DALHOUSIE FACULTY OF MEDICINE 2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT



DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

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WHO **WE ARE**



Established in 1868 following the creation of a medical faculty in 1843, Dalhousie's Faculty of Medicine has grown alongside the Maritimes, enduring major historic events while remaining committed to training physicians and advancing health.

That legacy endures; however, it is no longer the defining story. Today, Dalhousie Medicine is focused on impact.

As the medical school of the Maritimes, the Faculty is deeply embedded in the region it serves. Distributed medical education is central to who we are: Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick, launched in 2010, and the Cape Breton Medical Campus, which welcomed its first students in 2025, reflect a deliberate commitment to training physicians in and for diverse communities. These sites, alongside clinical and learning environments across Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, ensure that education is responsive to real-world health needs.

Guided by our 2023–2028 strategic plan, *Realizing Our Ambition*, the Faculty is advancing four interconnected priorities: excellence in education, high-impact research, serving and engaging society, and valuing people. Together, these reflect a mission to improving health and healthcare through world-class teaching and research, grounded in social accountability and a vision of healthier communities.

Today, Dalhousie Medicine is a collaborative, people-first community of learners, educators, researchers, clinicians, and partners. It is a place where medical education happens both in lectures, and in communities; where research is driven by pressing health challenges; and where partnerships with health systems and communities are essential to driving change. Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility are embedded across this work, alongside a strong sense of responsibility to the region.

From its earliest days to now, the Faculty's success has been tied to its relevance. Today, that relevance is expressed through a clear ambition: to lead with purpose, work in partnership, and improve health outcomes across the Maritimes and beyond.

MESSAGE
FROM THE DEAN



DR. SALEEM RAZACK
Dean, Faculty of Medicine

It has been a year of remarkable progress in the Faculty of Medicine, defined by significant milestones and by the dedication, resilience, and collaboration of our faculty, staff, learners, alumni, and partners.

Since I began my term as Dean, I have been deeply honoured to join a Faculty with such a strong tradition of excellence in education, research, clinical care, and service. Over the past year, our community has continued to demonstrate its commitment to improving health for the people and communities we serve, while advancing innovation and strengthening our culture of inclusion and belonging.

Among our most notable achievements was the successful accreditation of our Undergraduate Medical Education program, with confirmation received in September 2025. This accomplishment reflects a truly collective effort across all campuses and reaffirms the strength, quality, and comparability of our MD program.

We also marked a defining moment in our commitment to distributed medical education with the launch of the Cape Breton Medical Campus (CBMC). Welcoming our first cohort of 30 students in August 2025 and celebrating the opening of the new medical sciences building this spring, this initiative represents a transformative step toward addressing physician shortages and improving access to care across Nova Scotia and the broader region.

Across our education programs, we have continued to innovate and strengthen the learner experience. From advancements in competency-based medical education and the implementation of Entrustable Professional Activities in clerkship, to expanded interprofessional and community-engaged learning opportunities, our programs remain responsive to evolving healthcare needs and grounded in social accountability.

Research in the Faculty of Medicine has also demonstrated strong momentum. This year saw important investments in infrastructure, including progress on GMP BioLabs East and the reopening of the Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building following extensive restoration. These milestones, alongside continued success in funding, partnerships, and trainee support, position our research community for sustained impact in the years ahead.

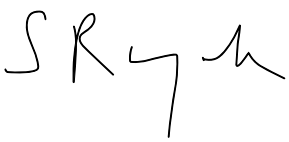
We have also advanced key priorities in anti-oppression and equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA). The expansion of Indigenous and Black health education and learner support, strengthened admissions pathways for Indigenous, Black, and rural learners, the continued growth of programs such as PLANS and IPMP, and additional anti-oppression education have enabled meaningful progress toward a Faculty that better reflects and serves the communities around us.

Like many institutions, we continue to navigate a challenging financial and operational environment. Yet even amid budget pressures and constraints on growth, our community has remained focused on its mission and steadfast in its commitment to excellence.

As I look to the future, I am inspired by the opportunities before us. I have long believed that health professions education and research must be rooted in service, partnership, and responsiveness to community needs. The Faculty of Medicine is uniquely positioned to lead in these areas, building on its strengths in distributed education, research excellence, social accountability, and community engagement.

As someone new to Dalhousie, please permit me to observe what an impressive report of progress and excellent outcomes this is! Under my tenure, it is my hope that we will continue to build on these considerable strengths and accomplishments.

Thank you to everyone whose contributions have made this year possible. Together, we will continue to build on a strong foundation and work toward a future in which our education, research, and service improve health and create meaningful impact for the people of Nova Scotia, the Maritimes, and beyond.



Dr. Saleem Razack
Dean, Faculty of Medicine



RESEARCH AT DALHOUSIE'S FACULTY OF MEDICINE

At the Faculty of Medicine, research is not just a pillar of academic excellence, it's a driving force behind our mission to improve health and health care across the Maritimes and beyond.

Our researchers are tackling the region's most pressing health challenges, including age-related diseases, chronic conditions, prevention of infectious disease, and mental health concerns. Through innovative, interdisciplinary approaches, they are advancing the detection, treatment, and prevention of illness in ways that are both locally grounded and globally impactful.

Research is integral to our commitment to social accountability and to our vision of healthier communities. It informs our world-class medical education, enriches our graduate and undergraduate programs, and fosters a culture of inquiry that inspires both faculty and learners.

Report from
Dr. Eileen Denovan-Wright
Associate Dean, Research



The Faculty of Medicine continues to advance a coordinated, high-impact research enterprise that spans basic science, clinical, population health, and medical education. Across all campuses, research activity is guided by a commitment to excellence, collaboration, and meaningful impact on the health of the communities we serve.

At the centre of this work is the Medical Research Development Office (MRDO), which provides strategic leadership across the full research lifecycle—from early investigator support to large-scale infrastructure and national initiatives. Over the past year, MRDO has strengthened the Faculty's research ecosystem through expanded funding programs supporting trainees and early-career researchers, including studentships, fellowships, and conference grants. These investments are helping to sustain research momentum while fostering the next generation of scientists and clinician-researchers.

Significant progress has also been made in advancing major research infrastructure. The Faculty secured multi-level funding and approvals for GMP BioLabs East, a transformative initiative that will enhance capacity for translational research and support the movement of discoveries into real-world clinical and health system applications. In parallel, the reopening of the Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building in July 2025 after significant flood damage marked an important milestone, restoring and modernizing research environments following considerable disruption. The resilience demonstrated by faculty, staff, and trainees during this period underscores the strength and adaptability of the research community.

Clinical research has been an area of renewed focus, with efforts to strengthen collaboration between academic researchers and health system partners. Through the leadership of Assistant Dean of Clinical Research, Dr. John Sapp, the Faculty has continued to advance clinical research capacity by fostering stronger connections among clinician-investigators, health system leaders, and research support teams. Increased engagement with Nova Scotia Health and the IWK has supported improved coordination, peer review processes, and mentorship for clinical investigators navigating an increasingly complex research landscape.

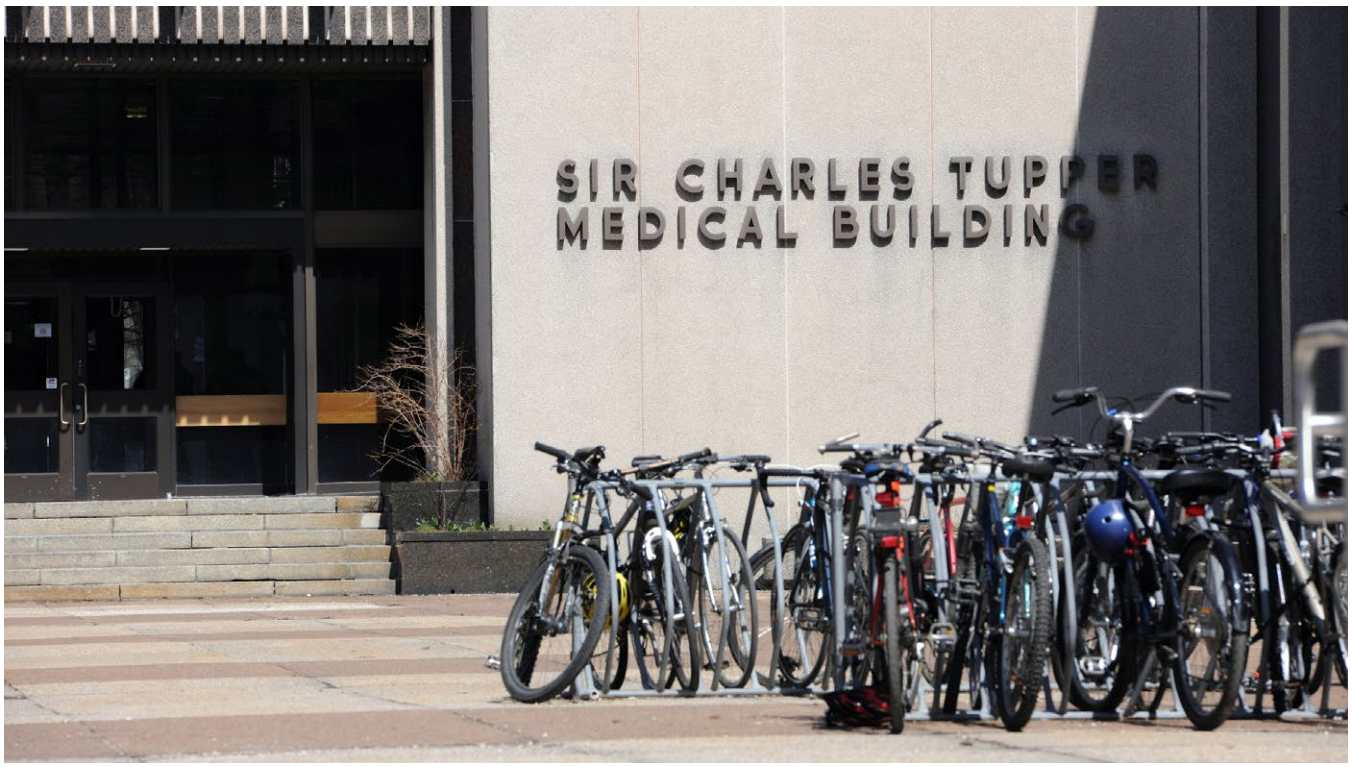
The Faculty also continued its successful Breakthrough Breakfast series, showcasing research excellence and strengthening connections between researchers, donors, patients, and the broader community. In December 2025, the first Breakthrough Breakfast held at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick highlighted innovative research in compassionate care, infectious diseases, cardiovascular health, and healthy aging, demonstrating the strength and breadth of research activity at DMNB. You can learn more about this on page 15. In June 2026, researchers at Dalhousie's Halifax campuses showcased how advances in genetics and genomics are improving the diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases, respiratory conditions, and mental illness, highlighting the growing impact of precision medicine.

