



Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2026



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Executive Summary

Strategic planning involves re-examining the vision, mission and values of an organization, setting out strategies for achieving its objectives over a number of years. A strategic plan sets a very clear direction for staff and other contributors, serving as a decision-making tool for the organization. All activity, guided by the core values, should support the strategic mission and vision of the organization.

In 2015, the Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia (PDBNS) initiated the development of its first Strategic Plan for 2016–2019. As the end of that timeframe approached, it was evident that while many of the goals set out had been completed, the process of legislative amendments was and would be ongoing.

A new Strategic Plan was developed for 2020–2022, many of the goals being contingent on the preparation for and implementation of a new Dental Act. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and government's change of course regarding health regulation, the Strategic Plan's timeframe was extended to 2023 as the landscape of dentistry and health regulation was surveyed.

This present Strategic Plan for 2024–2026 builds upon the 2020 document. The objectives focus on continuing to effectively deliver on core regulatory requirements:

- registration and licensing,
- the processing of complaints,
- quality assurance measures, and
- the administration of standards, guidelines and policies governing the practice of dentistry and dental assisting.

In addition to these, the objectives give significant weight to measures which will be required to meet the challenges of migration to the [Regulated Health Professions Act \(2023\)](#) – a common legislative framework which will replace the existing 21 Acts governing health professions in Nova Scotia. The RHPA received Royal Assent on November 9, 2023 and, at the time of this writing, it is expected that the PDBNS will be in the first cohort of Nova Scotia health regulators brought under this new Act.

The PDBNS is thankful to the many dedicated individuals (Board and Committee members, staff, and consultants) who diligently work within the framework of this Strategic Plan to support public protection in matters related to dentistry.

History of the Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia

The Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia (PDBNS) was established on May 19, 1891 by an Act to Incorporate the Dental Association of Nova Scotia. This legislation granted the Board the power to regulate the study of dentistry, to conduct final examinations, to examine degrees and credentials of dentists wishing to practise, to register and license dentists, to maintain the dental register, and to uphold dental regulations.

Today, the PDBNS is the regulatory body for the professions of dentistry and dental assisting. [The Dental Act of 1992](#) and [Regulations](#) pursuant to the Act have allowed the self-regulation of these professions. The PDBNS sets the requirements for registration and licensure of dentists and dental assistants, maintains registers for dentists and dental assistants, addresses complaints through its discipline regulations, develops policy and standards for safe dental practice, and undertakes quality assurance of licensees through its [Mandatory Continuing Dental Education \(MCDE\)](#) and [Dental Practice Review \(DPR\) Regulations](#).

Since the passing of the 1992 [Dental Act](#), the regulatory landscape for dentistry and dental assisting in Nova Scotia has evolved. Legislation such as the [Nova Scotia Fair Registration Practices Act \(2008\)](#) and the [Canada Free Trade Agreement \(2017\)](#) have led to the evolution of registration and licensing processes for the Provincial Dental Board. The [Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network Act \(2012\)](#) has enabled the Provincial Dental Board to work with the other regulatory bodies and the Department of Health and Wellness in collaborative partnerships to support its regulatory mandate of upholding the public interest respecting the provision of dental care.

As an active member of the [Canadian Dental Regulatory Authorities Federation \(CDRAF\)](#) and the [Canadian Dental Assistants Regulatory Authorities \(CDARA\)](#), the PDBNS stays current with respect to national regulatory trends in dentistry and dental assisting. The PDBNS also engages with the [Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada \(CDAC\)](#) which ensures national standards are met in dental and dental assisting education programs. The PDBNS has close ties with the [National Dental Examining Board \(NDEB\)](#), the [National Dental Assisting Examining Board \(NDAEB\)](#), and the [Royal College of Dentists of Canada \(RCDC\)](#) - organizations which certify qualified dentists, dental assistants, and dental specialists respectively through the administration of certification exams.

Like all other Nova Scotia health regulatory bodies, the PDBNS is presently entering a period of change as it prepares to be brought under the [Regulated Health Professions Act \(2023\)](#). It is unclear what the PDBNS' legislated relationship with the [Nova Scotia Dental Association \(NSDA\)](#) will be under this new legislative regime. However, we are confident that the organizations will continue to collaborate constructively on areas of common purpose.

