

Dr. Robert Williams

Dr. Robert Williams was born and currently resides in St. John's. He completed his Pre-Med Diploma from Memorial University in 1964 and went on to Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, where he completed his medical degree in 1969. He subsequently completed rotating internships at Dalhousie with distinction.

He became certified with the College of Family Physicians of Canada in 1974. And in 1982, he completed his Master of Public Health Degree from Harvard University in Boston, Massachusetts.

Upon completing medical school, Dr. Williams went to work with the province's Cottage Hospital system.

During his first two years, he served as a Medical Officer at the Burin Hospital. He then spent an additional 8 years as the Senior Medical Officer at the Hospital in Come By Chance. In this position, he was responsible for the provision of medical care services to approximately 10,000 people through out-patient clinics, including laboratory and x-ray diagnostic services, as well as in-patient care in the small 25-bed primary care hospital.

In patient care services included medical and pediatric services, as well as anesthesia, normal risk obstetrics, and minor surgery. Emergency surgery, including caesarean sections, were performed when clinical or weather and transportation services warranted. He was also responsible for all facets of the hospital operation, including administrative matters, planning, medical staff organization and the clinical services provided.

Dr. Williams also served as a family practice clinical preceptor for the Faculty of Medicine and was responsible for orientation to community care for visiting first-year medical students, and preceptorships for clinical clerks and interns on elective rotations. He later became a Clinical Associate Professor for the Division of Community Medicine at Memorial.

From 1974 to '76, Dr. Williams served as a Member of the NLMA Board of Directors. He also served as Chair of the NLMA Salaried Physicians Committee from 1975 to 1977.

In 1979, Dr. Williams went to work for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador as the Medical Consultant with the Department of Health and Community Services. He was responsible for consulting on medical and technology issues in the institutional sector, and was a liaison on medical education issues with the Medical School and medical affairs with the NLMA, the College and MCP.

From '82 to '89, he was the Associate Deputy Minister in the Department of Health, overseeing medical services and community health in the Province. At that time, the Department of Health was responsible for a number of District Medical Practices and Cottage Hospitals throughout the Province, as well as the delivery of public health services, the Provincial Public Health Laboratory, Emergency Health Services, as well as policy and funding issues involving the Medical School.

In that role, he supervised the shift from a centralized model of public health services to a regional public health unit structure, which provided a regional approach to setting priorities and the delivery and administration of services.

In 1989, Dr. Williams was appointed the Deputy Minister with the Department of Health, which functions as the Chief Executive Officer of the Department. He held that position for nine years. During that time, he also served as Chair of the Joint management Committee of the Department and the NLMA from 1992 to 1998.

That year, Dr. Williams became Vice-President of Medical Services with the Health Care Corporation of St. John's, which was set up to replace the previous six boards of governance. He was directly responsible for medical administration, including credentialing of physicians, quality of medical care, and medical staff recruitment.

He held that position he held until 2005 when he became the Vice-President of Quality, Diagnostic and Medical Services at Eastern Health. In this position he was responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive quality program with a strong emphasis on clinical safety, the provision of diagnostic radiology, nuclear medicine, laboratory medicine services for the region, as well as the delivery of primary, secondary and tertiary medical services.

Throughout his years in administrative roles, he continued to practice by providing family medicine locum coverage in St. John's. He officially retired in 2006, although he continues to work as a Sub Investigator at the Alpha-Derm Clinical Research Centre, focusing research trials in dermatological disease.

In 2013, he became the Assistant Registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador and last year, he became the College's Deputy Registrar. During his career, Dr. Williams also served as President of the Clarenville Branch of Memorial University's Alumni Association and as a member of Memorial's Board of Regents. He also served as a Member of the Alcohol and Drug Dependency Commission and the Newfoundland Medical Care Commission.

Dr. Williams has many fond memories of working with his patients and staff in the province's cottage hospital system.

He also fondly remembers meeting Mr. Gerry Lynch, the NLMA's first Executive Director, which led to his initial involvement in the work of the Association. He credits Mr. Lynch and the NLMA as a source for learning, which helped him greatly in his subsequent administrative roles in the province's health care system.

Last year, Dr. Williams received the Honorary Life Membership Award from the College of Family Physicians of Canada. He also received Honorary Membership in the Canadian College of Health Care Executives in 2004. And in 1973, he was named Citizen of the Year by the Sunnyside Lions Club.

In his spare time, he enjoys sports like basketball, golf, tennis and hockey. He has also held various executive positions with the Newfoundland and Labrador Tennis Association, including Chair of Junior Development, Treasurer and Vice President. And he volunteered as a hockey coach and referee while working in Come by Chance.

He is married to his wife Grace who is an RN and together they have three children, and four grandchildren.

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