

INSIDE

- GPS Online.....2
- Electronic Commerce Act.....2
- New home for NLHBA.....2
- Getting Safely Back to Work.....3
- HR Planning—A Shared Initiative.....3
- Physician Recruitment4



John Peddle, NLHBA Executive Director, is proud to present the first edition of **NLHBA NewsNet**, the new quarterly newsletter for the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association. NewsNet will provide quarterly updates on NLHBA activities, plus information and discussion on current issues in the provincial health system. Comments and input are welcome!

NEWSNOTES

- **The Romanow Commission** is coming to St. John's on **April 15** to hold an Open Public Hearing as part of its "National Dialogue" phase – deadline for abstracts is **March 15**. Check for details at www.healthcarecommission.ca
- **Medical Services** negotiations for replacing the current MOU by September 2002 - the NLHBA is soliciting information from member organizations for its participation in the negotiations.
- **Redundant Employees**: former health system managers whose severance pay/payment in lieu of notice has been outstanding for years should be aware of ongoing discussions with Treasury Board, the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Community Services. The NLHBA expects to receive further direction from Treasury Board in early March.

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Pastoral Care Cited in Edmonton

Congratulations and commendation was given to the Pastoral Care Allied Health Group of the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association at the Annual Convention and Assembly of the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE) in Edmonton on January 26, 2002.

The local group, a network of chaplains, clergy, pastoral professionals and volunteers, was congratulated for reaching twenty years as a provincial group promoting and advocating for pastoral services in health care facilities. The Pastoral Care Allied Health Group was commended for its province-wide efforts to link up the various men and women ministering in our hospitals, nursing homes and community facilities, for bridging the isolation of distance, and for the professional development efforts undertaken. Check www.nlhba.nf.ca under Pastoral Care for the latest CONNECTOR newsletter.

Electronic Commerce Act

Just in time for the implementation of the NLHBA On-Line Tendering System for Group Purchasing, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador passed legislation to facilitate electronic commerce by removing barriers to the use of electronic communication.

Important definitions in the legislation

“*Electronic*” includes created, recorded, transmitted or stored in digital form or in another intangible form by electronic, magnetic or optical means or by any other means that has capabilities for creation, recording, transmission or storage similar to those means and electronically has a corresponding meaning.

“*Electronic agent*” is defined as a computer program or other electronic means used to initiate an action or to respond to electronic documents or action without review by a natural person at the time of the response or action.

We've Moved



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony—January 25, 2002

After a lengthy stay of almost 25 years at 1118 Topsail Road, the offices of the NLHBA moved to the Board of Trade Building at 66 Kenmount Road on January 14, 2002. Prior to our move, the weather was clear, dry and unseasonably fair for this time of the year. However, the day of our move on January 11, we had the first of a series of snow storms. It still holds true that “the best laid plans of mice and men ..” In the meantime, the movers did a good

job with the use of two tractor-trailers, a straight truck and almost 200 man hours.

In preparation for the move, staff went through the records/files and needless to say, a lot of material was cleared out. The move still required the packing of approximately 500 boxes. Further, the transfer of the computer network, security, telephone and telemedicine systems was successfully completed without any major interruptions.

GPS Online

In June 2001 Zedcomm Inc., a local IT consulting company, was contracted to develop an On-Line Tendering System for the NLHBA Group Purchasing Program.

The system is scheduled to be completed in two phases, a vendor/tendering section in Phase I and a member support section in Phase II. In the interest of controlling the current Group Purchasing budget while at the same time maintaining member services, it was decided to proceed first with Phase I, which is now completed. Trials are currently being done with two laboratory supply companies.

The Group Purchasing System (GPS) - Online will have three modules: Vendor, Member and Administration. The *Vendor* module allows vendors to enter their response to Group's Request for Quotes via the Internet and submit their tenders on-line. There are two levels of security provided to protect the sensitive data that will be processed on the system. The *Member* section will allow members to log on and view reports. The *Administration* module allows in-house staff to issue tenders and maintain the site.

Phase II, scheduled for 2002-2003, will develop the Member section so that members can control the input of their data in the GPS system.

All necessary changes were made and the staff welcomed invited guests to an Open House event at our new home on Friday, January 25. The ribbon to symbolize the opening of the new offices was cut by Des Dillon, NLHBA President, and Robert Thompson, Deputy Minister, Department of Health and Community Services.

Getting Safely Back to Work—New On-site Education

Preventing injuries is the responsibility of everyone at the workplace. However, even best efforts by everyone concerned will not prevent **all** injuries or illnesses. Therefore, it is important for all parties to focus on getting the injured worker back to a safe and productive workplace as soon as possible.

