

College of Physicians
and Surgeons of
New Brunswick



Collège des médecins
et chirurgiens du
Nouveau-Brunswick

Annual Report 2024





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Land acknowledgement

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick acknowledges it carries out its work on the traditional unceded territory of the Wolastoqiyik, Mi'kmaq and Peskotomuhkati (Passamaquoddy) peoples. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which these nations first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with the surrender of lands and resources, but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick pays respect to the elders, past and present, and descendants of this land. We honour the knowledge keepers and seek their guidance as we strive to develop closer relationships with the Indigenous people in New Brunswick.

PURPOSE

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick is dedicated to safeguarding patients and the medical profession. Grounded in integrity, fairness, compassion, and innovation, we foster trusted, high-quality care and a healthier community for all New Brunswickers.

MISSION

Protecting the public and the profession by licensing qualified physicians in a fair and transparent manner, guiding standards of care, and maintaining public trust through objective oversight of physician professional conduct.

VISION

Trusted physicians providing quality patient care.



WE TREAT
EVERYONE
EQUALLY

Values

Integrity

We act honestly and ethically towards patients and physicians, ensuring an objective and transparent approach to licensing, complaints, and assessments.

Fairness

We treat everyone equally and without discrimination.

Compassion

We provide guidance to the public and physicians with sensitivity, kindness, and respect.

Innovation

We lead change in our evolving health care landscape through flexibility and continuous learning.

Message from the President

As I enter my new role as College President, I dedicate myself to the College's crucial role of maintaining trust in New Brunswick's physicians and the medical profession's ability to self-regulate. Despite the many challenges facing the health care system today, it's our job to ensure that physicians licensed to practice medicine in the province are held to a high standard, both in their education and training and in their conduct going forward.

Addressing complaints against registrants is a central part of our mandate. Over the past year the College has implemented new measures, including early resolution, to ensure all complaints are handled appropriately, with an eye to efficiency and fairness. More details can be found in this report.

Medicine is a constantly changing profession, and it is the College's mandate to update its professional standards alongside evolving practice norms. In particular, the increasingly prominent role of virtual care, as well as the challenges many patients face in seeing a regular care provider, has brought about significant changes in how we deliver medical services. This has introduced new complexities in maintaining continuity and quality of care. I'm pleased the College has released updated professional standards in virtual care, episodic care, and continuity of care to help both physicians and patients navigate these changes.

I'm also pleased to see the significant progress made in the Practice Ready Assessment program for experienced, internationally trained family physicians, as well as the ongoing quality assurance provided by the Peer Assessment Committee.

These assessment programs are crucial in maintaining high standards of competence and professionalism among practitioners, and safeguarding public trust in our profession.

I am fortunate to work alongside dedicated physicians committed to protecting the public and the integrity of our profession by serving on our Council, committees and working groups. Thank you for your role in ensuring that only qualified, ethical, and competent physicians are caring for New Brunswickers. Let's continue to evolve alongside our profession, and ensure our regulatory practices remain effective and relevant within the greater health care system.

**Dr. Kerry Sheppard
FRCSC**



Message from the Registrar and CEO



As we look back on the past year, another of significant transformation and growth, I am filled with a profound sense of optimism for the future of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick.

We have embraced change with open arms, turning to advanced technologies to improve our processes. These technologies are now an integral part of our daily operations, enabling us to process information more accurately, respond to inquiries more swiftly, and serve our registrants more effectively. Modern medical regulation requires modern solutions, and I am incredibly proud of our progress. Other Colleges across the country have taken note, and we routinely receive positive feedback on our transformation. We're proud to serve as a partner to help guide how we move forward collectively at a national level.

Our growth is not just about technology; it is also about people. We added several new professionals to our team last year, all of whom bring years of experience and expertise in their respective fields.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the incredible progress made over the past year in our Practice Ready Assessment (PRA) program. The team has worked incredibly hard, collaborating closely with our partners at the Government of New Brunswick and the Regional Health Authorities to narrow down the initial list of program applicants to a shortlist of outstanding candidates, all of whom are internationally trained physicians with considerable experience. In fall 2024, the first cohort of 10 candidates began their clinical assessments under the supervision of New Brunswick physicians. Successful candidates will begin seeing patients in the province in the first half of 2025. More details on this exciting and meaningful initiative can be found in this report.

