



2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Statistics:

Since the launch of the NSPAR program in February 2005, 1136 reviews have been initiated and 777 completed. Specific to 2009, all program targets were met. The program has successfully launched four 'versions' (with family physicians, medical specialists, surgeons and pediatricians) and physicians within these categories are now eligible to complete an NSPAR review when selected to do so.

Following are the detailed statistics (**as of the end of March 2010**) outlining the number of initiated and completed reports within each launched version of NSPAR, as well as the percentage of reports flagged and forwarded for review by the Practice Improvement Committee (PIC). The table also provides a breakdown of flagged reports into those flagged for commendation, information and stress as well as those flagged within each version, i.e. family physicians, medical specialists, surgeons and pediatricians.

Overview 2005 – 2010:

	FP	Med Spec	Surgeons	Peds	Total
NSPAR Reviews Initiated	673	227	223	13	1136
NSPAR Reviews Completed	459	155	163	0	777
Flagged Reports Referred to PIC	93	39	35	0	167
% Reports Referred to PIC	20.26%	25.16%	21.47%	0.00%	21.49%
Flagged Commendation Reports Referred to PIC	10	11	2	0	23
Flagged Information Reports Referred to PIC	52	16	23	0	91
Flagged Stress Reports Referred to PIC	31	11	10	0	52
Flagged Incomplete Reports Referred to PIC	0	1	0	0	1
Practice Visits	8 *				8 **

* 6 completed and 2 pending or suspended

** In addition 1 follow-up chart audit was completed. Another one to be done in spring 2010.

2009 Highlights:

- ***NSPAR Visioning Retreat and 5-year Operational Plan:***

In October 2009, NSPAR held a strategic visioning retreat with members of the Practice Improvement Committee, NSPAR practice visitors and staff. The day was very successful, resulting in a comprehensive report detailing the future direction for the program in a variety of strategic areas.

As a direct outcome of the retreat, a five-year operational plan was developed, the first year of which is being implemented. Key initiatives for the 2010-2015 period are as follows:

- Review of processes followed by the Practice Improvement Committee and the tools that program advisors use; providing more supports for program advisors and practice visitors including refresher training and a possible resource guide are all under review. A succession plan for program advisors and practice visitors will also be developed.
 - Review of survey administration, including initiatives such as developing a plan for the launch of the remaining versions of the program, working with the Alberta college on updating the surveys used with family physicians, exploring on-line methodologies, and evaluating the research firm currently providing survey administration services to the program will be addressed.
 - Development of communications Strategy/Plan – the development of a communications plan for NSPAR that is integrated with the overall College communications plan will be discussed. NSPAR data and information can be used to inform physicians, the public and to support other communications goals of the College.
 - Development of a research framework, a full evaluation of available data and information to the program, and a possible hosting of a meeting of a small, but diverse group of stakeholders interested in the collaborative development of a research framework, are all under consideration as possible initiatives. In addition, research publications and external presentations are underway and are possible initiatives for the future.
- ***The Practice Improvement Committee (PIC):***
 - New reporting protocols were introduced at the PIC to better accumulate ‘best practice’ information from reviewed physicians. This information is now summarized in an overall report, and reported in a more rigorous way to Council. The data will eventually be analyzed and reported more widely to external stakeholder groups including our members.
 - Reporting from NSPAR program advisors to the Committee has changed, with clearer upfront recommendations on actions for individual files and a move toward shorter, more concise reporting.
- ***Ongoing management of NSPAR:***
 - NSPAR now manages a greater number of physician reviews and flagged reports and an increased number of follow-up issues from each meeting of the Practice Improvement Committee.
 - The procedures for the management of non-respondent physicians (those physicians who are chosen for review but delay responding to program requirements) have been refined and changed. The NSPAR Program Assistant is now charged with contacting these physicians and discussing their response and the requirement to complete program review materials; and for reporting on the outcomes of these discussions to the Program Manager and Pivotal Research.
 - The work plan and communications plan for the development and launch of the pediatrics version of NSPAR resulted in the successful initiation of the NSPAR review process with pediatricians and pediatric specialists in October 2009.
 - A variety of articles about NSPAR were produced for the College’s member newsletter.
 - A new NSPAR website was launched.

- **Research:**

There is a variety of research being undertaken by the NSPAR program, including the following:

- Further use of results of focus groups with medical colleague reviewers

Working with Dalhousie CME, NSPAR held several focus groups with physicians who have acted as medical colleague reviewers in the program. The results have been developed and used in various ways, including:

- (a) The production of a Survey Interpretation Guide – This guide has a variety of uses within the program including assisting program advisors in their discussions with physicians who receive flagged reports, and acting as a resource to all physicians who receive an NSPAR report (a report insert was designed to inform each physician receiving an NSPAR report of the guide and how to access it). The guide was adapted and added to the NSPAR website as well as shared with the PAR program in Alberta. It will also be used as a resource for the updating of the family physician survey tools.
- (b) NSPAR and Dalhousie CME are partnering on preparing an article for publication in the CMAJ with a completion target mid-2010.
- (c) The research was accepted for presentation at the Canadian Conference for Medical Education in St. John's, Newfoundland and the Ottawa Conference in Miami in May, 2010.
 - PHMER (Program in Health and Medical Education) Feedback and Assessment Working Group – Dalhousie CME:

The NSPAR Program (NSPAR Program Manager) is represented on this group which will conduct research on physician/medical student feedback and assessment issues.

- **Continued collaboration/partnerships to the Program:**

A Steering Committee has been established to update the survey instruments used for the family physician version of PAR/NSPAR. This effort will be led by the University of Calgary and include representatives from Dalhousie CME, NSPAR, CPSA/PAR and several family physicians from Nova Scotia who have agreed to be part of this process.

NSPAR continues to collaborate and share information and research of common interest with the PAR program in Alberta. In particular, the results of NSPAR demographics analyses and the medical colleague reviewer research were discussed and shared with PAR representatives.

NSPAR provided further assistance to CRNNS with the launch of their PAR-like program with nurse practitioners in Nova Scotia (and, in turn, has benefitted from their experience to date), the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba as it prepares for an upcoming launch of a similar program with physicians in that province, and to the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario (CAHO) as that organization considers the benefits/challenges of administering such a program within their academic hospital network.