



January 27, 2005

Dear College Member,

I am pleased to announce the launch of Nova Scotia's new peer assessment program for physicians, the Nova Scotia Physician Achievement Review (NSPAR), which replaces the former program of random office audits undertaken for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia by the Atlantic Provinces Medical Peer Review (APMPR).

NSPAR is a program of performance assessment and feedback that provides participating physicians with practical information about their practice as viewed by their medical colleagues, co-workers and patients. Assessed physicians receive a confidential report that contains individualized data and comparisons to the average scores of other Nova Scotia physicians. This feedback also provides a benchmark for how patients and colleagues define good performance, while indicating possible areas for individual improvement and professional development. NSPAR reports for individual physicians are protected from use or disclosure in any disciplinary process or legal proceeding. Neither the College, patients, nor physicians can use them in a disciplinary process or legal proceeding.

Approximately 120 family physicians will be randomly selected to participate in NSPAR each year, and each eligible family practitioner in Nova Scotia will participate in an NSPAR assessment at some point within the next seven years, with seven-year re-assessments thereafter. In 2006, the program will expand to include several medical and surgical specialties. NSPAR fulfils the College's obligation under the Nova Scotia *Medical Act* to conduct peer assessment. In accordance with the *Act*, participation is mandatory, subject to a limited set of exemption criteria.

A 2001 pilot with approximately 140 Nova Scotia physicians indicated that most participants found NSPAR to be straightforward, unobtrusive and a source of practical feedback. NSPAR is modeled on the highly regarded PAR Program of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta which has been operating since 1999.

NSPAR does an excellent job of addressing the needs, concerns and schedules of practicing physicians while meeting the College's statutory obligation to conduct peer assessment. I particularly like that it gives participants the opportunity to provide feedback that can in turn be used to improve the program.

I encourage you to review the enclosed brochure which contains more detailed information about the program. You may also wish to visit the NSPAR website, www.nspar.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Wilson", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Rodney Wilson
President, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia