



Nova Scotia
College of
Pharmacists

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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BEVERLEY ZWICKER

CEO and Registrar



JON WRIGHT

Council President

"As we navigate the future of primary care delivery, the NSCP is committed to supporting the further integration of pharmacy practitioners and removing systemic barriers to Nova Scotians benefitting from team-based care."

A MESSAGE FROM THE REGISTRAR AND PRESIDENT

As the regulator for the practice of pharmacy, the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists (NSCP) continues to work on the public's behalf so that they can access the full range of care that a pharmacist has the expertise to provide. In fact, Nova Scotia is leading nationally, and around the world, when it comes to pharmacist prescribing authority. This means that more Nova Scotians can access care at a pharmacy for their chronic health conditions, as well as other core needs related to medications and staying well. This includes contraception management, immunizations and the prevention and treatment of Lyme Disease, as well as assessment and treatment of minor bladder infections, shingles, and strep throat.



Like other parts of the country and the world, Nova Scotia is experiencing a significant shortage of healthcare professionals, and this includes pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

Transforming the delivery of healthcare, and positioning pharmacists to practice the way they had envisioned when completing their six-year healthcare degree, not only improves access to care for the public, but it also makes Nova Scotia more attractive to pharmacy professionals. We have already seen the benefits of this through our streamlined licensing pathways for internationally trained practitioners.

As we navigate the future of primary care delivery, the NSCP remains committed to supporting the further integration of pharmacy practitioners and removing systemic barriers to Nova Scotians benefiting from team-based care. We know that these are challenging times. By working together, we can make the changes needed to transform our healthcare system for decades to come. This will require a transformation in the way that leaders talk about healthcare, the way professionals practice it, and the way that Nova Scotians receive care.

This report provides an overview of the work we completed in 2024 in support of patients having access to the right care, at the right time, from the right provider. In everything we do, we remain committed to this goal. We look forward to continuing this important work in the year ahead.

Beverley Zwicker
CEO & Registrar

Jon Wright
2024 Council President



A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

As public representatives, we provide the NSCP Council with expertise in communications, community outreach, governance, and strategic policy while advocating for the public's interests in pharmacy care decisions.

Our primary objective in 2024 was to ensure that the NSCP continued to effectively address the provincial healthcare crisis by enabling pharmacy professionals to fully utilize their unique knowledge, skills, and education.

Over the past year, we have engaged in meaningful conversations about licensing reforms, how to address staffing challenges in community pharmacies, and the crucial role of pharmacy professionals in delivering primary care under a new *Regulated Health Professionals Act*. For more details on the outcomes of these discussions, please refer to the Major Areas of Work and Milestones section in this report.

In addition to Council duties, we each volunteer on various NSCP committees, including the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee; Governance Committee; and Audit Committee. Other public representatives also participate on the full range of NSCP committees, which demonstrates the NSCP's commitment to putting the public interest first while maintaining transparency and accountability to the public in all regulatory activities.

Your 2024 Public Representatives,
Habiba Onuorah, Deepak Prasad, Tunde Awoyiga
(from left to right)



GET TO KNOW THE NSCP

YOUR PHARMACY REGULATOR

Founded in 1876, the NSCP is the regulatory authority for the practice of pharmacy in Nova Scotia. Our legislated mandate is to maintain standards of practice and professional accountability in the practice of pharmacy, thereby supporting optimal patient care.

The NSCP regulates pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and the community pharmacies where they practice. In accordance with the Pharmacy Act of Nova Scotia, the NSCP's key responsibilities include:

- registration and licensing
- quality assurance
- professional accountability
- legislation and practice standards

OUR MANDATE | Governing the practice of pharmacy in Nova Scotia in the interest of the health and wellbeing of the public.

OUR VISION | Excellence in pharmacy practice and patient-centered healthcare.