At the same time, enhanced support for graduate and postdoctoral trainees, alongside advocacy for increased stipend levels, has further strengthened recruitment, retention, and sustainability within the research workforce.

Across our distributed campuses, research capacity continues to grow in important and complementary ways. At DMNB, research activity demonstrates strong momentum across discovery science, clinical, and population health domains. Led by Dr. Paul Atkinson, DMNB has strengthened governance and strategic alignment by organizing research into three thematic areas, while deepening partnerships with the University of New Brunswick, Horizon Health Network, and provincial collaborators. Faculty and trainees are contributing to high-impact publications, securing competitive funding, and engaging in community-facing initiatives such as the DMNB Research Celebration. These efforts highlight the role of research in improving health outcomes and informing system-level change within New Brunswick and across the region.

At the Cape Breton Medical Campus (CBMC), research development remains an emerging but important priority. Early collaborations between Cape Breton University and Nova Scotia Health are laying the foundation for future growth, particularly in areas such as healthy aging and rural clinical trials. Plans to recruit clinician-scientists and expand local research capacity will further integrate scholarship into the learner experience and strengthen the campus's contribution to the Faculty's broader research mission.

Together, these efforts reflect a Faculty-wide commitment to building a robust, distributed research environment that is both locally responsive and globally competitive. By investing in people, infrastructure, and partnerships, the Faculty of Medicine is well positioned to continue advancing discovery, translating knowledge into practice, and improving health outcomes across the Maritimes and beyond.





A Ring Rescue kit

Dr. Kevin Spencer

FROM DALHOUSIE TO HIT TV SHOW *THE PITT*

A Nova Scotia innovation changing emergency care: Ring removal system born at Dal now used across U.S., Canada

An 11-year-old girl in Georgia put on a friend's ring and couldn't get it off. At first, it seemed harmless, but as her finger began to swell, the ring tightened. The more she tried to remove it, the worse it became, and by the time she reached the local emergency department, the situation had escalated.

Doctors and nurses tried everything they could to remove the stuck ring. After spending more than six hours in the health-care system, surgery was now being discussed. The possibility of losing her finger was real.

Scenarios like this play out in emergency departments around the world every day. Cases of patients with stuck rings can quickly escalate from minor discomfort to time sensitive medical emergencies, consuming hours of clinical time and, in severe cases, threatening permanent injury.

"It's not just an inconvenience," says Dalhousie alum Dr. Kevin Spencer (MD'09, B.Eng'00), an emergency physician at Dartmouth General Hospital, mechanical engineer, and co-founder and CEO of Ring Rescue, a medical device company based in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

A Chatham County EMS (Emergency Medical Services) supervisor happened to be at the pediatric hospital in Georgia that day. He knew about Ring Rescue and offered to retrieve the kit from his station.

Deploying the Dolphin Ring Cutter from the kit, he was able to safely remove the ring in minutes, and the girl's finger was saved.

"That story captures the problem and the solution," Dr. Spencer says.

And now, the result of that work appeared in primetime.

When real medicine makes it to television

On March 12, Ring Rescue appeared on *The Pitt*, a popular emergency medicine television series known for its realism and for earning the respect of clinicians who see their work portrayed accurately on screen.

"*The Pitt* is a well-watched show within the emergency medicine community," Dr. Spencer says. "I've heard it described as a love letter to the profession."

In the fall of 2025, Dr. Spencer attended the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) Scientific Assembly in Salt Lake City. It was there that he met The Pitt star, Noah Wyle, who was the keynote speaker. After a follow-up meeting and offering an in-person demo of Ring Rescue, the show's producers reached out with interest in featuring the product on an upcoming episode.

> "In no other area of modern medicine are clinicians improvising with repurposed hardware-store tools like grinders, bolt cutters, and other non-medical devices at the bedside."

Unlike many medical dramas, *The Pitt* takes accuracy seriously — especially when it comes to tools and procedures.

"When it comes to medical procedures, they use the right equipment and they use it properly," Spencer says. "They really do showcase modern medicine."



Dr. Kevin Spencer appearing on Dragons Den.

That commitment to realism made Ring Rescue's inclusion particularly meaningful.

"In a lot of other medical dramas, you sit there and laugh because they're doing things that you don't actually do in medicine," he says. "It seems to me that *The Pitt* takes great pride in representing things accurately."

When a stuck ring becomes an emergency

When people think of medical emergencies, they rarely think of rings. But they should.

"When a finger swells, a snug ring becomes a stuck ring," Spencer explains. "And if swelling continues, that ring can become a tourniquet."

In these situations, blood that continues to flow into the finger is constricted from escaping, causing swelling to worsen, and the ring becomes even tighter. What begins as a nuisance can escalate into a situation that requires urgent intervention.

Historically, healthcare providers had few good options, especially as rings themselves evolved. Modern materials like titanium, tungsten carbide, stainless steel, and smart rings are far more durable than traditional gold or silver. While rings changed, the tools to remove stuck rings did not. That has led to a remarkable departure from medical standards, notes Dr. Spencer.

"In no other area of modern medicine are clinicians improvising with repurposed hardware-store tools like grinders, bolt cutters, and other non-medical devices at the bedside," Spencer says. "Medical device

standards do exist for good reason, yet this mindset became normalized for ring entrapment treatment, and harms are well documented."

A made-in-Nova-Scotia success

The work traces back to Dalhousie's Faculty of Engineering, where nearly a decade ago mechanical engineering students and Ring Rescue co-founders, Patrick Hennessey and Brad MacKeil, began exploring compression-based approaches to removing stuck rings.

They later teamed up with Dr. Spencer to refine the concept, form the company, and develop their first product — a compression device that reduces finger swelling and allows many stuck rings to be removed without cutting. This was followed by the development of the sophisticated Dolphin Ring Cutter, a definitive solution capable of cutting even the most durable modern ring materials. Together, these tools form the Ring Rescue system.



A ring being removed with Ring Rescue.

Today, Ring Rescue products are deployed in every emergency department across Nova Scotia and P.E.I. — an unprecedented region-wide adoption of a locally developed medical device. The system is also used at more than 2,200 sites across Canada and the United States, including leading hospitals such as Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, Mount Sinai, and Johns Hopkins.

Since launching its full system in 2022, the company has grown steadily. Ring Rescue now employs nearly 20 people, holds regulatory clearance in both Canada and the United States, and has shipped more than 50,000 single-patient-use cutting discs—what Dr. Spencer equates to "fingers saved."

> "It's a nice local win. It's a fun story to share and it brings energy to the work we do."

A real problem with a real solution

Ring Rescue is focused on becoming the global standard of care for stuck rings, and the team hopes that appearing on *The Pitt* will offer mainstream exposure.

"The episode depicts a time-sensitive emergency where our ring cutter is required to resolve it," Dr. Spencer says. "And that's real life."

He hopes the episode resonates differently depending on who is watching.

"If you're not a medical professional and you're watching this," Dr. Spencer says, "you're going to think, 'Oh, there are modern tools that can solve this problem.' But if you are a medical professional, I hope it's an educational moment. An opportunity to discover a medically appropriate solution the next time you manage a stuck ring."

For Ring Rescue, the appearance on *The Pitt* is also a moment of reflection.

"It's a nice local win," Spencer says. "It's a fun story to share and it brings energy to the work we do."

With the right tools available, ring entrapment becomes what it should have been all along: a quickly and safely managed problem that protects patients, improves efficiency in busy emergency departments, and leaves both patients and clinicians with a better experience.

And for the thousands of fingers already saved, that solution traces its roots back to Dalhousie.

From discovery to delivery: CCfV's impact on vaccine innovation



A CCfV staff member looks at microorganism growth in a petri dish under a fume hood.

In the heart of Halifax, the Canadian Center for Vaccinology (CCfV) has become one of Canada's most influential voices in vaccine advocacy and clinical research, leading pivotal clinical trials and shaping national immunization strategies.

Its work has helped bring life-saving vaccines to Canadians, including the RSV vaccine, which in September 2025 was announced for rollout to seniors over 75 and infants in Nova Scotia.

With the launch of Dalhousie's GMP BioLabs East in 2027, the region is poised to accelerate the translation of scientific discovery into real-world solutions, ensuring breakthroughs reach patients faster.

Founded in the early 1990s by Dalhousie University, IWK Health, and Nova Scotia Health, CCfV was built on a collaborative, interdisciplinary model that brings together expertise in basic science, clinical evaluation, and social science. Over time, it expanded from pediatric to adult infectious diseases, established national networks such as the Canadian Immunization Research Network, and contributed to vaccine research, policy, and implementation in Canada and globally.

CCfV operates through three integrated groups focused on discovery, clinical evaluation, and policy and implementation. Its clinical trials program has grown to support both biotech companies and multinational vaccine manufacturers, while its work with governments has ensured that evidence from trials translates into meaningful policy changes.

A key innovation is CCfV's Human Challenge Unit, one of only two in Canada, which allows researchers to study immune responses through controlled infections, significantly reducing the time and scale required for vaccine testing. This capability has supported advances in maternal immunization and informed major policy changes, including pertussis vaccination during pregnancy and RSV vaccine development.

CCfV has also played a central role in pandemic response, contributing to COVID-19 trials, national research coordination, and advisory efforts that guided vaccine rollout and public health decisions. Its research has helped expand pharmacy-based vaccination and improve public access across communities.

Looking ahead, GMP BioLabs East will strengthen Canada's biomanufacturing capacity, enabling CCfV to produce clinical-grade materials locally, reduce reliance on external facilities, and support rapid vaccine development in future health crises. Together, the Challenge Unit and GMP facility position CCfV and Atlantic Canada at the forefront of vaccine innovation and pandemic preparedness.



AI-generated image of fruit fly in lab setting.

Unlocking the secrets of memory—**with fruit flies**



Dr. Jamie Kramer

What do fruit flies and Nobel Prizes have in common? More than you might think—especially when it comes to understanding how memories are made and stored in the brain.

Dr. Jamie Kramer, a professor in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Dalhousie's Faculty of Medicine, co-authored a study in *Nature Communications* with collaborators in Madrid that uses fruit flies (Drosophila melanogaster) to uncover genes and molecular switches involved in memory formation.

Fruit flies have long been central to genetic research because they are small, inexpensive, and genetically tractable, with brains simple enough to study but complex enough to model memory. Research in these insects has led to major discoveries, including early identification of memory genes and work recognized by Nobel Prizes.

Dr. Kramer's research focuses on how short-term memories become long-term memories, a process that requires specific genes in brain cells to be activated. Using advanced methods, the team isolated memory-forming neurons in fruit flies and tracked gene activity during memory formation and recall.

They identified a group of genes involved in long-term memory, along with two key transcription factors that regulate this process. These same molecular switches are also linked to human neurological disorders, including rare neurodevelopmental and neurodegenerative diseases, highlighting the broader relevance of the findings.

This work demonstrates how basic science provides the foundation for future discovery. By mapping memory in fruit flies, researchers can rapidly test large numbers of genes, offering a powerful starting point for further study in more complex systems.

Dr. Patrick Fok named inaugural Dr. Ron Stewart Clinician Scientist in EMS



Dr. Patrick Fok

Few people have shaped emergency medicine and paramedicine as profoundly as Dr. Ron Stewart, whose career in innovation, leadership, and patient centred care helped lay the foundation for modern emergency systems and improve outcomes for countless patients.

From leading the Los Angeles paramedic program to founding the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh and establishing Nova Scotia's Emergency Health Services as Minister of Health, Dr. Stewart championed evidence based practice, professional identity for paramedics, and a system level approach to care. His legacy continues to influence emergency medicine today.

That legacy is carried forward by Dr. Patrick Fok, the inaugural Dr. Ron Stewart Clinician Scientist in Emergency Medical Services, a role that began April 1, 2026. Created through Dr. Stewart's philanthropic vision and supported by Dalhousie, the Department of Emergency Medicine, and the QEII Foundation, the position advances pre hospital research and strengthens connections across emergency systems.

Dr. Fok's work is grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the patient journey, spanning out of hospital care, medical transport, and emergency department treatment. His research focuses on improving decision-making for medically complex and vulnerable patients, with an emphasis on ensuring the right care is delivered at the right time while avoiding unnecessary transfers.

His experience across clinical care, transport medicine, and national research networks has shaped a systems level perspective on emergency medicine, highlighting the balance between patient needs and resource use.

In his clinician scientist role, Dr. Fok also supports the growth of EMS research by mentoring paramedics and encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration across fields such as engineering, data science, and health economics.

Together, his work reflects Dr. Stewart's vision of empowering paramedics, advancing research, and improving patient outcomes—ensuring emergency care systems continue to evolve to meet the needs of the communities they serve.



Dr. Paul Atkinson presents at the Breakthrough Breakfast at DMNB.

Celebrating innovation over breakfast: Research Excellence at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick



L-R: Dr. Paul Atkinson, Tori Nelson, Dr. Duncan Webster, and Dr. Keith Brunt.

Dalhousie University's Faculty of Medicine has been serving up more than coffee and conversation through its Breakthrough Breakfast Series.

Bringing together faculty, students, donors, and community members, the events showcase the power of research, collaboration, and innovation across the Maritimes.

The Fall 2025 installment, held at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick (DMNB) in Saint John, celebrated the strength of research at the campus. DMNB's work spans discovery science, population health, and clinical innovation, leveraging New Brunswick's collaborative environment to translate ideas into real-world impact.

Attendees heard from researchers tackling some of today's most pressing health challenges.

Dr. Paul Atkinson, assistant dean of research at DMNB, presented Compassion in Medicine: The Science of Caring, exploring how compassionate care can improve patient outcomes, reduce unnecessary tests and referrals, and help address burnout among health-care professionals.

Dr. Duncan Webster, associate professor of infectious diseases, highlighted research into chronic infections such as tuberculosis and hepatitis C. His work combines laboratory science with real-world applications to improve diagnostics, treatment strategies, and patient care.

Tori Nelson, a PhD candidate in pharmacology, shared research examining heart failure progression and how existing therapies may protect the heart, offering new strategies to delay or prevent cardiac disease.

Dr. Keith Brunt, associate professor in the Department of Pharmacology, presented research focused on healthy aging. His work ranges from cardiovascular biology to innovations in nanotechnology and artificial intelligence aimed at detecting disease earlier and improving patient outcomes.

Together, their presentations demonstrated the depth and breadth of research taking place at DMNB and its growing impact on health outcomes in New Brunswick and beyond. As the Breakthrough Breakfast Series continues, it remains an important platform for sharing knowledge, inspiring collaboration, and advancing the future of healthcare.



EDUCATION AT DALHOUSIE'S FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine delivers a comprehensive and innovative medical education experience that spans the full continuum of learning—from undergraduate and postgraduate training to continuing professional development and graduate research. Our Bachelor of Medical Sciences degree and master's in physician assistant studies are two of the most popular and competitive programs at Dalhousie University.

Report from
Dr. Stephen Miller
Senior Associate Dean, Medical Education



Medical education across the Faculty of Medicine continues to advance through a coordinated, distributed model that spans undergraduate, postgraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education.

This past year has been defined by significant progress in accreditation, program development, and the expansion of distributed learning across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, reflecting a strong and integrated approach to training the next generation of health professionals.

Within undergraduate medical education (UGME), a major milestone was the successful accreditation of the MD program, with confirmation received in September 2025. This achievement reflects sustained efforts to ensure quality, comparability, and continuous improvement across all campuses. UGME has continued to evolve through curriculum renewal, including the implementation of a longitudinal professional competencies framework, strengthened clinical skills and interprofessional learning experiences, and the advancement of competency-based education in clerkship through Entrustable Professional Activities. Delivery of the MD curriculum has been further strengthened through distributed models, including the successful launch of programming at the Cape Breton Medical Campus (CBMC).

Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) continues to support a large and complex training environment, with more than 700 residents across 56 accredited programs. Key priorities over the past year have included preparation for upcoming national accreditation reviews, expansion of residency capacity—particularly in Family Medicine—and ongoing enhancements to resident leadership development and professional programming. Strengthened learner support systems, including wellness, advising, and career development services across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, remain central to the program. There has also been continued progress in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion, refinement of admissions pathways to better support Indigenous, Black, and Maritime learners, and strengthened distributed training opportunities.

The Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program reached an important milestone with the graduation of its inaugural cohort, demonstrating the successful implementation of this new professional program. The program continues to deliver an integrated curriculum combining foundational sciences, clinical training, and research, supported by distributed clinical placements and ongoing curriculum refinement. Strong engagement in scholarly activity further reflects the program's growing maturity and contribution to workforce development across the region.

Across Medical Sciences and the broader basic science education portfolio, the Faculty continues to strengthen foundational training for learners pursuing research and health-related careers. The BSc Medical Sciences program remains a key entry

point, with continued focus on curriculum renewal, preparation for program review, and the expansion of experiential and research opportunities. At the same time, enhancements to academic governance, program planning, and graduate education are supporting alignment between teaching, research training, and long-term sustainability. The Inclusive Pathways to the Medical Professions (IPMP) initiative also reached an important milestone this year with its first graduating cohort. The program continues to demonstrate strong impact in supporting equity-deserving students, with national recognition for its contributions to advancing inclusion in undergraduate medical education pathways.

Distributed education remains a defining strength of the Faculty's model. Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick (DMNB) continues to deliver a full continuum of undergraduate and postgraduate training, with ongoing growth in both enrolment and residency capacity, alongside active engagement in accreditation and quality improvement efforts. The Cape Breton Medical Campus has completed a highly successful inaugural year, welcoming its first cohort of students in August 2025 and establishing a strong academic and operational foundation, including the opening of the new Medical Sciences Building in May 2026. Both campuses play a critical role in advancing community-engaged, distributed education and addressing regional health workforce needs.

