali

Motion 2024-19

“That the following individuals be appointed to the ad hoc Code of Ethics Committee: Dr. Mary McNally (Chair), Dr. Martin Gillis (Vice Chair), and Dr. Scott Schofield.

Motion Carried

iii. **Summer Student Update**

The PDBNS has been successful in its application for a summer student grant and has shared the job posting with the Dalhousie Dentistry DDS 1 and DDS 2 classes, since it will be helpful if the student has a knowledge of dentistry. There were no applicants from this pool, so the posting was then shared with the Dalhousie Dental Hygiene classes, from which there have been several promising expressions of interest. Year 1 of the DH program ends on June 21 and Year 2 begins on August 19.

iv. **Process for Filling Vacancies on Statutory Committees**

Dr. Sunita Sharma explained an evolving process for filling vacancies on statutory committees which will involve notifying all registrants of vacancies and inviting expressions of interest. This is with the goal of attracting committee members from a broader range of backgrounds.

b. Finance and Audit Committee

It was moved and seconded - Mr. Greg Fevens / Dr. Erin Hennessy

Motion 2024-20

“That the meeting be moved *in-camera*.”

Motion Carried

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Tim Silver / Mr. David Melvin

Motion 2024-21

“That the PDBNS Financial Statements be approved as presented.”

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Tim Silver / Dr. Asile El-Darahali

Motion 2024-22

“That Baker Tilley be appointed as auditors for the Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia for 2024.”

Motion Carried

It was moved and seconded - Dr. Tim Silver / Dr. Sachin Seth

Motion 2024-23

“That the PDBNS accounting policies be amended such that the restricted net assets shall be accumulated at a frequency and amount determined by the Board.”

Motion Carried

It was moved and seconded by- Dr. Tim Silver / Dr. Scott Schofield.

Motion 2024-24

“That the PDBNS purchase cyber security insurance through Coalition Insurance inc. as per the quote of \$1,666.00 annually.”

Motion Carried

It was moved and seconded by- Dr. Tim Silver / Mr. Greg Fevens

Motion 2024-25

“That the PDBNS Financial Statements no longer be posted on the website, but that, if possible, they be accessible to registrants behind a password-protected wall.

Motion Carried

It was moved and seconded - Mr. Greg Fevens / Dr. Erin Hennessy

Motion 2024-26

“That the *in camera* session be ended.”

Motion Carried

Agenda 15 Old Business

a. Processing of Sedation and Botox Applications

The Registrar outlined that we now have a new email address (permits.pdbns@eastlink.ca) where dentists can apply for their sedation and Botox permits. We are now generally processing permit applications within 5 business days if the required documentation has been submitted and the application satisfies the requirements.

Agenda 16 New Business

a. Application Fee for Registration and Licensing

The Registrar outlined that the PDBNS is among the only health regulator in Nova Scotia which does not currently have an application fee for registration and licensing in addition to a fee for initial registration and an annual licensing fee. There was a robust discussion about the implications of instituting an application fee.

It was moved and seconded - Mr. Greg Fevens / Dr. Scott Schofield

Motion 2024-27

“That, except as prohibited by the Patient Access to Care Act, an initial application fee of \$100.00 be applied to all license applications received from dentists and an initial application fee of \$65.00 be applied to all license applications received from dental assistants.”

Motion Carried

Agenda 17 Upcoming Meeting Dates

September 27, 2024 (Future Inns)

November 30, 2024 with reception on the Friday evening prior (Location TBA)

January 31, 2025 (Future Inns)

May 30, 2025 (Future Inns)

It was moved and seconded – Dr. Erin Hennessy and Dr. Scott Schofield

Motion 2023-28

“That the meeting be moved *in camera*.”

Motion Carried


It was moved and seconded – Dr. Sachin Seth / Mr. David Melvin

Motion 2024-29

“That the meeting be adjourned.”

Motion Carried

Approved,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell MacSween".

Dr. Russell MacSween, Chair

September 27, 2024