

For Immediate Release



Clinician Assessment *for* Practice Program



New Assessment Program Addresses Nova Scotia Physician Shortage

Halifax, May 17, 2005 -- The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia announced today the launch of the Clinician Assessment for Practice Program (CAPP). The program will assess the clinical skills of international medical graduate (IMG) physicians who wish to become licensed in Nova Scotia.

"CAPP is aimed at the many well-qualified IMG physicians residing in Canada who are eager to have their skills assessed for possible licensure in Nova Scotia," said Dr. Robert Maudsley, executive director of the program. "This program is innovative because successful candidates will be eligible to apply for a defined licence to practice medicine in Nova Scotia under the guidance of an experienced physician mentor."

The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Doctors Nova Scotia are negotiating compensation for these physicians and their mentors.

"CAPP will lead to improved access to medical care, especially in rural areas of the province where the need is so great," said Dr. Cameron Little, registrar and CEO of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia. "The province's many overworked physicians should also benefit as the workload is shared among more physicians."

"While the statistics show that Nova Scotians have the best access to family doctors in the country, many of our communities have experienced recruitment challenges leaving thousands of people with no family doctor," said Health Minister Angus MacIsaac. "Along with the families and health providers in these communities, I will be pleased to see the positive results from CAPP in the short term and over a number of years."

Immigration Minister Rodney MacDonald said the program is a perfect fit with the province's new immigration strategy. "We know, if we want immigrants to stay and succeed in our province, they need to get to work," said Mr. MacDonald. "Now that qualified doctors will be able to get to work more quickly, we must find ways to remove delays in assessing the qualifications of immigrants in other professions and trades."

"Doctors Nova Scotia is proud to partner on this program that will help improve health-care delivery in our province," said Dr. Romesh Shukla, president-elect of Doctors Nova Scotia. "This program will not only benefit Nova Scotians who need timely access to health-care services, but will also benefit the current complement of physicians who are anxious to have new colleagues join the profession and contribute to their efforts in providing quality care to Nova Scotians."

CAPP's rigorous assessments will examine candidates' clinical competence, knowledge and attitudes that are essential for having a medical licence in Nova Scotia. Ninety of a possible 120 candidates have so far been confirmed for the first two CAPP assessments that will take place in June and December.

Current CAPP assessments are open to family practitioners with specialist assessments planned for the future. CAPP assessment is available only to Canadian citizens or permanent residents. The program does not solicit physicians from other countries.

CAPP administrators and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia are working closely with Dalhousie University, Doctors Nova Scotia, immigrant groups and the provincial government to ensure that physicians who become licensed in Nova Scotia -- after being assessed by CAPP -- receive personal support and professional mentorship to assist their integration into the communities where they practice.

More information on the program is available on the website at www.capprogram.ca.

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