Continuing Professional Development and Medical Education (CPDME) continues to play a central role in supporting lifelong learning and teaching excellence across the Faculty. A key focus this year has been CPDME's full accreditation review by the Committee on Accreditation of Continuing Medical Education (CACME), with a successful site visit completed in April 2026. This milestone represents the culmination of several years of coordinated effort across all teams within the unit and reflects a strong commitment to quality and continuous improvement. Notably, this marks CPDME's second consecutive full accreditation, following its successful 2017 review. Achieving full accreditation is a significant accomplishment for any continuing medical education program; doing so twice in succession speaks to the strength of CPDME's programming, evaluation processes, and culture of collaboration.





Cape Breton Medical Campus' inaugural class of physicians at the Rising Tide Ceremony in 2025.

A rising tide for rural healthcare: The Cape Breton Medical Campus opens its doors

In a landmark moment for healthcare in Nova Scotia, the Cape Breton Medical Campus (CBMC) officially welcomed its first class of medical students. Thirty future physicians began their journey in medicine at the inaugural Rising Tide Ceremony on Sept. 5, 2025.

This important event came a mere two-and-a-half years after the province announced a $58.9 million investment to develop a new medical sciences building at Cape Breton University (CBU), in partnership with Dalhousie. This facility, which officially opened on May 14, 2026, will serve as the cornerstone of CBMC, the province's second medical school and Dalhousie's third campus, designed to train 30 new doctors annually.

"Families across Cape Breton and our rural communities need more family doctors," said The Honourable Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia on March 7, 2023, when the campus investment was announced. "We know the best way to meet that need is to train more of them here and do more to ensure that the ones who graduate here, practice here."

A proven foundation

Dalhousie Medical School has long supported medical education in Cape Breton through family medicine residencies and Longitudinal Integrated Clerkships (LIC) in North Sydney and New Waterford. The CBMC builds on this legacy, expanding opportunities for students to train and serve in the communities that shaped them.

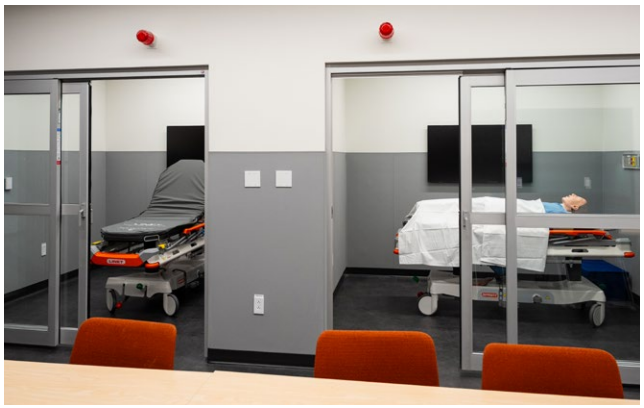
“Dalhousie Medical School has a proven track record of providing excellent medical education opportunities throughout the Maritimes,” said Dr. David Anderson, former Dean of Dalhousie’s Faculty of Medicine. “We look forward to partnering with Cape Breton University to train the next generation of physicians to further address the healthcare needs of the Cape Breton community.”

> “This investment will change the face of healthcare in Cape Breton, in rural Nova Scotia, and the entire province”
>
> **— David C. Dingwall**
> *President and Vice-Chancellor of CBU*

A celebration of firsts

During the Rising Tide Ceremony, or El~mpa’q in Mi’kmaq, each student in CBMC’s inaugural class received a stethoscope from Doctors Nova Scotia President Dr. Shelley McNeil and Eastern Zone Physician Advisor Ryan Brown, and lab coats embroidered with the CBMC logo, a donation from local business owners Steve and Katherine van Nostrand.

A striking sculpture by Nova Scotia artisan Liam Tromans served as the ceremony’s focal point. Carved from trees felled by Hurricane Fiona in 2022, the lighthouse stands as a beacon of hope and guidance for the students as they embark on their medical studies.



Clinic rooms in CBMC’s Simulation Centre.

The ceremony also featured words of encouragement from Dr. Jennifer Hall, former Senior Associate Dean of CBMC; Dr. Anderson; and David Dingwall. Each speaker emphasized the importance of community, equity, and the transformative power of education.

The event concluded with a stirring performance of Rise Again by Lucy MacNeil and her brother Stuart of the beloved Barra MacNeils. Written by Leon Dubinsky, the song—often called Cape Breton’s unofficial anthem—captured the spirit of resilience and renewal that defines both the region and its newest medical students.

A campus built for community

The grand opening of the new medical sciences building in 2026 saw leaders from CBU and Dalhousie, including President and Vice-Chancellor of Dalhousie, Dr. Kim Brooks, President and Vice-Chancellor of CBU, David C. Dingwall, Dr. Stephanie Langley, Senior Associate Dean, CBMC, and Dr. Anderson, along with Premier Houston. The state-of-the art facility houses educational and research spaces tailored to rural health needs, including aging, frailty, disease prevention, Indigenous health, and African Nova Scotian health. It will be complemented by a collaborative care clinic, recently constructed adjacent to the CBMC. Together with CBU’s expanded health and counselling centre, also located next door, rural healthcare continues to be a focus of the new Sydney campus.

“This investment will change the face of healthcare in Cape Breton, in rural Nova Scotia, and the entire province,” said Dingwall.



The CBMC building offers an impressive open concept with large window features, providing natural light throughout while showcasing a signature staircase.



Student study lounge.

A future rooted in place

The Cape Breton Medical Campus is more than a new academic institution—it's a bold step toward addressing healthcare gaps across Nova Scotia. With data showing that physicians are more likely to practice where they train, CBMC offers students the chance to complete their studies in Cape Breton and inspires them to stay and serve.

"The funding and construction of a state-of-the-art medical sciences building is a transformative decision that will have long-lasting impacts on the healthcare of the region," said Dr. Hall. "Future students can be assured that they will be receiving a world-class medical education in a facility that reflects their ambition and talents."

The inaugural CBMC class will graduate in 2029, poised to serve as family doctors in rural communities across the province.



A student from the inaugural class receives their white coat during the Rising Tide Ceremony.



MPAS students practice their skills in the lab.

FROM CLASSROOM TO CLINIC: Dalhousie's first physician assistant cohort steps into Nova Scotia's healthcare system

Before entering the MPAS program, Heather Chigora worked as a pharmacy assistant, where her close collaboration with pharmacists, nurses, and physicians sparked an interest in becoming a physician assistant (PA) and in providing more direct, team-based care.

She joined the inaugural cohort of Dalhousie's Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program in January 2024. The first of its kind in the Maritimes, the program equips students with the competencies to deliver compassionate, evidence-based care and contribute to interprofessional teams. Through a rigorous two-year curriculum, students gain training in diagnosis, treatment planning, pharmacology, and surgical procedures.

A key strength of the program is its hands-on clinical rotations across the province. Students apply their skills in real-world settings—from primary care to emergency departments—gaining exposure to a wide range of specialties. Diwan Minocha, for example, completed rotations in internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, family medicine, psychiatry, and endocrinology, working in clinics, inpatient units, and operating rooms.

These experiences are complemented by interprofessional learning opportunities and strong engagement from clinical preceptors, who have expressed interest in integrating PAs into their teams. Living and training in communities, particularly rural and underserved areas, also increases the likelihood that graduates will practice there.

For students like Jen Haskett, who spent nearly 20 years as a clinical dietitian, the program offers a chance to take on a more active role in patient care and be part of addressing Nova Scotia's overburdened health-care system. While students acknowledge some challenges in transitioning from classroom to clinical settings, they have also worked to improve the program for future cohorts.

Despite these growing pains, feedback from patients and healthcare teams has been overwhelmingly positive. The inaugural class demonstrated resilience and professionalism, reinforcing the value of PAs in improving access to and continuity of care.

The first cohort completed their training in December 2025, with many already contributing to a more accessible, team-based healthcare system, bringing compassion, skill, and advocacy to the communities they serve.



Associate dean of undergraduate medical education, Dr. Ian Epstein.

FORWARD TOGETHER: New associate dean, UGME, Dr. Ian Epstein's vision for medical education

Dr. Ian Epstein's appointment as associate dean of undergraduate medical education (UGME), effective July 1, 2025, marked a new chapter grounded in collaboration, support and a strong commitment to the learning environment. A Dalhousie-trained physician, Dr. Epstein has brought extensive experience from his leadership in the Office of Professional Affairs (OPA) and as a program director in postgraduate medical education.

His approach emphasizes togetherness, with a focus on ensuring students feel supported across all areas of the Faculty. Drawing on his experience working with learners, faculty and leadership, he aims to foster a culture rooted in kindness, respect and shared responsibility for student success.

In his role, Dr. Epstein oversees undergraduate medical education across multiple campuses and distributed sites in Atlantic Canada. Building on the strong foundation established by previous leadership, he has identified four key priorities: responding to accreditation findings, advancing accessibility and equity initiatives, improving the learning environment and supporting assessment innovation.

Central to this work is a commitment to continuous improvement and meaningful collaboration with community partners, including units such as PLANS and Keknu'tmasiek Ta'n Tel Welo'ltimk. Dr. Epstein also recognizes the importance of expanding clinical capacity, supporting faculty development and maintaining excellence across a growing, distributed program.

Through a focus on learner support, equity and innovation, Dr. Epstein aims to strengthen Dalhousie's reputation as a leading medical school—one defined by a supportive culture, strong outcomes and a commitment to continuous growth.

From the classroom to the lab: Anatomy Education at CBMC



The new anatomy lab at CBMC.

