



NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR

HEALTH BOARDS ASSOCIATION

NLHBA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

2nd Floor, Beothuck Building
20 Crosbie Place
St. John's, NL
A1B 3Y8

Telephone (709) 364-7701
Facsimile (709) 364-6460
Web Site www.nlhba.nl.ca

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Secretariat: The NLHBA provides a regular forum for the volunteer trustees and senior management to consult with each other and discuss their concerns. The volunteer Chair of each member Regional Health Authority (RHA) sits on the NLHBA Board of Directors. The NLHBA facilitates regular meetings for CEOs and the Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Community (DOHCS) to meet on operational issues, share expertise and information, make decisions and make recommendations to the NLHBA Board and to the Department of Health and Community Services. Senior executive staff in Medical Services, Human Resources, Finance, Patient Safety and Quality, and Community Services also meet regularly with their counterparts in the Department of Health and Community Services, facilitated by the NLHBA, and report to the CEOs and the Board of Directors meetings. The NLHBA fosters and promotes partnerships with the provincial and federal governments, health professional organizations, national and provincial organizations, and other organizations such as Health Canada, the Memorial University of Newfoundland Medical, Nursing and Pharmacy Schools, Dalhousie University Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Schools and the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council.

Programs and Services: programs and services are developed and delivered to meet needs identified by our members for centrally-managed services to avoid unnecessary duplication of administrative and fiscal resources. Services are currently offered in collective bargaining, group purchasing, physician recruitment, health human resources planning and labour relations, with other services offered as needed. The health human resources planning group and provincial physician recruitment programs are partnerships with the provincial government and NLHBA.

Secretariat Services

The NLHBA provides secretariat services as follows:

- for regular meetings of the CEOs and senior executive of the RHAs to meet on policy and operational issues and share expertise and information as follows:
 - ❖ The CEOs and the Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Community (DOHCS) meet twice a month and make decisions and recommendations to the NLHBA Board and the Department of Health and Community Services;
 - ❖ The Vice Presidents and/or Chief Operating Officers meet regularly, with the appropriate Assistant Deputy Minister of DOHCS, and may make recommendations to the CEOs. Vice Presidents' meetings currently cover the following sectors:
 - Finance;
 - Human Resources;
 - Patient Safety/Quality/Research;
 - Medical Services; and
 - Community Services;
- Briefing notes, reports and background documents to keep regional health authorities informed on policy, legislative and operational issues;
- Maintenance of the NLHBA website, a central source of information for the health and community services system inside and outside the province;
- Work with federal and provincial government committees and bodies with decision-making and advisory mandates in the health and community services system, reporting to CEOs on findings and outcomes;
- Liaison with health faculties and schools at Memorial University;
- Co-ordination of the placement in RHAs of Newfoundland and Labrador physiotherapy and occupational therapy graduates from Dalhousie University;
- Administration of the "Seat Purchase" arrangement between physiotherapy and occupational therapy students and the Department of Health and Community Services, and the administration of a bursary program for other allied health professionals such as pharmacy, clinical psychology, speech language pathology and audiology;
- Administration of an education fund which provides funds to specific projects from member organizations;

- Input on development of legislation in the health and community services sector (most recently the *Regional Health Authorities Act* and the *Health Information Act*);
- Monitoring of provincial and federal legislation and regulations that affect the health and community services system.
- Co-ordination of the Pastoral Care Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) units, ensuring that the appropriate supervisor is in place with the right number of candidates, and distribution of the Pastoral Care newsletter and other membership information.

Programs and Services

The NLHBA as a central agency offers programs and services, in consultation with member health organizations, that use the collective size of the health and community services system to achieve efficiencies and cost-savings both for each individual regional health organization and for the health and community services system as a whole.

Benefits include:

- Central administration which eliminates the need for individual RHAs to resource the program or service;
- Central source of experience and expertise which is available to all regional health organizations;
- Elimination of costly competition among regional health organizations;
- Fiscal, training and service advantages for individual RHAs.

Additional programs and services are made available to members who pay the cost of providing that service.

