



2021 - 2024

PHYSICIAN WELLNESS STRATEGY

This strategy which outlines MSPEI's bold vision for making an meaningful impact on the health and wellness of physicians, including reducing burnout, is made possible by a multi-year investment. The Affinity Grant was provided by:



Scotiabank®

This strategy will also be partially funded through a Healthy Workforce investment negotiated in the Master Agreement.

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

As recognized in the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) Statement on Physician Health and Wellness, “all physicians should have access to robust health and wellness services and supports to address any personal and professional difficulties they may experience.”¹ MSPEI supports the CMA statement and “recognizing the range of challenges physicians face, we advocate for a shared responsibility approach – targeting both individual and systemic factors that negatively affect physician health – as the pathway to meaningful, sustained improvements.”²

This strategy outlines the work that MSPEI will undertake over the next four years to achieve sustainable positive change in the wellness of PEI’s physicians as a result of funding from CMA for leadership, Scotia-bank for health and wellness and through the Master Agreement for a healthy physician workforce. It is expected as our understanding about effective strategies grows, this strategy will evolve over time to ensure planned activities remain relevant to the needs of PEI physicians.

CHANGE THEORY

The work that MSPEI undertakes to support physician wellness is evidence-informed and based on known best practices in the field. Based on extensive evidence, Drs. Tait Shanafelt and John Noseworthy identified **seven driver dimensions of intervention that influence physician burnout and engagement**:

- Workload and job demands
- Efficiency and resources
- Meaning in work
- Culture and values
- Control and flexibility
- Social support and community at work
- Work-life integration³

Each of these seven dimensions are influenced by individual, work unit, organizational and system factors. Shanafelt and Noseworthy also identified **nine organizational strategies to reduce burnout and promote physician engagement**:



¹ Canadian Medical Association. (2018). CMA Statement on Physician Health and Wellness. <https://www.cma.ca/sites/default/files/2018-11/physician-health-wellness-statement-e.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ Shanafelt T and Noseworthy J. (2017). Mayo Clin Pro (92(1): 129-146. [https://www.mayoclinicproceedings.org/article/S0025-6196\(16\)30625-5/pdf](https://www.mayoclinicproceedings.org/article/S0025-6196(16)30625-5/pdf)

⁴ Ibid.

These seven driver dimensions and organizational strategies form the foundation for MSPEI's planning and work in physician wellness and health. Using this foundation and informed by feedback from physicians across the province, MSPEI has identified key areas of focus for our work as an organization that we need to accomplish in collaboration with our system partners.

It is our belief that this work will lead to:

- Improvements in workplace culture so that physicians are able to work in positive, rewarding and productive relationships with their colleagues in medicine and throughout the health system;
- System changes that reduce administrative inefficiencies contributing to physician burnout;
- Increasing capacity in the system to reduce the workload on the physician workforce;
- Resources that support physicians connecting with their colleagues;
- Services that support physicians in returning to wellness and reducing burnout;
- Leadership development opportunities for physicians to support their engagement in health system change and design as well as strengthened medical leadership in medical departments across the province; and
- Reduction of discrimination and racism within the profession and the health system.

The ultimate outcome of our work will be a physician workforce that is healthy, less burned out, experiencing deep satisfaction with their work, and able to provide optimal patient care. This work aligns with MSPEI's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, impacting the achievement of all the strategic priorities of the organization.



KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

It is expected that the Physician Wellness Strategy will evolve as needs change over the next four years. The following objectives and activities will be reviewed and revised as necessary every six months.

Practice Support and Management

Objective 1:

To support physicians in reducing clinical and administrative inefficiencies within their practices and in optimizing practice support tools.

Activities

- 1 Make a physician practice consultant available to physicians to support them in identifying and implementing practice improvement opportunities (e.g. streamlining billing processes, improving practice flow).
- 2 Support physicians in navigating health system bureaucracy and work with system partners to improve policy and procedural issues that are identified as impediments to efficient physician practice operation.
- 3 Implement an awareness campaign to communicate to physicians the availability of practice supports.
- 4 Support the transition to a single provincial EMR and optimal use of the EMR product, addressing where possible gaps that are identified in the supports put in place by the provincial government and EMR vendor.
- 5 With system partners, continue to support the evolution of practice models that reflect the way that physicians choose to practice medicine.