Recent changes to the Workplace, Health, Safety and Compensation Act have downloaded human resource and financial requirements to already stressed Health Boards. Simply put, employers must continue to “do more with less.”

Health Boards should see significant savings in their annual WHSCC premiums resulting from changes to the assessment model. However, WHSCC will not be allocating these savings (approximately \$4.6 million for all health boards) any earlier than January 2003. This means that in 2002, without having received any savings on their WHSCC assessments, Health Boards face additional costs in the vicinity of \$4.4 million to cover:

- Early and safe return-to-work salaries
- Functional abilities assessment
- Additional staff
- Workplace modifications and devices

The NLHBA Labour Relations

Department recognizes the burden placed on member organizations. In addition to the regular consultations and advice provided on specific situations, the Labour Relations Department will be offering support, on-site education and in-service training on request, particularly on the introduction of a new early and safe return-to-work model. This model is designed to return injured workers to their pre-injury job in a safe and effective manner.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Don Saturley, Labour Relations Officer at 364-7701 ext. 312 or via e-mail at dsaturley@nlhba.nf.ca

Human Resource Planning—A Shared Initiative

The Human Resources Planning Committee continues to work on a visionary and integrated Human Resource (HR) plan for the Province. To date the committee has examined 14 different groups of health professionals and produced several reports, mostly on the supply of graduates and workforce characteristics.

Already completed: supply reports for RNs, LPNs, selected allied health professionals, diagnostic groups and physicians and an analysis of five years of Employment Insurance (EI) data showing trends in usage for RNs and LPNs. The RN Supply report for 2001 forecasts a projected deficit in the supply of RNs.

Work in progress: HR Employer Statistics analysis on turnover, sick leave and overtime; a report on best practices in Recruitment and Retention of health professionals with recommendations on improving provincial recruitment and retention; a survey assessing the

preparedness of new graduates for selected educational programs from the perspective of employers, graduates and educational facilities; an analysis of 10 years of Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission data in the health sector describing leading injuries and associated costs at the health board level; a review of education issues such as preceptorship and clinical capacity in selected educational programs; a management study analyzing issues and trends in the health sector; and HR Forecast modeling.

This is a shared initiative between the Department of Health and Community Services, the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association, and Human Resources Development Canada. Part I of the final report is due at the end of March. For completed reports and further information please visit our web site at www.nlhba.nf.ca/hr.

Physician Recruitment

Successful recruitment and retention of physicians is not easy. So far, there has been a feeling that short-term, one-off solutions can produce long-term results. Not so - in fact, short-term solutions produce only short-term results. What stakeholders need is a long-term strategy that coordinates all these separate actions into a provincial plan. Some examples of separate actions taken in the past in isolation from a comprehensive recruitment strategy are: independently increasing medical school seats, paying rural incentives, offering return in service incentives, upgrading credentials of international graduates and compromising our ethics to recruit in chosen countries.

People recognize that the way we recruit physi-

cians needs to change. Whether you experience the shortage of physicians as a patient unable to gain access to a local clinic or as an administrator who recognizes that the design no longer meets the demands of patients or physicians, in the end the challenge remains the same - patients need family physicians.

What needs to be done has been clearly identified in this province by a wide range of stakeholders. Today's challenge is to merge these ideas into a provincial plan that shares the implementation responsibility with all stakeholders.

Much work lies ahead. For a provincial plan, we need to consult with partner agencies to identify best practices in physician recruitment, develop strategic goals, and assign the responsibility for implementation of each component in the plan by the partner agencies.

Fall Conference

As disappointed participants know, the 2001 Fall Conference was cancelled due to budget restrictions. There will not be a Spring Conference as tentatively discussed at one time. A decision on a Fall Conference 2002 will be made after Health Boards receive their 2002 budgets.

Health Fact

Half (46%) of residents in Newfoundland and Labrador think that increased efforts should be devoted to promoting healthy lifestyles even if it means a reduction in health services.

The other half believe that almost all efforts should be devoted to the treatment of illness and disease, with only limited attention to promoting healthy lifestyles.

Online purchasing!
Physician recruitment!
Arbitration decisions!
Program news!
Regular updates!
Position papers!

Check out our website

www.nlhba.nf.ca

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions for our **NewsNet**, please contact Jeannie House, Director of Advocacy and Information at (709) 364-7701 ext. 320 or at jhouse@nlhba.nf.ca