Being part of a new medical campus is a rare opportunity that is not lost on Dr. Dan Hodgson, anatomist at the Cape Breton Medical Campus (CBMC). He joined the CBMC team in late 2025 during construction of the state-of-the-art facility, which officially opened on May 14, 2026.

Dr. Hodgson teaches future doctors how the human body is put together and how it works, with a focus on understanding how structure relates to function. Rather than memorization, students learn how different parts of the body interact and why that matters for movement, injury, and disease.

For most medical students, the anatomy lab offers a new experience that is both exciting and overwhelming. Moving from diagrams and lecture slides to real human structures makes learning tangible and deepens appreciation for the complexity and precision of the human body. It is also when students begin to understand the responsibility of learning from organ and body donors, treating them as their first patient.

The new CBMC lab features advanced technologies that allow students to visualize anatomy in 3D and better understand relationships that can be difficult to grasp from textbooks. Dr. Hodgson emphasizes that technology complements, but does not replace, cadaver-based learning, helping students build understanding digitally before applying it to real human tissues.

With a background in sensorimotor neuroscience, exercise physiology, and kinesiology, Dr. Hodgson brings expertise that connects anatomy to movement and function. Living in Cape Breton aligns with his interests in fitness, recreation, and nature, offering a strong sense of community and access to the outdoors.

As CBMC continues to grow, its new facilities and dedicated educators are helping to build a strong foundation for medical education—supporting learners, communities, and the future of rural healthcare in Nova Scotia.



Rhodes Scholar Sierra Sparks.

All Rhodes lead to home: Rhodes scholar Sierra Sparks returns home to study medicine

Sierra Sparks was inspired by strong female role models from a young age.

The second-year medical student from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, entered a field where women were few and stereotypes were plenty when she chose engineering for her undergraduate studies at Dalhousie.

Despite being told the path would be “too hard” and even encouraged to consider nursing instead, Sierra persisted—and excelled. She graduated in 2021 with an engineering degree and a passion for equity and inclusion.

She went on to earn a Rhodes Scholarship at the University of Oxford, becoming Dalhousie’s 92nd Rhodes Scholar. There, while conducting biomedical engineering research, she discovered her passion for medicine and was later accepted to Dalhousie Medicine through the Black Learners Admissions Pathway.

Sierra’s early interest in engineering began in junior high and was reinforced by her strength in math and science and the problem-solving nature of the field. As an undergraduate student, she became deeply involved in advocacy and equity initiatives, taking on leadership roles and engaging with students across Canada to promote diversity in STEM.



Sierra Sparks at her graduation from Oxford University.

At Oxford, her research focused on developing a simple, non-invasive eye test to detect early signs of brain disease, blending engineering and medical perspectives. This experience helped shape her decision to pursue medicine and highlighted the connection between technical problem-solving and patient care.

In medical school, she remains actively involved in community and mentorship initiatives, including the Black Medical Student Association and programs that support hands-on learning and mentorship. Her work is informed by her experiences growing up in African Nova Scotian communities and her commitment to culturally appropriate care.

Sierra’s journey reflects the importance of persistence, representation, and community. As she looks ahead, she aims to combine engineering and medicine to improve health outcomes, advance equity, and inspire others to see diversity as a strength.



SERVING & ENGAGING SOCIETY AT DALHOUSIE'S FACULTY OF MEDICINE

At Dalhousie's Faculty of Medicine, our commitment to serving and engaging communities across the Maritimes extends far beyond traditional academic roles.

We are actively reimagining how we connect with historically marginalized populations, working in partnership with governments and external stakeholders to drive meaningful systems change. Grounded in principles of anti-oppression and social accountability, our faculty is building inclusive environments that value diverse forms of excellence. Through collaborative efforts, we aim to improve equitable health outcomes, engage communities in shaping our education and research priorities, and align our initiatives with global standards to advance health equity and quality care.

Report from
Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed
Associate Dean, Serving & Engaging Society



The Serving and Engaging Society portfolio continues to advance the Faculty of Medicine's commitment to social accountability, meaningful community partnership, and impact across the health system.

Working in close collaboration with the Office of Community Engagement and partners across our distributed campuses, this work reflects a deliberate and growing effort to align education, research, and service with the priorities of the communities we serve.

Over the past year, important progress has been made in embedding social accountability more deeply across the Faculty. This commitment was recognized through a positive outcome in the recent undergraduate medical education accreditation process, highlighting continued efforts to ensure that our programs respond to community needs and health priorities. A significant milestone was the approval of new Guidelines for Community Compensation, Support, and Recognition, which establish a more equitable and respectful framework for engaging community partners in teaching, research, and program development.

Advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility remains central to this work. The continued implementation of the Faculty's Anti-Oppression Policy has been supported through educational programming, faculty development, and broad institutional engagement. These efforts are helping to foster more inclusive and accountable learning and working environments across all campuses, ensuring that equity principles are integrated throughout our activities.

Significant strides have also been made in strengthening Indigenous and Black health initiatives and learner pathways. Indigenous-focused efforts have prioritized academic leadership, culturally grounded supports such as land-based learning and Elders' teachings, and enhanced learning environments for students. At the same time, the Promoting Leadership in Health for African Nova Scotians (PLANS) program continues to expand its reach, supporting learners through mentorship, outreach, and structured pathways into health professions education.

Community-engaged service learning remains a cornerstone of the portfolio, providing students with meaningful opportunities to work alongside communities while developing a deeper understanding of the social determinants of health and health equity. Participation in these experiences continues to grow across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, with strong partnerships supporting initiatives that are both locally responsive and educationally impactful.

Across our distributed medical education system, these efforts are closely connected to the work underway at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick

(DMNB) and the Cape Breton Medical Campus (CBMC). At DMNB, longstanding partnerships with communities, health system leaders, and academic institutions continue to support community-focused education, research, and outreach across the province. These relationships reinforce the Faculty's commitment to improving health outcomes and addressing regional priorities through collaborative, place-based approaches.

At CBMC, community engagement has been a defining feature of the campus's development. Students and faculty have actively contributed to outreach initiatives, service learning opportunities, and admissions engagement, strengthening relationships with local organizations and supporting long-term goals around physician recruitment and retention in rural and underserved communities. This work demonstrates how distributed education can deepen connections with communities while advancing health equity.

Beyond regional engagement, the portfolio has also contributed to expanding work in planetary and global health. Events such as the Dr. Tarunendu Ghose Visiting Scholar Lecture and Community Engagement Day have created opportunities for dialogue and collaboration among learners, faculty, and community partners, highlighting innovative approaches to global health challenges and community-based research.

Additional efforts to support Francophone and Acadian learners and communities have strengthened culturally responsive programming and outreach, contributing to a more representative health workforce and improved access to care. These initiatives reflect a broader commitment to ensuring that the Faculty's activities are inclusive, relevant, and responsive to the diverse populations we serve.

Together, these accomplishments reflect a growing and sustained commitment to serving and engaging society in meaningful ways. By strengthening partnerships, embedding social accountability across programs, and amplifying community voices in decision-making, the Faculty of Medicine continues to evolve as both an academic institution and an active contributor to healthier communities across the Maritimes.





Interim division head in the Division of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed.

A home for public health: New Dal/Nova Scotia Health division puts people and prevention first

Public health physicians in the Maritimes now have an official place to grow, collaborate and lead—right here at Dalhousie.

The launch of the new Division of Public Health and Preventive Medicine (PHPM), shaped by long-term planning and the hard-earned lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, is set to transform how the region trains, supports and empowers public health leaders. Led by interim division head, Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed, the new division aims to bring public health physicians into the Dalhousie environment.

"We haven't had an academic home for public health physicians in the Maritime provinces, even though many are interested in academic work and teaching," says Dr. Watson-Creed. "Students from across the country still come here for public health experiences, so we wanted to support that interest by creating the right environment."

Developed in collaboration with Nova Scotia Health (NS Health), the new division is located within Dalhousie's Department of Community Health and Epidemiology and will offer opportunities to enhance public health expertise and capacity in Nova Scotia and the Maritimes.

"The new Division of Public Health and Preventive Medicine is transformational for Dalhousie Medicine and the broader Maritime region," says Dr. David Anderson, former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. "It gives public health physicians a true academic home, which highlights the important work they do to build healthier communities, and deepens our support for learners, faculty and researchers who are passionate about population health."

Lessons from the pandemic

In the Maritimes, PHPM specialist physicians may work in a variety of settings. Some are employed as Medical Officers of Health at the regional, provincial or federal level, while others work across clinical, academic and research settings to advance health equity and improve outcomes for diverse communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic thrust public health into the spotlight, making the work of Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Robert Strang, and his team a daily fixture for residents across the province. As the government responded to rapidly evolving challenges, the need for robust training, succession planning and academic engagement among public health physicians became increasingly clear.

This heightened awareness not only underscored gaps in the system but also sparked new interest among students and practitioners in pursuing clinical and academic roles within public health.



"There's been a longstanding lack of awareness of public health and preventive medicine as a recognized specialty," says Dr. Strang. "Having this division brings a focus on prevention to leadership tables and creates opportunities to rebalance investments in care and prevention. Prevention is multi-layered and complex, and working in this space requires a specialized skill set."

> "Having this division brings a focus on prevention to leadership tables and creates opportunities to rebalance investments in care and prevention.
>
> **— Dr. Robert Strang**
> *Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health*

A new residency in public health and preventive medicine

A cornerstone of the new division will be the launch of a dedicated residency program. Though a recognized Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada specialty, until now, many public health physicians in the region have held academic appointments in family medicine, because of lack of opportunity in public health. The new division will bring these practitioners together, providing a robust academic environment and diverse training experiences for learners across Atlantic Canada. Working closely with the Royal College to align with new national competencies, the division would anticipate its first residency intake by 2028.

