

# Dalhousie Family Medicine Clinics

## Proof of Concept

A Dalhousie Family Medicine and Nova Scotia Health collaborative initiative



## Weekly Newsletter

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## Welcome

*A message from Dr. David Anderson, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University; Dr. Nicole Boutilier, Vice President of Medicine Nova Scotia Health; and Gail Tomblin-Murphy, Vice President of Research Innovation and Discovery and Chief Nurse Executive at Nova Scotia Health*

Care teams and patients across Nova Scotia are frustrated with the increasing issue of access for those seeking care. These access challenges have myriad and complex contributing factors that require new and innovative solutions.

Nova Scotia Health (NSH) and Dalhousie Department of Family Medicine (DDFM) have partnered on a “Proof of Concept” project for two Central Zone Primary Health clinics that is designed to pave the way for better supports and efficiencies for care providers and patients in the future.

The project will entail applying new and innovative approaches to promote patient attachment. Initially, it will involve:

- Enhanced scope of practice for current clinic staff
- Administrative support for onboarding patients and promoting efficiency
- Additional staffing supports and new roles to supplement patient care particularly around chronic disease management
- Integration with VirtualCareNS and learning supports

The Dalhousie Family Medicine clinics at Mumford and Spryfield were chosen for this proof of concept for several reasons:

- A medical learning environment is adept at change and innovation
- The catchment areas have enough patients who require attachment to provide an opportunity to make

*“We hope that our care delivery teams will embrace this opportunity to promote new methods of delivering primary care and improving patient attachment. Being part of innovative projects that lead the way in care design and delivery is a great opportunity that we hope will improve caregiver satisfaction and increase retention of the medical learners we are training. Who doesn’t want to be on the cutting edge?”*

**Dr. Nicole Boutilier**  
**Vice President of Medicine**  
**Nova Scotia Health**

*“This type of initiative is what Health Innovation Hub is about in Nova Scotia Health – we test and try new innovative ways and applying best practice evidence to bring solutions to key priorities for Nova Scotians such as access to primary care, working across*

an immediate impact

- The location is close to administrative and education leadership for collaboration, review, and real-time evaluation

The proof of concept is ambitious in scope, and we have quick timelines for the development of important deliverables. Specifically, we are expecting this project to:

- Enhance support to the primary care teams at the clinics to create provider capacity to attach an additional 3500 patients to the clinic by fall 2022
- Create supportive primary care incubator clinics that provide wrap around services and supports to care teams in the work to improve access and efficiency

A change of this magnitude will require everyone's participation. We acknowledge that the day-to-day work of patient care and delivering medical education does not stop while these changes are underway. And for that reason, a project team has been established to support this change, working with clinic leadership, care providers, and clinic staff.

As executive sponsors of this work, we are committed to provide regular updates of changes as they take place:

- We will send a regular recurring newsletter to ensure everyone is aware of the progress and coming work of the project teams
- We encourage all staff and clinicians to ask questions throughout this process, both Graeme Kohler and Joanna Zed are available on site or by email
- We are also setting up a project email for those who may want to submit feedback in a different manner
- The project has been set up in such a manner to ensure staff and provider participation in identification and development of clinic improvements

We know that change can be challenging at times, and that these changes will have impacts on everyone in the clinic. We ask for your patience and understanding as we work together to advance this work.

We are confident that with a strong partnership and collaboration we can make improvements for providers, learners and patients to primary care access at Dalhousie Family Medicine and by then expanding this work provincially.

*partners within the organization and across the province to offer best possible care for patients, relevant supports for providers and teams, create efficiencies at practice and system levels. We are excited to work with Dalhousie University and the opportunity to work with our teams at Mumford and Spryfield clinics to make a real impact and with innovations and learnings from this work that can scale across the province!"*

**Dr. Gail Tomblin Murphy**  
**Vice President**  
**Research, Innovation and**  
**Discovery**  
**Chief Nurse Executive**  
**Nova Scotia Health**

*"This is an exciting opportunity for both of our organizations – we have partnered to inspire change in the way primary care is delivered in our province. I really think this project has the potential to inspire others tackling the same problems in health systems around the globe. What is really special about this project is how it engages and supports medical learners to make connections with other health care providers, and to enhance their educational experience with a focus on improving the patient experience."*

**Dr. David Anderson**  
**Dean**  
**Faculty of Medicine**  
**Dalhousie University**

## Project Governance and Structure

This Proof of Concept project will test and try a novel practice environment that will simultaneously enhance access to integrated primary care for patients and promote the recruitment and retention of

healthcare professionals. By developing an enabling practice environment, this initiative will support new family physicians in establishing, building, and sustaining a family practice in Nova Scotia.