This year has really been a wonderful story about the importance of collaboration. We are better and stronger together. We have strengthened our relationships with other medical regulators, government, and partner health care organizations. These collaborations have allowed us to share knowledge, align our standards, and work towards common goals faster.

I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our registrants for their support, our staff for their efforts, and our partners for their collaboration. Thank you for your service in support of the College, the medical profession and New Brunswickers.

Dr. Laurie Potter
M.Ed, FRCPC

Registering qualified physicians and surgeons



The College is committed to ensuring that all practicing physicians, surgeons, students, and physician assistants in the province meet high standards of medical education, training, and experience. **Our registration process is designed to protect the public** by ensuring that only qualified and competent practitioners are licensed to practice medicine in New Brunswick.

Full member portal integration

We have continued to enhance our registration processes to maintain the integrity and quality of medical practice in the province. We have now moved all registration activities to our new member portal, Alinity. This has allowed us to improve our database management, streamline reinstatement for inactive physicians and locums, and introduce better processes for locum licence extensions and annual renewal of postgraduate trainee and medical student licences.

In addition, our annual renewals are now handled entirely through Alinity. Feedback has been positive, with many registrants commenting on how intuitive and seamless they find the updated process. Several areas for improvement including timing, communications, and payment processing identified during the first annual renewal period using Alinity (for licensing in 2024) were addressed over the past year. Notably, we opened our most recent annual renewal period on November 1, 2024 to facilitate renewal processing in advance of the busy holiday period, and by the end of the month more than 70 per cent of renewals had been completed.



The College primarily continues to focus on pathways that bring additional physicians into the workforce

Collaboration with the National Registry of Physicians

Throughout 2024, we collaborated in the development of the National Registry of Physicians (NRP). Initiated by the Medical Council of Canada, the NRP is accessible to medical regulators across the country and is the first nationally integrated data source on Canadian physicians, aiming to support stronger health care delivery, improved health outcomes, and collaboration across jurisdictions. It functions as a centralized information exchange and facilitates effective decision-making for licensure and rapid response during health crises. Through the NRP, a wide range of physician data including credentials, specialties, and practice locations will be accessible in one cloud-based and secure location.

Collaboration with other organizations

We continue to be active with various other organizations, both within the medical regulatory space and outside it. We collaborate regularly with the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada to support registration standards and policy development. One of our main shared initiatives is the Committee on Medical Licensure in Canada to explore alignment in pathways to licensure. In addition, this year we've focused on sharing more information with our health care partners around our licensing practices.

Atlantic Registry

The Atlantic Registry was created jointly between the four Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in the Atlantic provinces for physicians seeking registration in multiple provinces in Atlantic Canada. At the end of 2024, there were 403 physicians on the Atlantic Registry from all four provinces. Health Canada is funding an 18-month study to evaluate the Atlantic Registry.

The College primarily continues to focus on pathways that bring additional physicians into the workforce, such as the Practice Ready Assessment program and the Clinical Assistant program, as this will have a meaningful impact on access to care.

Clinical assistants begin practice

The College is committed to improving access to care from qualified professionals. In September 2023, the College's Council approved the Clinical Assistant Policy allowing internationally trained physicians who would not otherwise qualify for a New Brunswick medical licence to care for patients under the supervision of a fully licensed physician.

The first clinical assistants began practicing in the province in 2024. Over the past year, we're pleased to have issued 16 Clinical Assistant Licences within our approved clinical assistant programs in most hospitals across New Brunswick and from both Regional Health Authorities. These skilled medical professionals are supporting many different clinical areas including anesthesia, cardiology, hospitalist, family medicine, general internal medicine, general surgery, neurosurgery, neurology, obstetrics and gynecology, oncology, intensive care and pediatrics, and we expect this program to grow in the coming years.