OUR VALUES | The NSCP upholds the following organizational values in our work:

- We believe that everyone deserves **quality** pharmacy care.
- We put **equity** at the core of what we do to address disparities in health access and outcomes.
- We **collaborate** with the public, pharmacy professionals, and our health system partners because learning with, from, and about others makes us all better.
- We **adapt** with the evolving health needs of the public so that we are doing the right work.
- We act with **humility** in everything we do.





THE ROLE OF THE NSCP

LEGISLATION & PRACTICE STANDARDS

- Establishes, maintains, and enforces appropriate regulations, standards, policies, and guidelines.
- Promotes a professional Code of Ethics to set out ethical expectations and obligations for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and to provide support for ethical decision-making.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Conducts inspections that protect, promote, and improve the quality of pharmacy care across the province.
- Conducts peer to peer practice feedback sessions under the Practice Feedback Program to help pharmacy professionals reflect on their practice and seek opportunities for improvement.
- Ensures pharmacy professionals engage in ongoing professional education to maintain their competency.
- Requires pharmacies to be actively engaged in continuous quality improvement. This includes reporting and analyzing errors to enhance the quality and safety of the services they provide.

REGISTRATION & LICENSING

- Ensures individuals licensed to practice pharmacy in Nova Scotia have the capacity, professional competence, and character to engage in the practice of pharmacy safely and ethically.
- Establishes and administers registration requirements and processes that are deemed fair, objective, thorough, and transparent.

PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Ensures pharmacy practitioners comply with the rules that govern the practice of pharmacy, are competent to practice, and conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner.
- Investigates and addresses complaints and concerns, considering such matters in the context of the rules and expectations outlined in legislation, standards, policies, and the Code of Ethics.

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

MAJOR AREAS OF WORK & MILESTONES

STRENGTHENING NOVA SCOTIA'S PHARMACY WORKFORCE

Like other healthcare sectors, Nova Scotia is experiencing a shortage of pharmacy professionals. We need more practitioners to meet our growing healthcare demands and to enhance primary care delivery. The NSCP continues to collaborate with our health system partners, including the Department of Health and Wellness, the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment, the Department of Advanced Education, and the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia, to develop innovative strategies aimed at filling the growing number of vacancies in community pharmacy and primary care settings.

Using the authority provided by the Patient Access to Care Act, in 2023 the NSCP streamlined the licensing pathway for pharmacy practitioners from the United States, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand in Nova Scotia, while ensuring necessary safeguards remain in place.

At the end of 2024:

- Over 1350 individuals expressed interest in the streamlined licensing pathway, with 684 expressions of interest coming from qualified jurisdictions.
- 85 files were opened to begin the process of licensing
- 34 pharmacists were licensed (11 USA, 13 GB, 2 NZ, 5 IRE, 3 AUS)
- 1 pharmacy technician was licensed (UK)

The NSCP continues to explore additional jurisdictions and opportunities to address the province's short-term and long-term recruitment and retention needs.





POSITIONING PHARMACISTS IN PRIMARY CARE DELIVERY

To ensure that Nova Scotians can benefit from the full range of knowledge and expertise that pharmacists have, the NSCP continuously reviews and updates its standards of practice and policies to identify opportunities to amend or update these regulator tools so that pharmacists are appropriately positioned in the delivery of primary care:

- Amending the Standards of Practice: Prescribing Drugs to enable pharmacists to assess and prescribe for Human Immunodeficiency Virus pre-exposure prophylaxis (HIV PrEP), early Lyme Disease, and Group A Streptococcal infections.
- Amending the Standards of Practice: Prescribing Drugs to eliminate gender references in the anatomical description for uncomplicated cystitis. Additionally, the age restrictions was modified, enabling pharmacists to prescribe drug therapy for individuals who have entered adolescence.
- Amending the Standards of Practice: Drug Administration to remove the minimum age limit for pharmacists providing immunizations.
- Overhauling the Standards of Practice: Drug Therapy for the Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder to align with the evolving treatment of opioid use disorder and empower pharmacists to better meet the needs of their patients.
- Approving research and pilot protocols under the Standards of Practice: Prescribing Drugs to explore pharmacists diagnosing and prescribing for hypertension and diabetes, as well as assessment and prescribing when a diagnosis is already established and for sinus and ear infections.