We recognize that this will be challenging. We also see the potential for this project to become a model that could be used across the province. That is why we have put solid structures and processes in place.

Implementation of this project has been divided into five working groups:

- The **Strategy Group** provides strategic oversight of the project.
- The **Onboarding Group** will be establishing an onboarding team of RNs, LPNs and administrators to develop the process to rapidly onboard patients
- The **Human Resources Group** will be focused on the hiring of new positions to support the clinics. This will include consulting providers about what allied health professionals best match the needs.
- The **Clinical Group** will be focused on the scope of practices for LPNs, and FPNs, as well as new workflows and booking options, in consultation with providers.
- The **Communications Group** will provide weekly updates on the progress of the project.

Each of these groups has representation from clinicians, Dalhousie and Nova Scotia Health.

These groups will soon be reaching out to the clinic teams and will continue to do so throughout the project. While each working group has specific responsibilities, their fundamental purpose is to support you as we work together to build capacity at the clinics. Through a collaborative approach we can meet the needs of the clinics and the needs of patients, thereby benefiting the overall health care system.

For more specific details about the governance structure and working groups, please click this [link](#).

## Feedback

As project leads, we are committed to listening to your feedback. It will be critical to the success of this project.

Throughout the course of the project, you will have the opportunity to provide feedback through ongoing surveys.

In addition to the surveys, an email address has been set up for your feedback and to answer any questions about the project. We will ensure that your inquiry is referred to the appropriate person on the team and receives a response.

The feedback gathered from the surveys and the emails will be coordinated and factored into the implementation of the project. It will also be confidential.

The email address is [dfminnovations@nshealth.ca](mailto:dfminnovations@nshealth.ca).

Thank you,

Dr. Joanna Zed and Graeme Kohler



# Clerical Changes

For some time, the DFM Halifax sites have identified ongoing challenges with the current clerical support team roles. We have listened, heard your concerns and are working to address them. In so, we would like to remind you of the upcoming changes to the Dalhousie Family Medicine team structure at both the Mumford and Spryfield sites.

All front desk clerical positions, Clerk B, will be replaced with Secretary D positions. All Clerk Bs will continue to work daily while we recruit for these roles. Given the existing vacancies, temporary staff will be brought in to meet the clerical needs of the clinics. There will also be an overlap in roles for a brief period to ensure proper orientation and training for all new Secretary Ds.

These new classifications will not impact schedulers and administrative team leads.

Please remain cognizant of the impacts these changes have on team members. During this time of change, we ask that everyone continue to be patient, and respectful of each other.

## Job Postings

### Dalhousie Family Medicine Postings

Through this project, we will enable the Mumford and Spryfield practices to accept additional patients from the registry by implementing innovations and process efficiency solutions that will build additional capacity for primary care providers.

To that end, four permanent Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) position were posted in late March and those postings are now closed.

Funding has also been allocated to increase clinic efficiency by hiring Secretary D positions at both clinics, as noted above. These positions have now been posted internally by NS Health. To access the postings in the following hyperlinks, interested applicants will need to log into SAP.

- [Secretary D \(DFM Clinic – Mumford - 4 full-time positions\)](#)
- [Secretary D \(DFM Clinic – Spryfield - 3 full-time positions\)](#)
- [Secretary D \(DFM Clinic – Spryfield - 1 part-time \(80%\) position\)](#)

### Nova Scotia Health Medical Affairs Postings

Funding has also been provided for five new positions under NS Health Medical Affairs to support the Onboarding Team.

The Onboarding Team will support the efficient onboarding of individuals from the Need a Family Practice Registry. If successful, this is a scalable opportunity across the province for rapid onboarding and attachment of patients from the registry to other primary care practices.

These positions have now been posted internally by NS Health. To access the postings in the following hyperlinks, interested applicants will need to log into SAP.

- [Licensed Practical Nurse - 2 full-time positions](#)
- [Registered Nurse - 2 full-time positions](#)
- [Administrative Assistant \(Secretary D\) - 1 full-time position](#)

If you know of qualified individuals for any of these positions, please encourage them to apply.

## About this Newsletter

This weekly newsletter is sent on behalf of the project leads, Dr. Joanna Zed and Graeme Kohler. Joanna and Graeme can be contacted by email at [dfminnovations@nshealth.ca](mailto:dfminnovations@nshealth.ca)



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