

# **MEDICAL CONSULTANTS' COMMITTEE**

## **ACTIVITY REPORT**

**2019-20**

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# 1.0 Message from the Chairperson

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I am pleased to provide the **2019-20 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, 2019 to March 31, 2020. 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 on a light grey rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Crowther".

**Colleen Crowther MD FRCPC**  
**Chairperson**  
**Medical Consultants' Committee**

## 2.0 Committee Overview

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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 advises the Minister of Health and Community Services of its findings. The Committee is a key component in the Department of Health and Community Services 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.

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 who serve as ex-officio members.

Committee membership during 2019-20 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. Mr. Andrew Wells, Director of Medical Services, Department of Health and Community Services
5. A salaried general practitioner (vacant)
6. Dr. Robert Randell, specialist
7. Dr. Richard Barter, non-salaried general practitioner
8. Peggy Coady, chartered professional accountant

The Committee receives its authority from the **Physicians and Fee Regulations** under the **Medical Care and Hospital Insurance Act**. Members whose terms have expired will be 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.

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. During 2019-20, the Committee met twice at the MCP Building on Major's Path.

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. Total expenses for the meetings held were as follows:

Per Diems	\$ 5625.00
Travel*	\$ 154.86
Food/Refreshments	<u>\$ 301.65</u>
Total	<u>\$ 6081.51</u>

\*Committee members who reside outside the Northeast Avalon are reimbursed for travel and accommodation expenses in accordance with Government travel policy.

## 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 duties and responsibilities of the Committee include providing advice to the Minister as follows:

- Review 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 2019-20

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## Annual Objective 2019-20

Over the course of the three-year period from the beginning of the fiscal 2017-18 to the end of fiscal 2019-20, the Medical Consultants' Committee will meet at least once each year and review cases prepared by the Audit and Claims Integrity Division of the Department of Health and Community Services. In so doing, this Committee further extends Government's ability to ensure the wise and prudent use of public resources.

The Committee 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 objective remaining the same for each year of this Activity Plan. This report is the third to report on progress made under the 2017-20 Activity Plan. In compliance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, for each year covered by the plan, the Committee intends to produce an annual report on the extent to which the annual objective was achieved.

By March 31, 2020, the Medical Consultant's 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.

<b>Indicators 2019-20 Planned Activity</b>	<b>Actual Activity in 2019-20</b>
Number of cases forwarded by the Audit and Claims Integrity Division of the Department of Health and Community Services	By the end of the 2019-20 fiscal year, the Committee received five MCP billing audits on four fee-for-service physicians from the Audit and Claims Integrity Division.
Number of completed reviews of MCP billing audits on fee-for-service physicians	The Committee completed five reviews of MCP billing audits on four fee-for-service physicians. A total of \$305,824.99 was identified for recovery.
Annual Activity Report prepared and tabled in the House of Assembly	In 2019-20, the Committee produced an annual report for the previous fiscal year (2018-19) year.
Annual meetings of committee (minimum)	The Committee assembled twice in 2019-20. However, there was one agenda divided into two days in July and August of 2019.

## Discussion of Results (2019-20)

As per the Medical Consultants' Committee Activity Plan 2017-20, the final year (2019-20) also summarizes the contribution that this Committee has made to delivering physician services within the available resources of the health and community services system.

With the assistance of the Committee, the Audit and Claims Integrity Division has identified physician recoveries totalling \$1,592,463 for 2017-20. As a peer review process, the Committee continues to deter fee-for-service physicians from misbilling.

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.

Although there were negligible impacts due to COVID-19 for this reporting year, the pandemic is expected to have an impact on the number of times the Committee will meet in 2020-21. The Committee meets when medical billing audits are ready for review. COVID-19 has delayed this process, which will impact the volume of audits for the Committee to review.