Clinical assistants exemplify a key focus of the College presently and in the coming years – innovation in pathways to licensure while still maintaining our robust processes to confirm the qualifications, skills, and knowledge of medical practitioners in New Brunswick. We knew there were international medical graduates in the province who were eager to apply their skills, and these programs provide an additional option for them to care for patients, offering well-defined roles and responsibilities under the supervision of a licensed physician.

The College has received excellent feedback from the Regional Health Authorities about how these new team members are positively impacting patient care and team morale. We anticipate continued growth in clinical assistant programs across the province, and a positive impact on access to care for New Brunswickers.

Practice Ready Assessment New Brunswick

The Practice Ready Assessment New Brunswick program (PRA-NB) was introduced as a fast track to bring experienced internationally trained family physicians into the province through careful assessment of their clinical skills and suitability for practice in the province. It provides an alternate route to licensure for physicians who would not otherwise be eligible for a licence.

The PRA-NB program saw tremendous progress throughout 2024. Following consideration of applicants, potential candidates were interviewed and each RHA selected five candidates, resulting in a total of 10 candidates for the first cohort. Candidates began their 12-week clinical field assessments in the fall, and those successful are expected to begin seeing patients in the first half of 2025.

The program's progress this year would not have been possible without the many family physicians who served as primary and secondary assessors for the clinical field assessments. Assessment data collection and monitoring was facilitated by a new form custom-built in the College's member portal, Alinity.

We expect this program to have a profound impact on the province of New Brunswick, as 10,000 to 15,000 patients will have access to a primary care provider when this first cohort starts practice.

The selection process for a second cohort has now begun, with 106 candidates deemed eligible. Our focus this year will be on building capacity within the program by training additional assessors.

At a glance

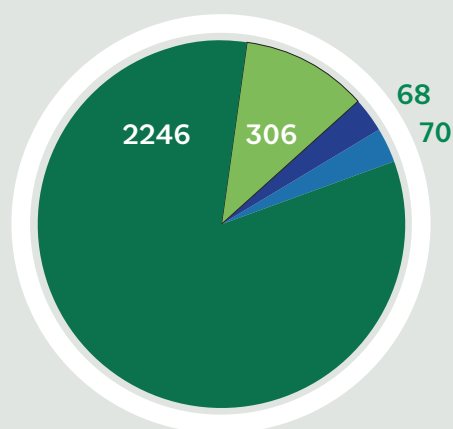
As of December 31, 2024

| Year | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Registrants with an <u>Annual Licence</u> | 2223 | 2600 | 2690 |
| Registrants with a <u>Locum Licence</u> | 138 | 58 | 81 |
| Registrants with a <u>Medical Education Licence</u> | 575 | 778 | 1031 |



- » **926** CFPC certified family physicians registered in 2024
- » **1032** RCPSC certified specialists registered in 2024