"It's so exciting to think about hosting that content here," says Dr. Watson-Creed. "Having residents energizes the public health system, so we're really looking forward to that opportunity."

By embedding resident trainees in the region's public health infrastructure, Dalhousie aims to foster a new generation of leaders equipped to advance health equity, drive research and respond to emerging public health needs.

Community-driven research

A central mandate of Dalhousie's new division is to advance research and academic growth, not just for public health physicians, but for learners at every stage of training. By integrating public health expertise within the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, the division creates new pathways for collaboration, innovation and hands-on learning.

"Having an academic home like this brings agencies like CIHR directly into focus for those practitioners," says Dr. Watson-Creed. "The folks who join the division will be able to take advantage of that, which means that the ideas they've been holding on to, or the ideas fed to them by community around research that's needed now, actually have some chance of growing and having life breathed into them."

The division will coordinate research efforts with the Faculty of Medicine and health authorities, focusing on areas relevant to Nova Scotia's population health needs. This includes supporting community-driven research, advancing health equity and addressing the structural determinants of health. By connecting public health physicians with academic resources and funding opportunities, the division aims to increase research activity and impact across the region.

Real-world public health experience

The division will raise the profile of public health as a specialty, attracting learners for various projects—graduate studies, undergraduate electives and research projects, and more. Prospective faculty are eager to contribute to teaching at all levels, ensuring that learners have access to engaged educators and real-world public health experiences.

> "Learners will have new opportunities to engage with public and population health, and faculty will be able to develop the academic side of their work. The excitement around this is real.
>
> **— Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed**
> *Interim Division Head, PHMP*

"Dalhousie is an amazing place to learn and grow," says Dr. Watson-Creed. "Learners will have new opportunities to engage with public and population health, and faculty will be able to develop the academic side of their work. The excitement around this is real."

By building a robust academic environment and supporting interdisciplinary research, Dalhousie's new division is poised to shape the future of public health in the Maritimes—empowering the next generation of leaders to advance health equity, drive innovation and respond to emerging challenges.



Elder Ann LaBillois, Dalhousie's Elder in Residence, delivers a session during the Indigenous Faculty Leadership Development Program in Membertou First Nation.

FUTURE INDIGENOUS LEADERS IN MEDICINE: DALHOUSIE AND NCIME LAUNCH FIRST OF ITS KIND PROGRAM IN MEMBERTOU FIRST NATION

A new course is providing Indigenous physicians with culturally safe leadership training and support.

Launched in Membertou First Nation, the inaugural Indigenous Faculty Leadership Development Program brought together faculty and early- to mid-career Indigenous physicians from across Canada. Led by the National Circle for Indigenous Medical Education (NCIME) in partnership with Dalhousie, the program focuses on fostering Indigenous-led leadership, addressing anti-Indigenous racism, and creating culturally safe learning environments.

Grounded in Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Being, the program emphasizes sharing circles, mentorship, and guidance from Elders and Knowledge Keepers, encouraging personal growth and systemic change. Former Academic Director of Indigenous Health, Dr. Brent Young, and Vice-Provost, Indigenous Relations, John R. Sylliboy, were part of the Dalhousie team who developed programming for the first iteration of the course, and Elder Ann LaBillois, Dalhousie's Elder in Residence, helped deliver the first session.

NCIME, a national collaboration among major medical organizations, aims to transform medical education and advance culturally safe care. The program also builds a network of Indigenous leaders in academic medicine, bringing together participants from medical schools across the country to share experiences and strengthen connections.

Designed to address gaps in traditional leadership training, the program recognizes the unique challenges faced by Indigenous leaders in academic spaces and offers a values-driven approach rooted in the seven sacred teachings.

Following the initial gathering, participants continue their learning through ongoing sessions on topics such as critical race theory, conflict resolution, and integrating ceremony into the workplace, while maintaining the relationships built during the program.

What began as a gathering rooted in identity, reflection, and ceremony has grown into a national community of Indigenous physicians supporting one another and shaping the future of medical education in ways that honour culture, wellness, and self-determination.



Nathan Barton and Aaliyah Arab-Smith are recipients of the Black Medical Students Bursary.

BACKING BLACK FUTURES IN MEDICINE: A NEW BURSARY SUPPORTING BLACK MEDICAL STUDENTS AT DALHOUSIE

In December 2025, Dalhousie University's Faculty of Medicine announced a transformative partnership with the Foundation for Black Communities (FFBC) to launch the Black Medical Students Bursary, a national initiative designed to reduce financial barriers for Black learners entering medical school.

Through a $200,000 gift from FFBC, matched dollar-for-dollar by Dalhousie, the program will provide $100,000 annually over four years in support of Black medical students.

The bursary represents an important investment in equity, access, and representation in medicine. Black Canadians remain underrepresented in the medical profession despite facing significant health disparities and barriers to care. Increasing representation among healthcare professionals helps build trust, improves patient experiences, and contributes to a more inclusive healthcare system.

Beyond financial support, the bursary creates opportunities for mentorship, community building, and professional development. By helping offset the costs of tuition, books, equipment, and living expenses, it allows students to focus more fully on their medical education and engage in the academic and community life of the Faculty.

The initiative aligns with Dalhousie Medicine's broader commitment to improving access to medical education through programs such as Inclusive Pathways to Medical Professions (IPMP), Promoting Leadership in Health for African Nova Scotians (PLANS), and Indigenous health initiatives. Together, these efforts are helping create pathways for students from historically underrepresented communities and fostering a learning environment where they can thrive.

For recipients Nathan Barton and Aaliyah Arab-Smith, MD class of 2029, the bursary reinforces a sense of belonging and connection, while strengthening networks of peer support and mentorship. As Dalhousie and its partners work toward a healthcare workforce that better reflects the communities it serves, initiatives like the Black Medical Students Bursary are helping to remove barriers, support student success, and build a more diverse and equitable future for healthcare in Atlantic Canada and beyond.



Sina Lash, researcher and neuroscience graduate from Dalhousie, volunteers at a local school in Mfuwe, Zambia.

Bridging worlds: Dalhousie team advances epilepsy outreach in Zambia

In summer 2025, researchers from Dalhousie University returned to Zambia to advance epilepsy care and reduce stigma in resource-limited settings, building on a long-standing research collaboration that has grown into a model of shared learning and community engagement.

The team, which included medical student Laith AlHadeed, graduate students Abdullah and Alaa Abu Ahmad, along with the supervisor of all three, Dr. Alon Friedman, Dennis Chair in Epilepsy Research, began in Lusaka, presenting findings at the 5th African Epilepsy Congress, highlighting both challenges and opportunities in epilepsy care and reinforcing the importance of global partnerships.



(L-R) Abdulla Shanti, Laith AlHadeed, Sina Lash, a conference representative, and Alaa Abu Ahmad attend the International League Against Epilepsy Conference in Lusaka, Zambia.

They then traveled to Mfuwe, a remote region with high epilepsy rates, to better understand the realities faced by patients and families. Working closely with local health-care providers, the team delivered community talks, visited schools, supported students living with epilepsy, and provided clinical guidance in local clinics with limited resources.

This work, supported by Dalhousie's Brain Repair Centre, focuses on raising awareness, dispelling harmful myths, and improving access to care. It also reflects strong relationships between Dalhousie researchers and Zambian communities.

A key part of the experience was witnessing the lived impact of stigma, including social exclusion, disrupted education, and limited treatment access, while also seeing patients travel long distances to receive care.

Looking ahead, efforts are underway to expand telemedicine and establish a dedicated epilepsy centre in Mfuwe to provide diagnostics, treatment, rehabilitation, and education. Fundraising is ongoing to support infrastructure, medications, and patient education.

Back in Halifax, students continue to support the initiative through advocacy and fundraising, strengthening a growing partnership rooted in collaboration, service, and a shared commitment to improving epilepsy care.



The Dalhousie team volunteers at a local school in Mfuwe, Zambia.



VALUING PEOPLE AT DALHOUSIE'S FACULTY OF MEDICINE

In the Faculty of Medicine, Valuing People means fostering a culture of respect, appreciation, and belonging for everyone who contributes to the Faculty. Grounded in a people-first philosophy, this work recognizes that our collective success depends on the dedication, expertise, and contributions of people across all roles, teams, and campuses.

Report from
Dr. Shawna O'Hearn
Interim Chief Operating Officer



Over the past year, the Faculty of Medicine has continued to advance its commitment to the Valuing People stream, even as we navigate a period of transition and new leadership.

While contexts evolve, our focus remains steady: fostering a respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment where our people can do their best in service of improving health, research and education across our communities. This continuity of purpose, paired with renewed perspectives, is helping to shape how we move forward together.

The Valuing People Staff Committees have made tangible progress in key areas identified through employee feedback. This includes the development of faculty-wide email guidelines to support clearer, more respectful communication, and the creation of a centralized SharePoint site to better organize and share critical work across the Faculty. Policies and practices have also been reviewed through a more inclusive lens, helping to ensure they reflect the diverse needs and experiences of our communities. These efforts are strengthening the foundations for a more connected, transparent, and supportive workplace.

Building on this momentum, the Faculty of Medicine has also prioritized opportunities for learning and dialogue. A staff-informed wellness learning series was launched, with topics shaped directly by employee input, reinforcing our commitment to responsive and relevant programming. You can read more about this on page 43.

At the same time, administrative reviews have continued in partnership with staff and faculty, creating space to better understand the evolving needs of units while aligning with broader institutional priorities. Together, these initiatives reflect an ongoing commitment to listening, learning, and adapting in ways that support both our people and our shared mission.