Leadership Development and Engagement

Objective 2:

To provide leadership development opportunities for physicians.

Activities

- 1 Develop a physician leaders' community of practice to support ongoing connection and development for physician leaders.
- 2 Continue developing a physician leadership development program that offers regular intake opportunities and opportunities for ongoing development for program alumni.
- 3 Explore the need for a formal mentorship program for physicians.

Objective 3:

To support physician leaders in improving local workplace culture in partnership with health services administrators.

Activities

- 1 Develop and implement a physician onboarding process that creates a welcoming environment for newly hired physicians and supports their navigation through the system in their first year of practice on PEI.
- 2 Identify physician leader/health services administrator dyads willing to engage in and lead (with supports) a facilitated process to explore opportunities to improve workplace culture at the work unit or department level. Provide workplace culture facilitation supports to work with self-identified work units or departments to identify and implement strategies to improve workplace culture locally.
- 3 Develop a model based on the experience of the first work unit/department initiatives to support other initiatives in workplace culture improvement at the local level. Based on the model, create resources to support other physician leaders/administrative leaders in implementing positive workplace culture promotion initiatives.
- 4 With system partners support an overhaul of the provincial medical leadership structure, recruitment of medical leaders, and ongoing support and education for medical leaders.

With system partners, co-design new medical by-laws for the province.
- 5 Support/enable implementation of small physician groups across the province based on the
- 6 COMPASS model⁵ to encourage collegiality, shared experience, connectedness, mutual support, and meaning in work.

Building on the success of the 2019 UNWIND event, implement a regular provincewide social
- 7 opportunity for physicians and families to come together during the summer to promote recreation with supports in place to enable stress-free participation and entertainment for all ages (in accordance with public health directives).

Health and Wellness Support Services

Objective 4:

To ensure all PEI physicians have access to health and wellness support services when they need them.

Activities

- 1 Continue to provide all PEI physicians with access to confidential advocacy, support, and referrals to assist them in overcoming challenging issues that impact their health and wellness.
- 2 Improve awareness, uptake and satisfaction with the offerings of the Physician Health Program.

⁵ Shanafelt T. (2017). Success story: COMPASS Groups Rejuvenate Relationships and Reduce Burnout. AMA Steps Forward. <https://edhub.ama-assn.org/steps-forward/module/2702523>

- 3 Grow the existing one-on-one coaching program for physicians in a sustainable way to make it available to more physicians.
- 4 Offer a variety of preventative and educational opportunities that address burnout, stress management, conflict resolution and improving collegiality.
- 5 Implement a peer support program to support physicians through adverse events.
- 6 Ensure every new physician (and their family) recruited to the province is paired with a family physician.

Collaboration for Increased Efficiencies in the Health System

Objective 5:

To partner with health system colleagues to reduce the amount of time physicians spend in administrative tasks to maximize their clinical time.

Activities

- 1 Create with Health PEI a short-term red tape reduction task force to inventory key areas of administration that consume physician time and opportunities for efficiencies.
- 2 Work with Health PEI to implement projects to address the opportunities identified by the red tape reduction task force.
- 3 Recruit a pool of locums to support existing PEI physicians who need support with reducing wait times, paperwork, implementation of EMR or to enable physicians who need to take time away from their practice to do so without compromising access to care for their patients.

Equity and Inclusion

Objective 6:

Support members in creating workplaces that provide an open, accessible and accepting environment that strives for equity and embraces, respects and values differences.

Activities

- 1 Work with members to increase understanding about their role in creating work environments that are free of discrimination.
- 2 Provide education opportunities for physicians to increase understanding of the impact of systemic racism and gender-based discrimination on their patients and colleagues.
- 3 Provide cultural safety education opportunities to support physicians in providing culturally safe care.

Objective 7:

To increase our understanding about what strategies are most effective in promoting physician well-being to inform future program decision-making.

Activities

- Develop and regularly implement a wellness assessment for the PEI physician workforce to regularly track the impact of the strategy.
- Develop an evaluation framework that identifies indicators of success for each strategy focus area and tools for measuring the indicators.