Collective Bargaining

The NLHBA provides collective bargaining services to provincial Residential Boards, Central Health, Western Health, Labrador-Grenfell Health and Eastern Health:

- Collective bargaining for the following collective agreements – NLNU, NAPE (HS), NAPE (HP), NAPE (LX), CUPE (HS), AAHP, PAIRN, NAPE Master Agreement (Residential Boards), CUPE Master Agreement (Residential Boards). This includes developing proposals, compiling negotiating teams, costing, liaison with stakeholders, researching cross-jurisdictional issues and drafting language;.
- Collective agreement interpretation sessions across the Province following each round of collective bargaining;

- Development of necessary expertise and protocol arrangements with the Public Service Secretariat so that individual regional health organizations do not need to duplicate the purchase of collective bargaining expertise and negotiating of protocols;
- When a strike is pending, co-ordination of essential employees, including the negotiation of essential employee agreements;
- During a strike, representation by NLHBA on a committee tasked to resolve essential employee issues that arise;
- During a strike, co-ordination of activities among the RHAs to help each cope with problems that arise during the strike, usually through daily conference calls.
- In connection with the collective bargaining program, assistance for all employers with other types of issues such as court injunctions and co-ordination of information and resource distribution;
- Assistance with illegal strike issues on behalf of employers, including assisting legal counsel;
- Assistance with the negotiation of transition agreements and other agreements forming addendums and amendments to any collective agreement.

Labour Relations

The NLHBA provides labour relations services to provincial Residential Boards, Central Health, Western Health and Labrador-Grenfell Health:

- Liaison with union representatives, managers and government representatives in the provision of labour relations services;
- Assistance with bargaining unit restructuring and transition talks;
- Chairing monthly meetings of the VPs of Human Resources;
- Chairing monthly labour relations information sessions for representatives of all employers. Agendas are developed by the Labour Relations Department;
- Representation of employers at arbitrations, Labour Relations Board matters, mediations, grievance meetings, harassment investigations and conflict resolution services as required;
- Negotiation and drafting of settlements as a form of conflict resolution;

- Provision of regional education seminars/workshops to management employees on selected topics such as progressive discipline and managing absenteeism;
- Provision of advice and assistance on workers' compensation issues, human rights issues, judicial review applications and other issues;
- On a day-to-day basis provision of advice and assistance to human resource managers with policy and practices issues and collective agreement interpretations.

Physician Recruitment

The routine activities of the NLHBA Provincial Physician Recruitment Office include:

- Facilitation of regular networking opportunities for students, residents and health authorities;
- Identification of opportunities for recruitment initiatives within the activities of the Medical Student Society, the Professional Association of Internes and Residents, the Family Medicine Program and MUN Alumni;
- Promotion of the Provincial Bursary and Fellowship Programs ;
- Co-ordination of a Medical Student Summer Employment Program.

Canadian recruitment

- Seeking out opportunities to initiate recruitment contact with other Canadian medical students and residents
- Routine notification of MUN Alumni of provincial vacancies;
- Acting as the first point of contact for candidates and facilitates timely responses from the system;

International recruitment

- Acting as a provincial resource to International Medical Graduates and Canadians studying medicine abroad;
- Cost-effective management of mass internet advertising for all RHAs;

Recruitment initiatives

- Co-ordination of new physician recruitment initiatives to support RHAs:
 - Completed Best Practices document in Physician Recruitment;
 - Management of the new www.NLphysicianjobs.ca website that is specifically designed to facilitate access to recruitment tools for RHAs and to enable real time sharing of information on the availability of all potential candidates processed through the NLHBA Provincial Recruitment Office;

- Under the direction of the VPs of Medical Services, co-ordination of the research, development and implementation of the physician recruitment strategy in each RHA in the province;
- Under the direction of the VPs of Medical Services, co-ordination of the necessary research, development and implementation plan for the management of physician orientation in RHAs and the province.

