

MEDICAL CONSULTANTS' COMMITTEE

ACTIVITY REPORT

2022-23

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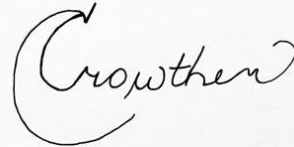
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1.0 Message from the Chairperson

I am pleased to provide the **2022-23 Activity Report** for the Medical Consultants' Committee (the Committee) in accordance with the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for a Category 3 Government Entity.

This Activity Report provides an overview of the Committee and the extent to which planned results were met during the fiscal period April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. As Chairperson of the Committee, my signature below is indicative of the entire Committee's accountability for the actual results reported herein.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Crowther". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a light gray rectangular box.

Colleen Crowther MD FRCPC
Chairperson
Medical Consultants' Committee

2.0 Committee Overview

The Committee reviews the patterns of practice and billing procedures of physicians who submit claims to the Medical Care Plan (MCP) as well as the utilization of services by beneficiaries. The Committee is a key component in the Department of Health and Community Services' (HCS) audit function. It can recommend recovery of funds billed in error and other corrective actions and serves to deter misbilling by fee-for-service physicians.

Membership

The Committee consists of seven members, as follows:

- Three physicians appointed by the Minister of Health and Community Services from a list submitted by the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association. These members serve for a period of up to five consecutive years;
- A chartered accountant appointed by the Minister. This member serves for a period of up to five consecutive years; and
- The Department's Director of Medical Services, Assistant Medical Director and Dental Consultant are ex-officio members.

Committee membership during 2022-23 was as follows:

1. Dr. Colleen Crowther, Assistant Medical Director, Department of Health and Community Services
2. Dr. Ed Williams, Dental Consultant, Department of Health and Community Services
3. Dr. Michelle Zwicker, Dental Consultant, Department of Health and Community Services
4. Ms. Lisa Curran, Director of Medical Services, Department of Health and Community Services
5. Mr. Dave Moore, Director of Medical Services (Acting), Department of Health and Community Services
5. a salaried general practitioner (vacant)
6. Dr. Robert Randell, consultant
7. Dr. Richard Barter, non-salaried family physician
8. Dr. Peggy Coady, chartered professional accountant

Legislative Authority

The Committee receives its authority from the **Physicians and Fee Regulations** under the **Medical Care and Hospital Insurance Act**. The chartered accountant is replaced in accordance with the Independent Appointments Commission process. Subsection 15(6) of the **Physicians and Fee Regulations** outlines that when a committee member's term expires, he or she continues to be a committee member until replaced.

Meeting Frequency

The Committee meets when one or more medical billing audits have reached the stage where they are ready for review by the Committee. Historically, it has met one to four times a year. In 2022-23, the committee met six times to complete the work of two agendas.

Expenditures

The Committee is not required to prepare an audited financial statement. Administrative support and remuneration of the Committee's members' expenses are provided by the Audit and Claims Integrity Division of the Department of Health and Community Services.

2.1 Mandate

The Committee is established pursuant to Sections 14 and 15 of the **Physicians and Fee Regulations** under the **Medical Care and Hospital Insurance Act**. The Committee provides advice to the Minister based on the following duties and responsibilities:

- Review of the patterns of practice and billing procedures of participating physicians and the utilization of services by beneficiaries.
- Where the Committee concludes that no corrective action is warranted beyond notification to the physician of a finding that a deviant pattern or unacceptable billing practice exists, that notification may be given or authorized by the Committee.
- Recovery of funds or other disciplinary or investigative action may be recommended by the Committee to the Minister.

3.0 Report on Performance 2022-23

Annual Objective 2022-23

Over the course of the three-year period from the beginning of fiscal 2020-21 to the end of fiscal 2022-23, the Committee will meet at least once each year and review cases prepared by the Audit and Claims Integrity Division. In so doing, this Committee further extends Government's ability to ensure the wise and prudent use of public resources.

The Committee has developed the annual objective to measure its performance in auditing fee-for-service physician billing practices. The defined mandate of this Committee results in the annual objectives remaining the same for each year of the Activity Plan. This report is the third to report on progress made under the 2020-23 Activity Plan. In compliance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, the Committee has now prepared annual activity reports (i.e. 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23) on the extent to which the annual objective has been achieved.

By March 31, 2023, the Committee will have reviewed the patterns of practice and billing procedures of participating physicians and the utilization of services by beneficiaries in cases prepared by the Audit and Claims Integrity Division of the Department of Health and Community Services.

For the annual reports produced from 2020 to 2023, the Committee's indicators have been:

- Number of cases forwarded by the Audit and Claims Integrity Division of the Department of Health and Community Services;
- Number of completed reviews of billing audits on fee-for-service physicians;
- The total dollar amount identified for recovery as a result of any completed reviews by the Committee;
- Annual reports produced; and
- Met a minimum of once annually.

Indicators 2022-23 Planned Activity	Actual Activity in 2022-23
Number of cases forwarded by the Audit and Claims Integrity Division of the Department of Health and Community Services.	By the end of the 2022-23 fiscal year, the Committee received seven new MCP billing audits on seven fee-for-service physicians from the Audit and Claims Integrity Division. Two files on two fee-for-service physicians were brought back to the Committee for further review.
Number of completed reviews of MCP billing audits on fee-for-service physicians.	The Committee completed nine reviews of MCP billing audits on nine fee-for-service physicians in 2022-23. A total amount of \$335,889.40 was identified for recovery.
Annual report produced and tabled in the House of Assembly	In 2022-23, the Committee produced an annual report for the previous fiscal year (2021-22) year.
Annual meetings of committee (minimum)	The committee met six times to complete the work of two agendas in 2022-23.

Discussion of Results (2022-23)

The Committee reviews evidence presented by the Audit and Claims Integrity Division and recommends recovery of funds billed in error and other corrective actions that serve to deter misbilling by all fee-for-service physicians. This focused review contributes to the prudent use of public resources and increased accountability and stability in the delivery of health and community services.

The Committee did not meet in 2021-22, but resumed meetings throughout 2022-23 and met more often throughout 2022-23 to address audits ready for its review.