

MEDICAL CONSULTANTS' COMMITTEE

ACTIVITY REPORT

2017-2018

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1.0 Message from the Chairperson

I am pleased to provide the **2017-2018 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, 2017 to March 31, 2018. As Chairperson of the Committee, my signature below is indicative of the entire Committee's accountability for the actual results reported herein.

Yours sincerely,



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 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 (DHCS) 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.
- The Department's Director of Medical Services, Assistant Medical Director, and Director of Dental Services are ex-officio members.

Committee membership¹ during 2017-18 was as follows:

1. Dr. Ed Williams, Director of Dental Services, Department of Health and Community Services, Acting Chairperson
2. Dr. Colleen Crowther, Assistant Medical Director, Department of Health and Community Services, Chairperson
3. Director of Medical Services, Department of Health and Community Services (Angela Batstone, Andrew Wells)
4. Dr. Loran Savoury, Medical Advisor, Department of Health and Community Services.
5. General Practitioner (Vacant)
6. Dr. Robert Randell, Specialist
7. Dr. Richard Barter, non-salaried General Practitioner
8. Ms. Peggy Coady, Chartered Accountant

The Committee receives its authority from the **Physicians and Fee Regulations** under the **Medical Care Insurance Act, 1999**. Members whose terms have expired will be replaced in accordance with the Independent Appointments Commission processes. The Department is

¹ It should be noted that:

- Departmental representation on the Committee is being addressed to reflect changes in departmental positions and titles as a result of recent restructuring;
- Angela Batstone, Director of Medical Services is no longer in this position. Andrew Wells is the current Director of Medical Services (Acting).
- The terms for Dr. Randell, Dr. Barter, and Ms. Coady have expired and the process of appointment of new members is underway; and
- The process for filling the vacant salaried general practitioner is on-going.

working with the Independent Appointments Commission to replace members whose terms have expired, and current members will continue in their roles until replacements are found.

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 2017-18 the Committee met five times and held its meetings 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	\$13, 125.00
Travel*	\$ 0
Food/Refreshments	<u>\$ 697.90</u>
Total	<u>\$13, 822.90</u>

*Committee members who reside outside the Northeast Avalon are reimbursed for travel and accommodation expenses in accordance with Government travel policy. There were no travel claims submitted in 2017-2018.

2.1 Mandate

The Committee is established pursuant to Sections 14 and 15 of the **Physicians and Fee Regulations** under the **Medical Care Insurance Act, 1999**. 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.

2.2 Primary Client

The primary client of the Committee is the Minister of Health and Community Services.

3.0 Report on Performance 2017-2018

Annual Objective 2017-2018

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. Progress will be reviewed at the end of each year to determine if changes in the indicators are necessary. In compliance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, for each year covered by the plan, the Committee intends to prepare annual activity reports on the extent to which the annual objective was achieved. This report is the first to report on the progress made under the 2017-20 Activity Plan.

By March 31, 2018, 2019, and 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.

Indicators 2017-2018 Planned Activity	Actual Activity in 2017-2018
Number of cases forwarded by the Audit and Claims Integrity Division of the Department of Health and Community Services.	By the end of the 2017-2018 fiscal year the committee received eighteen MCP billing audits on sixteen 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 sixteen reviews of MCP billing audits on fourteen fee-for-service physicians. A total of \$887,517 was identified for recovery.
Annual Activity Report prepared and tabled in the House of Assembly	In 2016-2017 the committee submitted an annual performance-based activity report for the previous fiscal year (2015-2016) year.
Annual meetings of committee (minimum)	The committee met five times in 2017-2018.

Discussion of Results (2017-2018)

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