Looking ahead, the Faculty remains committed to building this progress, with a continued focus on listening, learning, and adapting. As priorities evolve and new opportunities emerge, the Valuing People stream will remain a cornerstone of our work—ensuring that our people feel supported, respected, and equipped to contribute to stronger education, better health outcomes, and more resilient communities.



Recognizing Outstanding Achievement: Faculty of Medicine presents staff and faculty awards

On June 2, 2026, members of the Faculty of Medicine came together to recognize faculty accomplishments in the areas of research, education, and community service.

This was followed by a celebration of the outstanding contributions of staff and those in senior academic leadership roles on June 18. The staff and faculty leadership awards, presented annually, are an opportunity to acknowledge hard work and ensure we create a positive work environment that fosters well-being and supports career growth. Importantly, this is just one way that we are striving for this goal.

Faculty Awards

The Faculty of Medicine Early Career Educator Award: Dr. Alexandra Manning

The Faculty of Medicine Award of Excellence in Education: Dr. Gerard Corsten

The Faculty of Medicine Community Teacher of the Year Award: Dr. Jeffrey Ratushny

The Faculty of Medicine Early Career Award of Excellence in Clinical Practice: Dr. Sarah Fancy

The Faculty of Medicine Award of Excellence in Clinical Practice: Dr. Min Lee

The Faculty of Medicine Award for Early Career Excellence in Teaching (PhD Faculty): Dr. Joshua Slysz

The Faculty of Medicine Award for Early Career Excellence in Teaching (MPAS Faculty): Erin Sephton

The Dr. Allan Cohen Memorial Award for Community Service: Dr. Cinera States

The Faculty of Medicine Wayne Putnam Award: Dr. Simon Jackson

The Dr. John Savage Memorial Award for Faculty Leadership in Global Health: Dr. Nabha Shetty

The Faculty of Medicine Program Director's Award – Innovations in Postgraduate Education: Dr. Stacey Williams

The Faculty of Medicine Program Director's Award – Leadership: Dr. Allen Tran

The Faculty of Medicine Excellence in Basic Research Award: Dr. Morgan Langille

The Faculty of Medicine Early Career Investigator Award – Clinician: Dr. Thomas Brothers

The Faculty of Medicine Early Career Investigator Award – Research Faculty: Dr. Melina Agosto

The Faculty of Medicine Award for Excellence in Research Mentorship of Trainees: Dr. Mark Asbridge

The David Anderson Award for Clinical Research Excellence – Research Faculty: Dr. Manuel Mattheisen

The David Anderson Award for Clinical Research Excellence – Clinician: Dr. Michael Bezuhly

The Faculty of Medicine Award for Excellence in Research Mentorship – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Dr. Ejemai Eboreime

The Faculty of Medicine Award of Excellence in Research Mentorship of Faculty: Dr. Roy Duncan

The Faculty of Medicine Award for Career Excellence in Research Mentorship: Dr. Gregory Hirsch

Leadership Awards

Ryan Clow Team Collaboration Award: Human Body Donation Program Team

Professional & Managerial Leadership Award: Kelly Maher, Chief Operating Officer for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Academic Leadership Award: Dr. Lisa Sutherland, Assistant Dean, Student & Resident Affairs at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick

Leadership in Administrative, Clerical & Technical Support: Tina Bowridge, Graduate Program Administrator, Department of Community Health and Epidemiology

Emerging Leader Award: Nick Lignos, Communications and Community Impact Advisor at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick

Valuing People Innovation Award: Angela Vermeir, Volunteer Patient Program in Undergraduate Medical Education

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY-WIDE AWARDS

Over the past year, students, staff, and faculty in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University have been recognized across the institution for their exceptional achievements and contributions.

From leadership and community service to academic excellence and innovation in teaching, these honours reflect the Faculty's deep commitment to advancing healthcare, education, and research. The following highlights celebrate the remarkable individuals whose dedication and impact have earned them university-wide recognition.

Dal Med learners receive Board of Governors Award

We're proud to celebrate the outstanding members of the Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine community who were named Dalhousie University Board of Governors' Award recipients for 2025–2026, Dalhousie's highest honour for student leadership.

Announced at the Impact Awards on March 26, the recipients reflect what meaningful impact looks like in medicine today: advancing accessibility in medical training, centering human connection in care, championing peer mental health support, and leading with inclusion and purpose.

Congratulations to **RJ Roggeveen** (MD candidate), **Sherry Eskander** (MD candidate), **Evan Treffler** (Medical Sciences), and **Wateen Sadek** (Neuroscience). Through advocacy grounded in lived experience, creative approaches to wellness and care, peer-driven mental health leadership, and a deep commitment to inclusive community-building, each of these students is helping to redefine what's possible in medicine and healthcare.

Faculty of Medicine leaders recognized at the 2026 Impact Awards

Dalhousie's 15th annual Impact Awards brought together students, faculty, staff, and community members on March 25 to celebrate exceptional leadership and service beyond the classroom. Among this year's honourees were several members of the Faculty of Medicine community, recognized for their outstanding contributions to innovation, equity, and student leadership.

Medical student **Nicoletta Dini** received two major honours—Student Entrepreneur of the Year, presented by Pomerleau, and the Sustainability Award, recognizing her leadership in innovation and environmental advocacy. Faculty of Medicine students **Eshan Arora** (medical student) and **Annika Benson** (graduate student) were each recognized with Faculty Leadership Impact Awards, celebrating their initiative, leadership, and positive impact on peers and the broader Dalhousie community.

The evening also celebrated **Timi Idris**, manager of the Black Learners Admissions Pathway (BLAP), who received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award for her exceptional leadership and commitment to advancing equity, diversity, and student success at Dalhousie.

Brittany DeYoung presented with DPMG Award

Brittany DeYoung was awarded the 2025 DPMG Outstanding Achievement Award: Mid-Career.

Brittany, Finance Manager in the Department of Family Medicine was recognized for her work to transform how the department handles finances across all three Maritime provinces including innovative cost-sharing models and navigation of tough negotiations, resulting in sustainable funding for critical programs.

Known for her calm, practical approach, Brittany is a go-to advisor for faculty leadership.

Medical faculty receive Dalhousie research awards

In July 2025 Dalhousie University announced the 2025 recipients of its most prestigious internal research honours, recognizing excellence, impact, and emerging talent across disciplines. Among the honourees from the Faculty of Medicine were **Dr. Andrew Roger** (Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology), named a Distinguished Research Professor for his pioneering work in evolutionary molecular biology; **Dr. Penny Corkum** (cross-appointed to the Department of Psychiatry), also named a Distinguished Research Professor for her internationally recognized research in pediatric sleep and ADHD; **Dr. Ejemai Eboreime** (Department of Psychiatry), recipient of the President's Research Excellence Award – Emerging Investigator for his equity-focused mental health research; and **Dr. Alexa Yakubovich** (Department of Community Health and Epidemiology), also recognized as an Emerging Investigator for her impactful work on preventing gender-based violence and strengthening health system responses across Canada.

Paul Bourgeois named 2025 EHS Award recipient

The Facutly of Medicine's now retired building services manager, **Paul Bourgeois**, was honoured with Dalhousie University's 2025 Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Award, recognizing his outstanding contributions to campus health and safety. Over his 16-year career at Dalhousie, including 13 years as building services manager, Paul demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication. His proactive efforts strengthened the safety culture across key facilities such as the Tupper/CRC complex, Life Sciences Research Institute (LSRI), and the Collaborative Health Education Building (CHEB).

Research in Medicine program presents awards

The Research in Medicine program presented the 2025 Embil Awards and RIM Excellence in Mentoring Awards to recognize the outstanding achievements of our students and faculty.

Nick Dawe (Class of 2026) was the recipient of the 2025 Embil Publication Prize for Research in Medicine (RIM), which celebrates the timely publication of research completed within the RIM program. Nick's work reflects the rigor and curiosity that define the RIM experience.

The Embil Prizes for Research in Medicine were presented at RIM Day to:

- Best Podium Presentation: **Samar Ali** (Class of 2026), recognized for delivering a compelling and well-structured presentation that showcased strong scientific insight.
- Best Poster Presentation: **Joey Silburt** (Class of 2026), honoured for an engaging poster presentation that demonstrated clarity and innovation in research communication.

These awards highlight excellence in scientific presentations and posters, marking important milestones in our students' research journeys.

Drs. Craig Erker (DMNS) and **Duncan Webster** (DMNB) were the recipients of the RIM Excellence in Mentoring Award, recognizing their exceptional commitment to mentorship. Dr. Erker, a pediatric neuro-oncologist, is deeply involved in clinical research on pediatric brain tumors and leads multiple national and international trials. Dr. Webster, an infectious diseases specialist, combines clinical expertise with research on chronic viral infections and harm reduction, while actively teaching and mentoring across DMNB. Their guidance and support have shaped the academic and professional paths of countless learners.

2025 Community Engagement Award Recipients

The Office of Community Engagement presented the 2025 Community Engagement Awards to celebrate leadership and impact in advancing health equity through community and global engagement.

Chloe Blackman (Class of 2025), received the Dr. Ronald Stewart Student Award, and was recognized for leadership in community and global health through her work revitalizing the HOPES clinic and contributing to global surgery research focused on reducing financial barriers to care.

Dr. LeAnne Revell, PGY 5 Psychiatry resident, received the Dr. TJ Jock Murray Resident Awar, and was honoured for advancing global mental health education and international collaboration, including the development of Dalhousie Psychiatry's first global mental health elective in partnership with institutions in Ghana.

Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Professor and Head of Psychiatry and Chief of Psychiatry for Nova Scotia Health Central Zone, received the Dr. John Savage Memorial Faculty Award, recognizing his transformative leadership in expanding culturally responsive mental health care locally and strengthening global mental health capacity internationally.

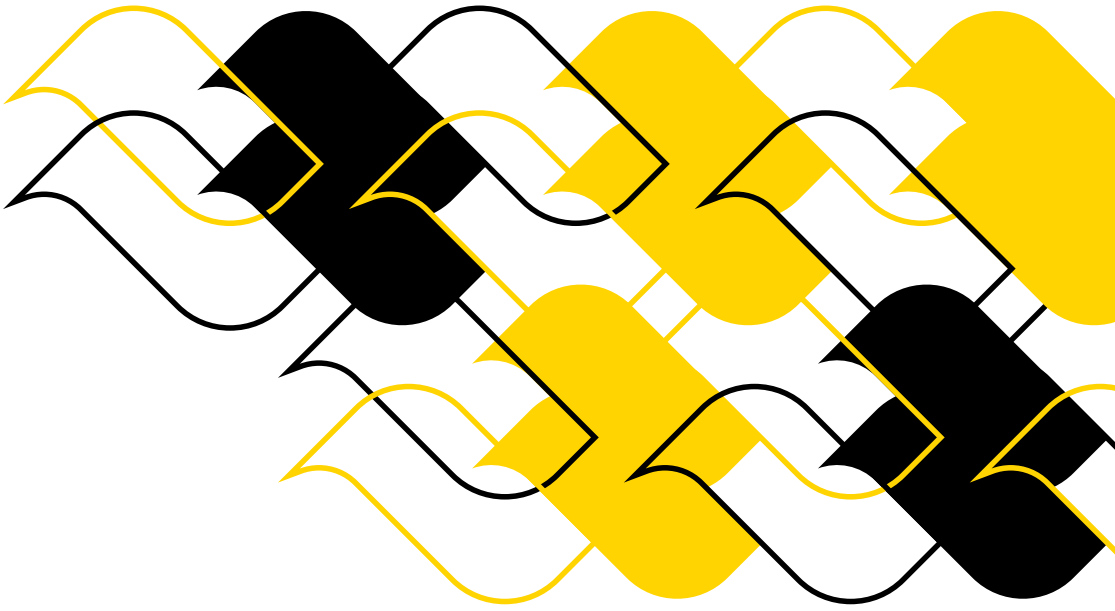
FACULTY OF MEDICINE HOSTS STAFF WELLNESS SERIES

In early January 2026, the Faculty of Medicine was pleased to host the inaugural Staff Wellness Series. The sessions were an important way to bring our commitment to the Valuing People stream of Realizing Our Ambition to life—creating space for reflection, connection, and practical support for the people who make our faculty thrive.

Supported in part through a Dalhousie grant, this initiative reflects a growing recognition that fostering a healthy, engaged workforce is essential to achieving our broader goals in education, research, and service.

The series, which was held both in-person on our Halifax campus, and virtually, brought together staff from across departments and campuses for a range of thoughtful, action-oriented sessions. Topics included psychological safety and boundary clarity, financial preparedness in uncertain times, communication standards in an evolving digital workplace, and practical strategies for nutrition and wellbeing. Each session was designed to provide tools and strategies staff could apply in their day-to-day work and lives.

These sessions are helping to build a shared understanding of wellness at work. By prioritizing conversations around safety, communication, and support, the Staff Wellness Series continues to strengthen a culture where people feel valued, respected, and equipped to do their best work.





Mi'kmaw artist Alan Syliboy speaks at the unveiling of his art in the foyer of the Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building.

CULTURE AS MEDICINE: CELEBRATING ART, BELONGING, AND REFLECTION

In June 2026, the Faculty of Medicine welcomed community members, faculty, staff, students, and partners to Culture as Medicine, a special event marking the unveiling of a new public art installation by acclaimed Mi'kmaw artist Alan Syliboy in the foyer of the Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building.

Held in partnership with the Dalhousie Art Gallery and Nimbus Publishing, the event also celebrated the launch of *The Journey So Far*, the publication accompanying Syliboy's retrospective exhibition at the Dalhousie Art Gallery.

Drawing on ancient Mi'kmaq petroglyphs, Syliboy's work brings Indigenous perspectives, cultural knowledge, and contemporary artistic expression into one of the Faculty's most visible shared spaces. The event highlighted the important role that art, culture, and representation play in creating environments where people feel welcomed, respected, and connected.

Speakers reflected on the Faculty's commitment to fostering a culture of belonging and to ensuring that its physical spaces better reflect the diverse communities it serves. As the Faculty continues to welcome increasing numbers of Indigenous learners, Black Nova Scotian students, and students from a wide range of backgrounds, the installation was recognized as a meaningful step toward creating learning and working environments that affirm identity, encourage reflection, and support ongoing dialogue.

The gathering underscored the Faculty's strategic commitment to valuing people and engaging with society, while recognizing that creating inclusive spaces is an ongoing journey. Attendees were invited to view the artwork, reflect on its significance, and consider how shared spaces can become places of learning, cultural understanding, and connection. The installation represents the beginning of a broader effort to showcase the stories, perspectives, and contributions of the diverse communities that enrich the Faculty of Medicine and the region it serves.



Alyssa MacDonald (right) and Eli Quirk (left) with students from Greenfield Elementary School in Cape Breton.

STUDENTS BRIGHTEN DAL'S NEW MEDICAL CAMPUS IN CAPE BRETON WITH HEARTFELT ART: PARTNERSHIP PROMPTS 'I CAN BE A DOCTOR HERE' MOMENTS

Before the Cape Breton Medical Campus opened in Sydney, N.S., staff found a creative way to connect with the community and help make the new medical sciences building feel welcoming. Alyssa MacDonald, student and resident affairs advisor for the campus, coordinated a partnership with a nearby elementary school that invited students to create artwork for display in the facility. The initiative gave local children an opportunity to learn about the new campus while imagining themselves in future health-care careers.

The project aligned with the school's Art Literacy Program, which encourages students to explore their interests and expand their learning through visual arts. Students from primary through Grade 3 contributed colourful pieces, with younger learners completing pre-designed templates and older students following guided artistic activities. The artwork was initially displayed in the temporary Cape Breton Medical Campus space before being moved into the new building following its opening.

MacDonald, who brings more than a decade of experience in student advising, quality assurance, and post-secondary education, saw the initiative as an opportunity to strengthen connections between the campus and local schools. Drawing on her background in education, she recognized the value of introducing young learners to medicine and higher education at an early age while helping them see the possibilities available within their own communities.

The partnership also reflected the campus's broader commitment to community engagement. A successful pilot with Greenfield Elementary School in New Waterford demonstrated the enthusiasm of both students and educators, creating a foundation for future collaborations with schools across the region.

For MacDonald, the project was particularly meaningful as a lifelong Cape Breton resident who had the opportunity to help build the campus from the ground up. She viewed the new medical campus as part of a larger transformation taking place in the region, alongside significant investments in health care, education, and community infrastructure. By involving local students in the campus before it opened, the initiative helped foster a sense of pride, belonging, and connection to a facility that now serves as an important centre for medical education in Cape Breton.

DALHOUSIE MEDICAL SCHOOL
BY THE NUMBERS

625
Medical students

260
Graduate students

53
Postdoctoral fellows

725
Residents
225 Family Medicine
500 Royal College

36
Fellows
in various Royal College specialty and sub-specialty programs

36
Research chairs
25 Endowed Chairs
11 Canada Research Chairs

85
Basic science faculty
Full-time equivalent

3044
Clinical faculty members
spread across **22** departments

479
Staff members
Full-time equivalent

10
Family Medicine post-graduate teaching sites
in urban and rural communities throughout Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island

40
New Brunswick students admitted
to Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick (DMNB) each year

30
Cape Breton students admitted
into each of the first two cohorts at Cape Breton Medical Campus

5
undergraduate teaching sites throughout Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick
including Fredericton, Miramichi, Moncton, Saint John, and Waterville (Upper River Valley)

8
undergraduate teaching sites in Nova Scotia
including 2 in Cape Breton: Chéticamp (CB Rural), Inverness (CB Rural), Antigonish, Cumberland, Colchester, Annapolis Valley, South West Nova, Pictou

6
new undergraduate teaching sites
established in rural Nova Scotia to support students from the Cape Breton Medical Campus

RESEARCH FUNDING
HIGHLIGHTS

$79.6M
Total research funding

$18.02M
in Tri-council grants

$61.65M
non-Tri-council grants, clinical trials and contracts

CIHR Spring 2025 Competition

National success rate of **15.5%**

FoM/NSH/IWK success rate of **15.6%**

One Priority Announcement worth **$100,000**

CIHR Fall 2024 Competition

National success rate of **13.6%**

FoM/NSH/IWK success rate of **10%**

Research Chairs

Recruitment remains underway for two Canada Research Chairs (CRCs)

One Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) application remains under review

One CRC renewal completed

Recruitment of three endowed chairs in progress

Successful recruitment of three endowed chairs:

- Kathryn Allen Weldon Chair in Alzheimer's Research
- Ron Stewart Chair in Emergency Medicine
- Joan and Jack Craig Chair in Autism

Four endowed chairs renewed:

- R. Howard Webster Research Chair
- Soillse Scientist in Prostate Cancer Quality of Life Research
- J.D. Irving Ltd. Research Chair in Occupational Medicine
- QEII Health Foundation Scholar in Retina Research

Innovation

Pulse BioMedical Hub launched with Dal Innovates, Medicine, Health, and Dentistry, under the leadership of Dr. Paul Santerre



DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

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