LAUNCH OF PRACTICE FEEDBACK PROGRAM

The NSCP officially launched its Practice Feedback Program (PFP) in 2024 after a successful pilot. The PFP engages pharmacists in discussions about their clinical decision-making with a trained PFP facilitator, ultimately enhancing the care they provide to their patients through self-reflection on the effective management of drug therapy.

ESTABLISHING SAFE PHARMACY STAFFING LEVELS

The NSCP has been working for the past five years on a significant regulatory initiative to address concerns of registrants regarding pharmacy staffing levels through its Staffing and Workload Initiative for Safety and Effectiveness (StaffWISE) project. In 2024, work included:

- Hosting a regulatory summit in July 2024 that included the NSCP Council, senior leaders from various Canadian pharmacy regulators, the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA), the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), and senior representatives from various pharmacy regulatory authorities in the US. The summit provided important feedback on the StaffWISE project and next steps.
- Integrating StaffWISE data collection into the annual pharmacy licence renewal process, a critical step in ensuring that staffing level data is routinely collected from each community pharmacy in Nova Scotia.
- Establishing the *Pharmacy Staffing Level Policy* that will begin to be implemented in 2025.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The NSCP is committed to the inclusion of individuals who reflect the broadest range of human identities, skills, experiences, and perspectives in fulfilling its responsibility to regulate the practice of pharmacy in the public interest. In 2024, this work included:

- Conducting training on the role of the board in addressing health inequities.
- Establishing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Expected Practices that set out expectations for NSCP Council and staff related to land and heritage acknowledgements and use of pronouns.
- Actively involving the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee in the NSCP's policymaking process related to community pharmacy staffing levels, business metrics, sexual misconduct standards, and regulatory approach.
- Collecting self-reported Indigenous, racial, and gender identity from pharmacy professionals through the annual licence renewal process.



BY THE NUMBERS

REGISTRATIONS & LICENSING

Pharmacists

- **1604** pharmacists
- **34** pharmacists licensed via the streamlined licensure pathway
- **33** new pharmacy graduates licensed with the NSCP for the first time
- **55** licensed with the NSCP from another Canadian jurisdiction
- **14** pharmacists resumed practice
- **64** pharmacist intern licenses issued
- **65** new pharmacy students registered with the NSCP

Pharmacy Technicians

- **305** pharmacy technicians
- **1** pharmacy technician licensed via the streamlined licensure pathway
- **13** new pharmacy technician graduates licensed with the NSCP for the first time
- **7** licensed with the NSCP from another Canadian jurisdiction
- **16** pharmacy technicians resumed practice
- **215** pharmacy technician candidates