2024 distribution of 2690 registrants by Annual Licence



83% REGULAR
LICENCE

11% DEFINED
LICENCE

3% SPECIAL
LICENCE

3% OTHER
LICENCE

**2690 REGISTRANTS
with an ANNUAL LICENCE
including:**

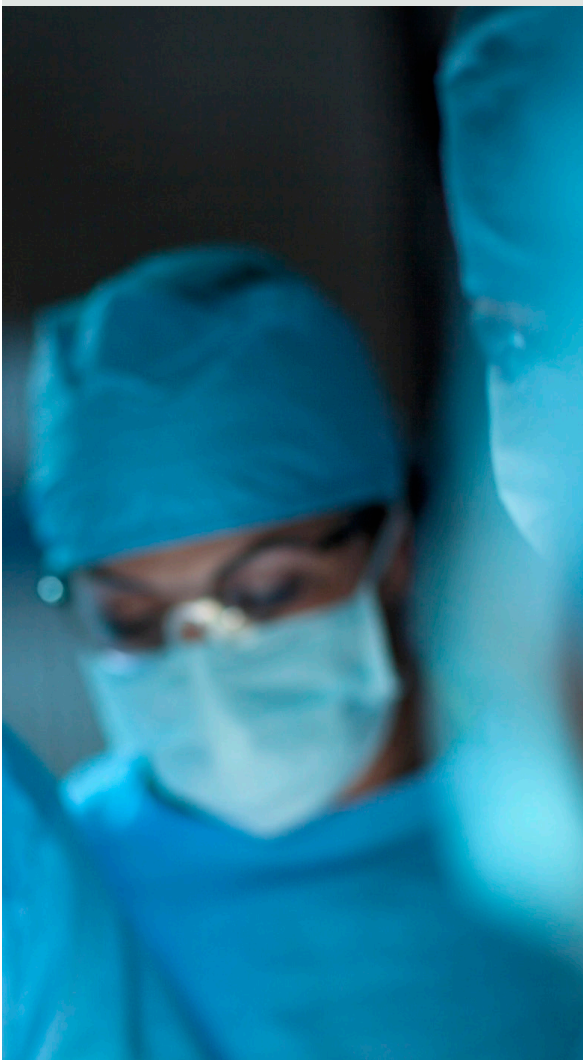
- » 2246 Registrants with a **Regular Licence**
 - 1843 Not on the Atlantic Registry
 - 403 On the Atlantic Registry
 - 167 On the Atlantic Registry with Nova Scotia as home College
 - 135 On the Atlantic Registry with New Brunswick as home College
 - 63 On the Atlantic Registry with Newfoundland as home College
 - 38 On the Atlantic Registry with Prince Edward Island as home College
- » 306 Registrants with a **Defined Licence**
- » 68 Registrants with a **Special Licence**
- » 21 Registrants with a **Border Area Licence**
- » 25 Registrants with a **Courtesy Licence**
- » 16 Registrants with a **Clinical Assistant Licence**
- » 8 Registrants with a **Physician Assistant Licence**

**81 REGISTRANTS
with a LOCUM LICENCE**

- » 70 Registrants with a **Regular Locum Licence**
- » 10 Registrants with a **Defined Locum Licence**
- » 1 Registrant with a **Moonlighting Licence**

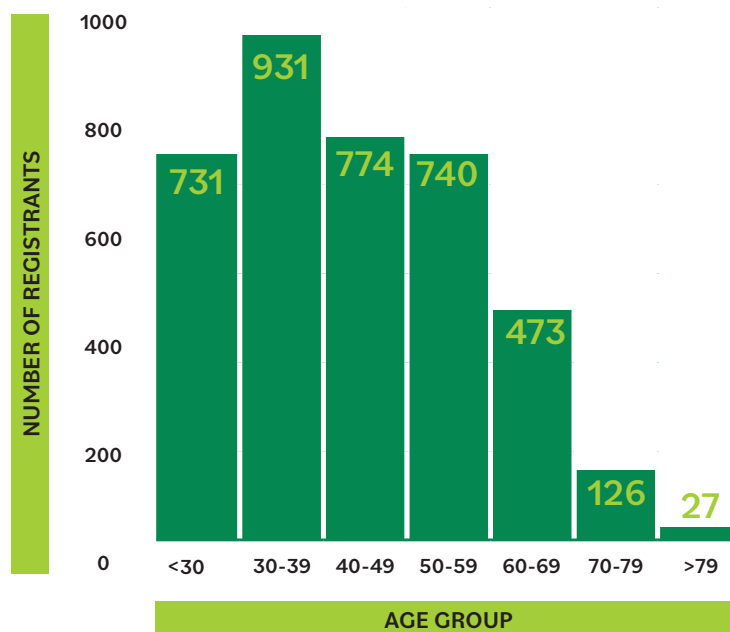
**1031 REGISTRANTS
with a MEDICAL
EDUCATION LICENCE**

- » 517 Registrants with a Medical Student Licence
- » 495 Registrants with a Postgraduate Trainee Licence
- » 19 Registrants with a Clinical Trainee Licence



Age distribution of all registrants

(includes medical learners)



Investigating complaints



As medicine is granted the privilege of self-regulation, the College is responsible for protecting the public by thoroughly investigating all complaints. In doing so, we are committed to ensuring that all involved parties are treated with fairness and sensitivity.

Record number of complaints

The College received a record number of complaints in 2024, reflecting national trends. We expect this to continue as patients and physicians deal with an increasingly challenged health care system. Quality of care remains the dominant type of complaint, though there has also been an increase in ethics-related complaints. These include issues such as privacy breaches, conflicts of interest, interprofessional matters, discrimination, fraud, failure to respond to the College, and off-duty conduct.