Group Purchasing

The NLHBA Group Purchasing program is a province-wide, high-volume contracting service, with annual contracts to a value of approximately \$60 million for commodity items and approximately \$10 million for member-required services:

- Products in the commodity items include Medical and Surgical, Radiology, Laboratory, Pharmaceuticals, Dialysis, Dietary and Laundry Chemicals. There are approximately 6000 line items in this program, with regional health organizations purchasing upwards of 90 per cent of their pharmaceuticals and 55 per cent of other needs;
- Services include: Biological Flow Hoods and Safety Cabinet Inspections; Courier Service; Car Rental; Corporate Travel; Biomedical Waste Transportation, Treatment and Disposal; Microscope Repairs and Bulk and Cylinder Oxygen Supply.

According to the feedback from members of the health supply industry, the NLHBA Group Purchasing program is considered one of the best in Canada. This is largely as a result of the member commitment to the program with upwards of 95 per cent participation. The NLHBA believes that the dependable commitment to contract by its members generates ongoing savings for renewed contracts.

Savings to the health system as a result of the Group Purchasing Program are most readily calculated when a new product is added to the program. For example, a recent contract awarded for Dietary Chemicals achieved a reduction in acquisition costs of approximately \$60,000 annually. Subsequent contract renewals will see these savings continue, and the Group Purchasing department will concentrate on maintaining its high volume contracting process in order to take advantage of competition in the market place, controlling acquisition cost increases and reducing price based on change in volume.

The Group Purchasing Program uses an online tendering system for most commodity tenders. This system allows tender information to be collected, evaluated and disseminated in a convenient, efficient and secure manner.

Health and Community Services Human Resource Planning Unit

The Health and Community Services Human Resource Planning Unit (HRPU) was formed as a partnership agreement between the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Services, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association. The HRPU is entirely funded by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Services to support evidence-based decision-making for current human resources issues in the health and community services system through research and evaluation reports, provide information for strategic planning, advise stakeholders on policy and program development, and support health workforce planning to meet population needs.

- Research is primarily based on employees working in regional health authorities, but consideration is given to those working in the private sector as required. [Notes: Physician human resource planning is the responsibility of the medical services branch, but the HRPU provides technical support.]
- With a solid base of data and research, more than 30 major reports and initiatives have been completed on most aspects of health human resources planning. Selected reports are available on our website at <http://www.nlhba.nl.ca/hr/index.html>.

Current Major Projects

- Human Resource Indicator Report – Analyses indicators for the entire health workforce, including demographics, overtime / callback / relief, sick leave, workplace injury leave, vacancies, turnover, and retirement estimates.
- Registered Nurse and Licensed Practical Nurse Supply Reports. Data is provided by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), provincial associations, educational institutions, regional health authorities, and other regulating bodies and reports. Reports review statistics and issues that are specific to these groups. These foundational reports have been highlighted as extremely useful by provincial stakeholders and referenced in several national publications.
- Vacancy Data. Collects, analyses, and distributed statistics on regional health authority vacancies including employment status and hours, length of vacancy period, and difficult to fill status.
- Pharmacy and Diagnostics Reports. Assists and supports regional health authorities in lobbying government for funding to reduce pharmacy and diagnostics human resource shortages.
- Allied Health Seat Purchase and Bursary Funds. Provides financial management of the Allied Health Seat Purchase and Bursary funds.
- Outplacement Services. Co-ordinates outplacement services with an external firm, Robertson Surette, including counseling and workshops for job search and retirement planning. Almost 60 displaced employees have been referred to outplacement services, with the majority of displaced employees registering for retirement planning workshops.

- Committees. HRP staff participate in several national, regional, and provincial committees.

Conclusion

Flexibility is always a major strength in the NLHBA as its role and activities evolve to meet the challenges of change in the health and community services system and the needs identified and requested from the Association by our members. New times will continue to mean new ways of co-operation, new issues and challenges for employers in the new structure. The NLHBA is prepared to meet these challenges with new services and new methods of delivery and is well-positioned to do so as the system goes through the process of change.

The NLHBA acts as a central point of reference in our health and community services system, works with the perspectives and concerns of the health and community services system for Government and the public on provincial, Atlantic and national issues. This role focuses on analysis of issues, collaboration and co-operation as essential common goals, with consultation and team-building as key elements for partnership and ongoing collaborative planning.