Please see the Appendix for a map of how each activity above maps to the Shanafelt and Noseworthy seven driver dimensions and organizational strategies.

SUCCESS MEASURES

The following markers of success will be used to measure the progress of the Strategy.

Process Measures

- 1 Continuation of the Physician Health Program;
- 2 Continuation and expansion of the coaching program;
- 3 Having an active locum program for physicians;
- 4 Opportunities are provided for retiring physicians to provide support during their transition period and offer opportunities for them to continue to contribute to the system in other ways (e.g. locum tenens);
- 5 Physician leaders are able to blend their clinical and administrative work and be reasonably compensated without working more than 1.0 FTE; and
- 6 Interested physicians access a practice consultant who supports them in implementing practice improvements.

Outcome Measures

- 7 Decrease in the number physicians who report feelings of burnout;
- 8 Increase in the number of physicians who report they are able to take vacation and feel rested after vacation;
- 9 Decrease in the number of physicians who report they have experienced discrimination;
- 10 Increase in the number of physicians who feel their contributions are valued by the health system;

- 11 Increase in the number of physicians who feel positively connected to their colleagues;
- 12 Increase in the number of physicians who would recommend PEI to physician colleagues as a positive place to practice medicine; and
- 13 Increase in the number of physicians who feel the health system is responsive to their concerns.



APPENDIX

OVERVIEW OF HOW PLANNED STRATEGY ACTIVITIES LINK TO DIMENSIONS OF BURNOUT & ENGAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

ACTIVITY	DRIVER DIMENSIONS ADDRESSED	ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY AREAS ADDRESSED
Objective 1: To support physicians in reducing clinical and administrative inefficiencies within their practices and in optimizing practice support tools.		
Make a physician clinical practice consultant available to physicians to support them in identifying and implementing practice improvement opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload and job demands • Efficiency and resources • Control and flexibility • Meaning in work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and assess the problem • Implement targeted work unit interventions • Promote flexibility and work-life integration
Support physicians in navigating health system bureaucracy and work with system partners to improve policy and procedural issues that are identified as impediments to efficient practice operation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload and job demands • Efficiency and resources • Control and flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and assess the problem • Implement targeted work unit interventions
Implement an awareness campaign to communicate to physicians the availability of practice supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload and job demands • Meaning in work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement targeted work unit interventions
Support the transition to a single provincial EMR and/or optimal use of the EMR product, addressing where possible gaps that are identified in the supports put in place by the provincial government and EMR vendor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload and job demands • Efficiency and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement targeted work unit interventions • Use rewards and incentives wisely
With system partners, continue to support the evolution of practice models that reflect the way that physicians choose to practice medicine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload and job demands • Efficiency and resources • Meaning in work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote flexibility and work-life integration • Improvements in workplace culture

ACTIVITY	DRIVER DIMENSIONS ADDRESSED	ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY AREAS ADDRESSED
Objective 2: To provide leadership development opportunities for physicians.		
Develop a physician leaders' community of practice to support ongoing connection and development for physician leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning in work • Social support and community at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness the power of leadership • Cultivate community at work
Continue developing a physician leadership development program that offers regular intake opportunities and opportunities for ongoing development for program alumni.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning in work • Social support and community at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness the power of leadership
Explore the need for a formal mentorship program for physicians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social support and community at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness the power of leadership • Cultivate community at work
Objective 3: To support physician leaders in improving local workplace culture in partnership with health services administrators.		
Develop and implement a physician onboarding process that creates a welcoming environment for newly hired physicians and supports their navigation through the system in their first year of practice on PEI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and values • Social support and community at work • Efficiency and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness the power of leadership • Cultivate community at work • Provide resources to promote resilience and self care
Identify physician leader/health services administrator dyads willing to engage in and lead (with supports) a facilitated process to explore opportunities to improve workplace culture at the work unit or department level. Provide workplace culture facilitation supports to work with self-identified work units or departments to identify and implement strategies to improve workplace culture locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and values • Social support and community at work • Meaning in work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and assess the problem • Harness the power of leadership • Implement targeted work unit interventions • Align values and strengthen culture • Cultivate community at work