Early resolution

Where appropriate, the College has been refining its processes to prioritize early resolution and expedite complaint processing times. This approach focuses on maintaining the patient-physician relationship and finding mutually agreeable outcomes, such as apologies, additional training, or system/process improvements.

Early resolution allows complaints to be resolved quickly, assisting in complainants' satisfaction and lessening the impact on physicians. Physicians are encouraged to acknowledge when their conduct falls below the standard of practice and propose appropriate resolutions. If the complainant and College staff agree on the proposed resolution, the complaint is resolved without further proceedings.

Website improvements

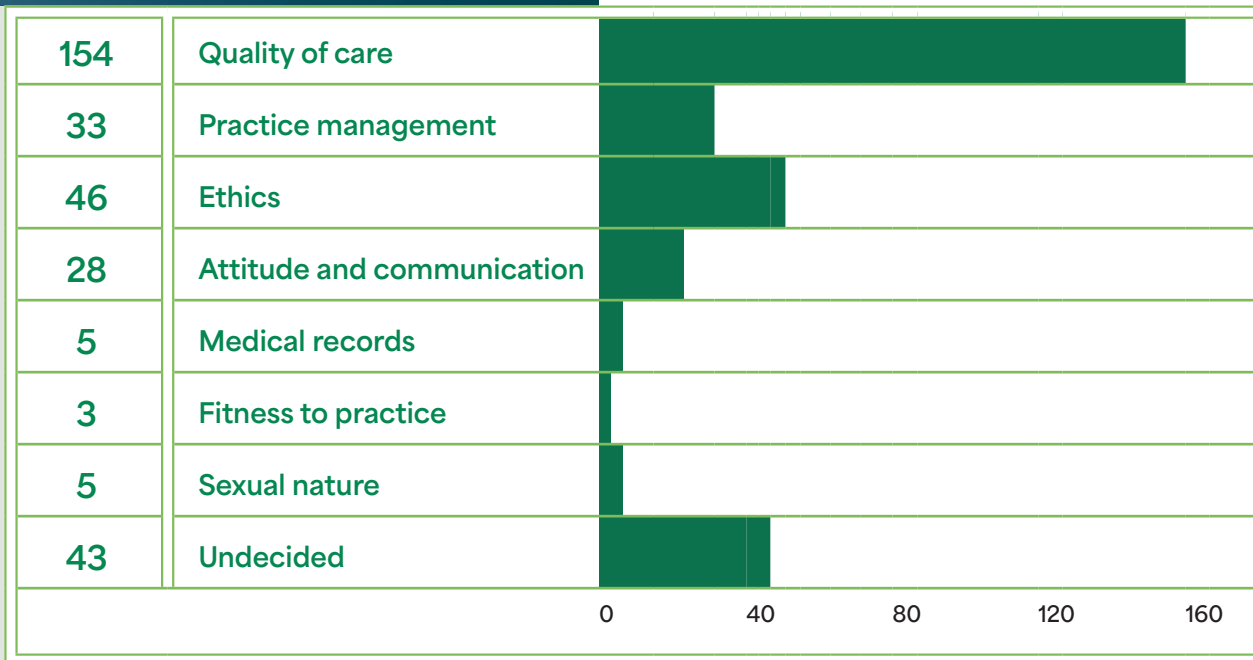
To better support complainants, the College has expanded the complaints section of its website. A new page provides guidance on when and how to file a complaint and includes details about other concerns and frequently asked questions.

In addition, a new form has been introduced to standardize the information provided when complaints are received, including a new section requiring complainants to identify their desired outcome for the complaint. The form has helped the College achieve more early resolutions, particularly when the complainant's expectation is an apology or acknowledgement, or that the physician learns from the complaint to prevent the error from occurring again with other patients.

