



PRESS RELEASE

Patients, Colleagues to Assess Physicians in New Nova Scotia Program

Halifax, February 11, 2005 – Beginning next week, Nova Scotia family physicians will be periodically assessed by their patients, peers, and colleagues as part of the Nova Scotia Physician Achievement Review (NSPAR) Program. “This is a huge step forward for the public and the medical profession in this province,” said Dr. Kevin Keating, NSPAR Medical Director. “Thanks to NSPAR, physicians will benefit from routine confidential feedback from the people they work with and serve, and will be able to use that information to improve their practices.”

The NSPAR program uses questionnaires given out by doctors to their patients, colleagues and professional co-workers. Twenty-five patients per physician receive questionnaires that examine areas such as doctor-patient communication skills and patient management. Completed questionnaires are sent to an independent research firm that assembles the results, prepares a summary and sends a confidential report to each physician. Patients are not identified in this report.

A 2001 pilot with approximately 140 Nova Scotia family doctors indicated that most were pleased with the NSPAR approach and felt that it provided practical information that they could use to improve their practices. NSPAR is modeled on the highly regarded PAR Program of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta which has operated since 1999.

“The best organizations regularly solicit feedback from their clients and use this information to improve the quality of their services,” said Keating. “With NSPAR, the College is bringing this philosophy to medical practice. One of our members describes it as a ‘win-win’ situation – patients appreciate the opportunity to comment on the care they receive and physicians benefit from receiving constructive feedback.”

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 a variety of medical and surgical specialties.

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