NUMBER OF PHARMACIES BY ZONE

312 licensed pharmacies

Zone 1: 150

Halifax, Lunenburg, and Queens Counties

Zone 2: 49

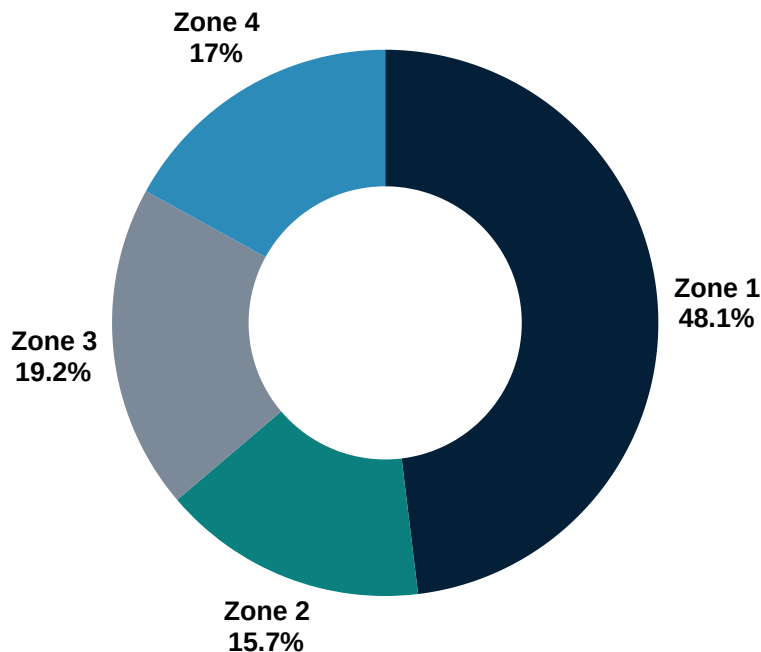
Cape Breton Island

Zone 3: 60

Antigonish, Guysborough, Pictou, Colchester, Cumberland Counties, and the Municipality of the District of East Hants.

Zone 4: 53

Hants, Kings, Annapolis, Digby, Shelburne, and Yarmouth Counties, excluding the Municipality of the District of East Hants



QUALITY ASSURANCE

The NSCP routinely inspects pharmacies to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Pharmacy Act and regulations, and engages pharmacists in discussions about their clinical decision making with a trained facilitator. This process enables the public to be confident of the safety and quality of the medications and care they receive from pharmacy professionals in Nova Scotia.



80

Routine pharmacy inspections completed

Every pharmacy in Nova Scotia undergoes a comprehensive routine inspection approximately every 3 years.



78

Revisit pharmacy inspections completed

If deficiencies are identified during the routine inspection, a revisit inspection is conducted within six months to ensure that these deficiencies have been satisfactorily addressed.



15

Renovation inspections completed

A renovation inspection is completed when the location of the dispensary within an existing pharmacy changes or when alterations have been made that affect the diagram of the pharmacy.



66

Pharmacy manager interviews conducted

Interviews are conducted with new pharmacy managers to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities set out in the legislation. Existing pharmacy managers are interviewed approximately every 5 years to ensure they are aware of updates to legislation and standards of practice and that they continue to be aware of their responsibilities.



0

Sterile compounding inspections completed

Pharmacies that undertake sterile compounding are inspected approximately every 3 years.



39

Practice Feedback Program (PFP) evaluations completed

Launched in November 2024, the PFP provides pharmacists with an opportunity to discuss their clinical decision-making approach with a peer and seek opportunities for improvement.

PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

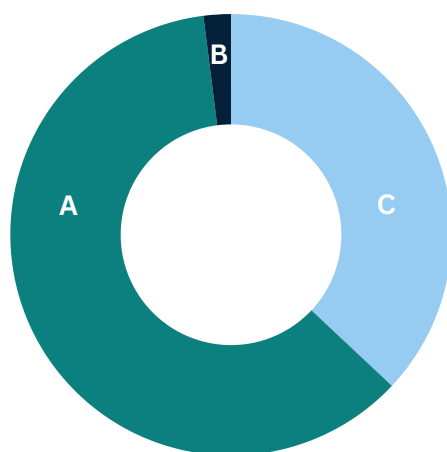
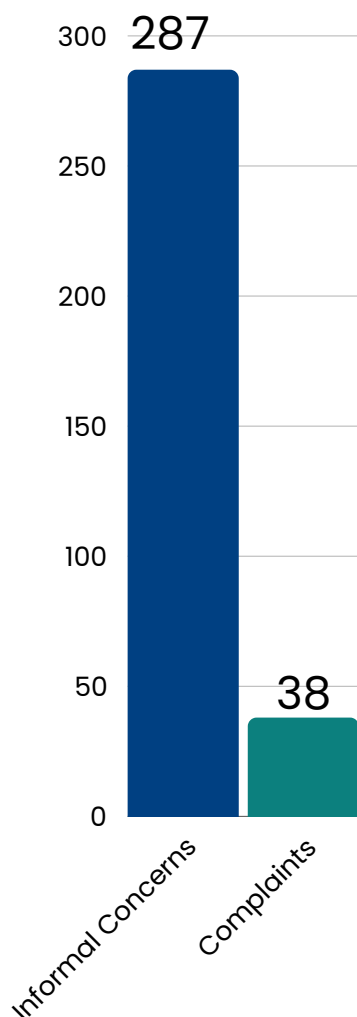
Definitions:

Informal concerns: Information provided to the NSCP by someone to file a complaint.

Complaint: Information provided to the NSCP by someone, including the NSCP Registrar, as a formal complaint.

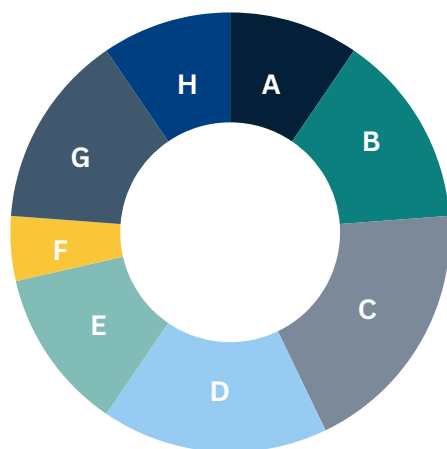
319

Resolved files in 2024



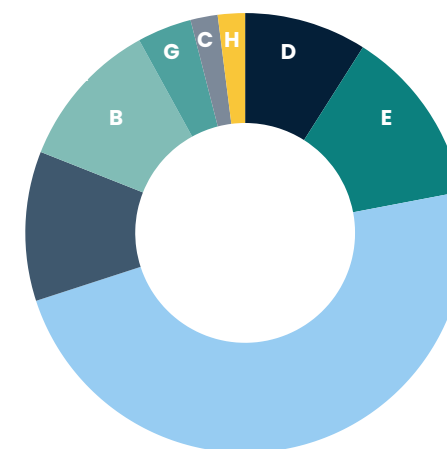
DISPOSITION OF INFORMAL CONCERNS RESOLVED

- A** Guidance provided: 61%
- B** Referred to Investigation Committee: 2%
- C** No further action taken: 37%