At a glance

As of December 31, 2024

317 Complaints received*

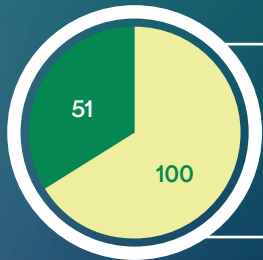


» **184 Additional complaints received compared to 2023**

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* View in-depth statistics on page 15

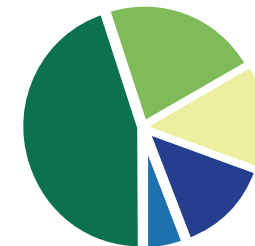
151 Complaints resolved*



- » 100 Complaints resolved through early resolution
- » 51 Complaints resolved by Complaints and Registration Committee

» Of the 51 complaints resolved by the Complaints and Registration Committee, the outcomes were the following:

- 23 NO FURTHER ACTION
- 11 CENSURE
- 07 CAUTION
- 07 COUNSEL
- 03 REMEDIAL TRAINING ONLY



Complaints and Registration Committee activities

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 75 | Complaints considered | |
| 51 | Recommendations approved by Council | |
| 22 | Recommendations awaiting approval by Council | |
| 02 | Investigative orders issued | |
| 02 | Recommendations to refer to a Board of Inquiry | |

» Appeals and requests for reconsideration

- 07 Appeals of recommendations of the Complaints and Registration Committee
- 04 Requests for reconsiderations by the Complaints and Registration Committee

» Review Committee

- 02 Appeals considered

Assuring quality care

It is expected that all physicians practicing in the province will deliver quality care to New Brunswickers based on current best practices. The College guides physicians in this endeavor through quality assurance activities including the Peer Assessment Committee and professional standard development. These initiatives are designed to promote excellence in medical practice, ensuring physicians are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of their patients and the health care system.



Professional standards

The College's professional standards establish baseline practices around patient care and physician behavior. These standards guide our registrants while managing patient expectations. Professional standards are developed in consultation with registrants, our partners, and the public, who are invited to provide feedback during the development process. Standards are created and updated as necessary, based on changing practices, new legislation, and other influences.

In 2024, we held consultations for or approved the following professional standards:

- » Continuity of Care
- » Episodic Care
- » Virtual Care
- » Artificial Intelligence (interim guidance)

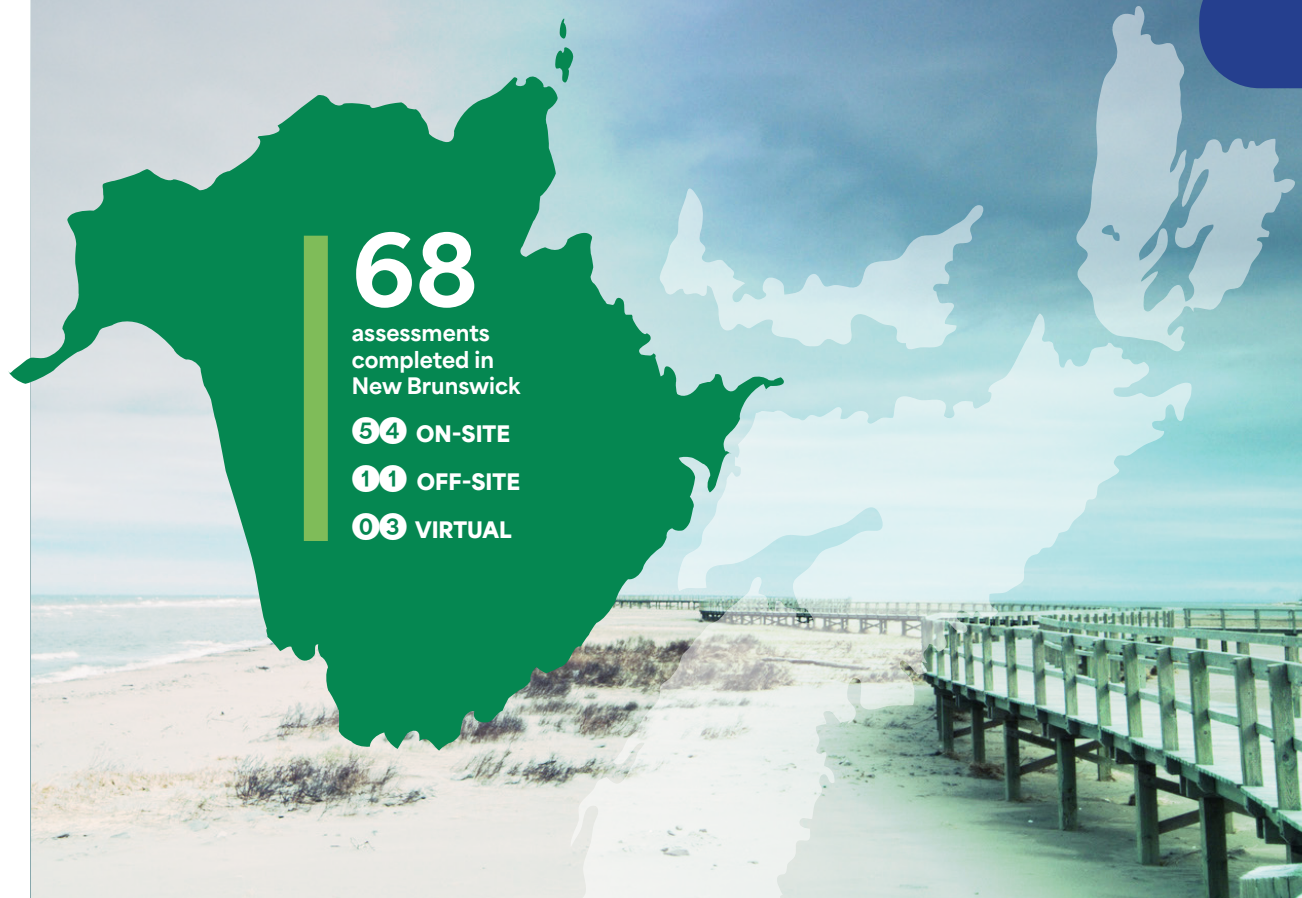


Peer assessment

The College is responsible for ensuring that the province's physicians have the skills and knowledge they need to provide ongoing quality care. The Peer Assessment Committee (PAC) routinely works with physicians to support them in lifelong learning and continuous quality improvement. The committee's assessors are all physicians who have been previously assessed themselves and benefited from the experience.

At a glance

As of December 2024



Governance

Council

Dr. Rina Lee (ZONE 1)
Dr. Manon Belliveau (ZONE 1)
Dr. Michael Matchett (ZONE 1)
Dr. Kerry Sheppard (ZONE 2)
Dr. Arif Bungash (ZONE 2)
Dr. Peter Ross (ZONE 2)
Dr. Zeljko Bolesnikov
Dr. Hanif Chatur (ZONE 3)
Dr. Vivek Virmani (ZONE 3)
Dr. Janik Côté-Bérubé (ZONE 4)
Dr. Grant Oyeye (ZONE 5)
Dr. Marc Aucoin (ZONE 6)
Dr. Michael Hayden (ZONE 7)
Ms. Diane Brideau-Laughlin (PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE)
Ms. Dominique Eddie (PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE)
Mr. Mathieu Picard (PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE)
Mr. Jason Steeves (PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE)

In 2024 we welcomed **Ms. Dominique Eddie** and **Mr. Mathieu Picard** as new public Council members, who bring significant expertise in psychology and law, respectively.

Executive Committee

President

Dr. Kerry Sheppard

Vice President

Dr. Rina Lee

Past President

Dr. Peter Ross

Dr. Michael Matchett (MEMBER AT LARGE)

Ms. Diane Brideau-Laughlin (PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE)

Complaints and Registration Committee

Chair

Dr. Michael Hayden
Mr. Jean Castonguay
Dr. Tim Christie
Dr. Teshome Kelkile
Dr. Lachelle Nofall
Mr. Andrew Orchard
Dr. Paul Postuma
Dr. Hugh Scarth

Review Committee

Chair

Dr. Michael Matchett
Dr. Marilyn Bossé
Ms. Cathy Bowlen
Dr. Christine Duclos
Dr. Gary Fecteau
Dr. Linda LeBlanc
Dr. Beatriz Sainz
Dr. Patrick Sullivan

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