ACTIVITY	DRIVER DIMENSIONS ADDRESSED	ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY AREAS ADDRESSED
Develop a model based on the experience of the first work unit/department initiatives to support other initiatives in workplace culture improvement at the local level. Based on the model, create resources to support other physician leaders/administrative leaders in implementing positive workplace culture promotion initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture and values Social support and community at work Meaning in work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge and assess the problem Harness the power of leadership Implement targeted work unit interventions Align values and strengthen culture Cultivate community at work
With system partners support an overhaul of the provincial medical leadership structure, recruitment of medical leaders, and ongoing support and education for medical leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harness the power of leadership Implement targeted work unit interventions Cultivate community at work
With system partners, co-design new medical by-laws for the province.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harness the power of leadership
Support/enable implementation of small physician groups across the province based on the COMPASS model ⁶ to encourage collegiality, shared experience, connectedness, mutual support, and meaning in work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture and values Social support and community at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harness the power of leadership Implement targeted work unit interventions Cultivate community at work
Building on the success of the 2019 UNWIND event, implement a regular provincewide social opportunity for physicians and families to come together during the summer to promote recreation with supports in place to enable stress-free participation and entertainment for all ages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social support and community at work Work-life integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivate community at work Provide resources to promote resilience and self care
Objective 4: To ensure all PEI physicians have access to health and wellness support services when they need them.		
Continue to provide all PEI physicians with access to confidential advocacy, support, and referrals to assist them in overcoming challenging issues that impact their health and wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work-life integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide resources to promote resilience and self care

⁶ Shanafelt T. (2017). Success story: COMPASS Groups Rejuvenate Relationships and Reduce Burnout. AMA Steps Forward. <https://edhub.ama-assn.org/steps-forward/module/2702523>

ACTIVITY	DRIVER DIMENSIONS ADDRESSED	ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY AREAS ADDRESSED
Improve awareness, uptake and satisfaction with the offerings of the Physician Health Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work-life integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide resources to promote resilience and self care
Grow the existing one-on-one coaching program for physicians to make it available to more physicians		
Offer a variety of preventative and educational opportunities that address burnout, stress management, conflict resolution and improving collegiality.		
Implement a peer support program to support physicians through adverse events.		
Ensure every new physician (and their family) recruited to the province is paired with a family physician.		
Objective 5: To partner with health system colleagues to reduce the amount of time physicians spend in administrative tasks to maximize their clinical time.		
Create with Health PEI a short-term red tape reduction task force to inventory key areas of administration that consume physician time and opportunities for efficiencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workload and job demands• Efficiency and resources• Meaning in work• Control and flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge and assess the problem• Promote flexibility and work-life integration
Work with Health PEI to implement projects to address the opportunities identified by the red tape reduction task force.		
Recruit a pool of locums to support existing PEI physicians who need support with reducing wait times, paperwork, implementation of EMR or to enable physicians who need to take time away from their practice to do so without compromising access to care for their patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workload and job demands• Control and flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote flexibility and work-life integration

ACTIVITY	DRIVER DIMENSIONS ADDRESSED	ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY AREAS ADDRESSED
Objective 6: Support members in creating workplaces that provide an open, accessible and accepting environment that strives for equity and embraces, respects and values differences.		
Work with members to increase understanding about their role in creating work environments that are free of discrimination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and values • Social support and community at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness the power of leadership • Align values and strengthen culture
Provide education opportunities for physicians to increase understanding of the impact of systemic racism and gender-based discrimination on their patients and colleagues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and values • Social support and community at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness the power of leadership • Align values and strengthen culture
Provide cultural safety education opportunities to support physicians in providing culturally safe care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align values and strengthen culture
Objective 7: To increase our understanding about what strategies are most effective in promoting physician well-being to inform future program decision-making.		
Develop and regularly implement a wellness assessment for PEI physicians to track the impact of the strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload and job demands • Efficiency and resources • Meaning in work • Culture and values • Control and flexibility • Social support and community at work • Work-life integration • Facilitate and fund organizational science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and assess the problem • Facilitate and fund organizational science
Develop an evaluation framework that identifies indicators of success for each strategy focus area and tools for measuring the indicators.		

MSPEI

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