SUBJECT MATTER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

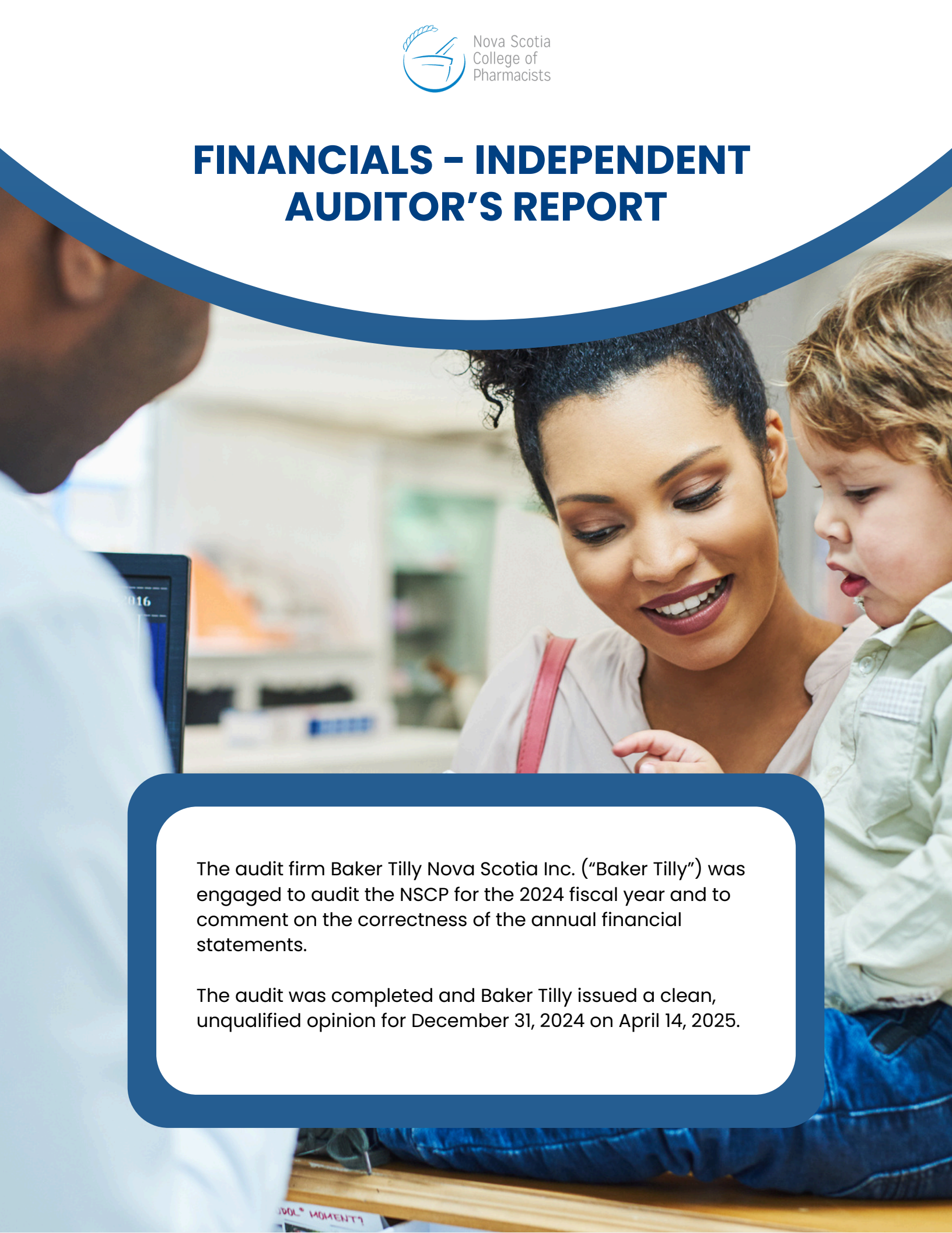
- A** Privacy/Confidentiality: 9.5%
- B** Workflow/Customer Service: 14%
- C** Administrative Lapse: 21.5%
- D** Inappropriate Clinical Service: 17%
- E** Medication Error: 12%
- F** Competency: 5%
- G** Unprofessional Conduct: 14%
- H** Inappropriate dispensing: 7%



DISPOSITION OF COMPLAINTS RESOLVED

- A** Reprimand: 11%
- B** Forward to Hearing Committee: 11%
- C** Conditions (e.g. Essay): 2%
- D** Dismiss: 9%
- E** Counsel: 13%
- F** Caution: 48%
- G** Refer to Fitness to Practice Committee: 4%
- H** Withdrawn: 2%

FINANCIALS – INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT



The audit firm Baker Tilly Nova Scotia Inc. (“Baker Tilly”) was engaged to audit the NSCP for the 2024 fiscal year and to comment on the correctness of the annual financial statements.