Present Board members, as well as PDBNS staff, are excited to be part of this transition in Nova Scotia health regulation. We look forward to ensuring our organization continues to fulfill its role of public protection in matters related to dentistry.

Message from the Chair

I am pleased to be able to comment on and participate in this, the third version of a Strategic Plan for the Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia (PDBNS). In 2015, during the development of the PDBNS' initial Strategic Plan, I was president of the NSDA. At that time, I admittedly did not understand all the nuances of any strategic plan, but even more so did not comprehend why an organization like the PDBNS would even need one. Fast forward eight years, I have served almost six years as a Board member and now appreciate the value, guidance and direction a well-crafted Strategic Plan affords the Dental Board. It is the foundation that guides everything we do in our mission to serve the public interest in dental regulation.

During the first update to the PDBNS Strategic Plan for the time period beginning in 2020, I was pleased to see how well the first version had held up. Other than some minor changes, the four strategic initiatives and goals remained unchanged. At that time the Board was excitedly awaiting legislative changes in the form of a new Dental Act. Many of the objectives for the 2020 Strategic Plan were crafted with those impending changes in mind. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The new Dental Act was put on pause but still seemed to be on government's horizon. Early in 2022 the landscape changed with the announcement of government's intention to migrate all Nova Scotia health professions under a single "common foundations legislation", each individual regulator with its profession-specific Regulations. This initiative hit a significant milestone with the [the Regulated Health Professions Act \(2023\)](#) which received Royal Assent on November 9, 2023.

This third PDBNS Strategic Plan was developed at a time when the RHPA has been passed, but the Act's accompanying general Regulations and profession-specific Regulations are still forthcoming. We are hopeful of a meaningful consultation process between government and the health regulators as these Regulations are being developed.

We have projected a three-year timeframe for this plan. However, we realize that this timeframe may need to be modified as the PDBNS' migration to the RHPA unfolds. In this current updating of our Strategic Plan, we have maintained the strategic initiatives and goals from the previous plan, making minor modifications to the objectives.

I want to thank the members of the PDBNS Executive Committee and the Board for the development and approval of this Strategic Plan, one which I feel will help guide the PDBNS' actions through this period of transition. I am confident that the PDBNS will continue to diligently fulfill its mandate of public protection in matters related to the provision of dental care.

Respectfully,



Dr. Russell MacSween, Chair

Strategic Plan Components

PDBNS Values

TRUST: Ensuring public confidence in the dental profession

RESPONSIBILITY: Executing our duties in a transparent, fair, and impartial manner to meet our mandate

INTEGRITY: Protecting the public interest through evidence-based decision making

PROFESSIONALISM: Maintaining our leadership role in providing responsive services to the dental community and the public

Mission

To serve the public interest as the legislated body responsible for the licensing and regulation of dentists and registered dental assistants

Vision

To set, regulate and uphold the standards of our professions to ensure the public's trust

Strategic Initiatives

#1 ~Regulatory Compliance

GOAL: To support licensees' compliance with the Dental Act and Regulations as well as PDBNS policies and guidelines

OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Continue to communicate trends in complaints to registrants
- 2 Refine systems for the administration of existing Standards of Practice
- 3 Explore emerging trends in the assessment of continuing competence (e.g., CE, practice audits)

#2 ~Governance

GOAL: To maintain a capable, functional, and efficient Board responsible to uphold legislation and in the public interest

OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Collaborate with Government in the development of profession-specific Regulations under the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#)
- 2 Revise policies and create bylaws under the RHPA
- 3 Evolve the composition of the Board and its Statutory Committees to reflect the requirements of the RHPA
- 4 Explore ways to improve training for new Board members

#3 ~Collaboration and Communication

GOAL: To ensure effective relationships and access to information in the interest of public awareness

OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Provide information and resources to registrants that enable them to maintain compliance with all regulatory obligations
- 2 Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders for mutual benefit and policy development
- 3 Build public awareness and confidence in the PDBNS and its role in public protection

#4 ~Operations

GOAL: To ensure resources are used efficiently and effectively for maximum output

OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Identify opportunities to expand human resources to successfully support the operations of the Board
- 2 Continue to implement modules available through Alinity (our new database management platform)
- 3 Efficiently manage statistics and other data to prepare timely and accurate reports for the Department of Health and Wellness
- 4 Ensure Information Technology infrastructure is secure and optimized for performance