The audit was completed and Baker Tilly issued a clean, unqualified opinion for December 31, 2024 on April 14, 2025.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINANCIAL RESULTS

	General Fund \$	Reserve Fund \$	2024 Total \$	2023 Total \$
REVENUES				
Registration and Licensing	3,659,972	–	3,659,972	3,073,401
Realized (Gain) Loss on Disposal of Investments	–	118,858	118,858	(14,148)
Investment Income	45,895	66,304	112,199	133,306
Fair Value Adjustment for Unrealized Gain on Investments	–	71,176	71,176	97,772
Government Funding	42,572	–	42,572	174,631
Sundry	35,903	–	35,903	19,593
Professional Accountability	6,821	–	6,821	11,717
	<u>3,791,163</u>	<u>256,338</u>	<u>4,047,501</u>	<u>3,496,272</u>
EXPENSES	<u>3,688,105</u>	<u>670,059</u>	<u>4,358,164</u>	<u>3,697,843</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	<u>103,058</u>	<u>(413,721)</u>	<u>(310,663)</u>	<u>(201,571)</u>

The College maintains a Reserve Fund for these specific purposes:

1. As an operating reserve to manage the risks associated with possible cash flow interruptions.
2. To provide flexibility to fund new organizational priorities and unexpected needs.
3. As a reserve for extraordinary legal/liability costs.
4. A reserve fund for the costs associated with strategic initiatives and activities that support the mandate of the NSCP.

The reserve is funded by earnings on investments and operational surpluses. The funds balance at the end of 2024 was \$1,315,210.

2024 NSCP COUNCIL

The NSCP Council oversees the direction and policy decisions of the NSCP as a whole. Council's mandate is to ensure that the NSCP acts at all times to protect the public interest, and governs the practice of pharmacy in the interest of optimal health outcomes.



Jon Wight
President
Zone 1 Representative



Tunde Awoyiga
Vice President
Public Representative



Stephen MacInnis
Member-at-Large
Zone 2 Representative



Michael MacDonald
Councillor
Zone 1 Representative



Sabrina McLean
Councillor
Zone 1 Representative



Michelle Stewart
Councillor
Zone 3 Representative



Rami Saaloukeh
Councillor
Zone 4 Representative



Sylvia Yazbeck
Councillor
Zone 5 Representative



Lynn Corkum
Councillor
Zone 6 Representative



Habiba Onuorah
Councillor
Public Representative



Deepak Prasad
Councillor
Public Representative



Kyle Wilby
Director, Dalhousie
College of Pharmacy



NSCP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive Committee

Jon Wright, (Chair)
Tunde Awoyiga, (Vice President)
Stephen MacInnis (Member-at-Large)

Audit Committee

Michael MacDonald (Chair)
Rami Saaloukeh
Deepak Prasad
Bernard Oche, Public Representative

Governance Committee

Lynn Corkum (Chair)
Sabrina McLean
Tunde Awoyiga
Michael MacDonald

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee

Habiba Onuorah (Chair)
Michelle Patrick
Greg Richard
Samantha Darville
Cecil Skinner
Kristy Barnaby
Kenneth Oguzie
Leeann Walling

Fitness to Practice Committee

Trina Organ, Pharmacist (Chair)
Brian Wilbur, Public Representative (Vice Chair)
Julia Green, Pharmacist
Serena Bruce, Pharmacy Technician

Hearing Committee

Harriet Davies, Pharmacist (Chair)
Susan Halliday Mahar, Pharmacist (Vice Chair)
Haitham Fathalla, Pharmacist
Leigh Nofle, Pharmacist
Ellen Purves, Pharmacist
Tena Taylor, Pharmacist
Krista Trider, Pharmacist
Lisa Johnston, Pharmacy Technician
Kayla Ransome, Pharmacy Technician
Desiree Jones-Matthias, Public Representative
Annette Marshall, Public Representative
Edith Menzies, Public Representative

Investigation Committee

Pauline Tran-Roop, Pharmacist (Chair)
Lynn Guscott, Public Representative (Vice Chair)
Rana Naji, Pharmacist
Jennifer Thome, Pharmacist
Greg Richard, Pharmacist
Kristen Pulsifer, Pharmacy Technician
Gary Clarke, Public Representative
Donna Moreen Smith Darrell, Public Representative





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