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MOA Negotiations – Seeking Member Input

Dear Colleagues:

The NLMA will be triggering the start of the next round of negotiations this spring.

It is important that the NLMA and Government place our Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) negotiations back on a predictable schedule so that financial and workplace issues can be addressed on a timely basis. After almost four years of unacceptable delay by government, the last MOA was signed in May 2022. The term of that agreement expires on September 30, 2023.

An early start to negotiations will ensure adequate time to prepare, negotiate, and sign a new agreement without undue delay. This round of negotiations will be the first time we have the ability to use binding arbitration, should we be unable, after 12 months of negotiations, to reach a satisfactory agreement. We do not seek to use this authority, but its existence helps to keep both sides on track and focused on reaching a deal on a timely basis.

The recruitment and retention crisis has become much more serious in the last two years. Though government is now engaging in actions to address the problem, these actions are not yet sufficient, and the province has not yet turned the corner towards recovery. Patients continue to have long wait times for treatment and far too many people do not have a family doctor. The physicians of the province are also overburdened and seeking more solutions. Therefore, we must use this round of bargaining to achieve sustainable and effective changes that will rebuild the profession in our province.

The Board of Directors has begun its discussions on themes and objectives for a new MOA. We are now seeking additional member input. A survey link for members was included in the email with this President's Letter so you can give us feedback on these themes and objectives, and other ideas that you believe are innovative and essential. Please do not share the email/survey link with non-members. **The survey period will be open for two weeks.** Survey results will be compiled and presented to the Board of Directors for consideration in our negotiating strategy.

We are also asking specialty sections, sub-specialties, APP groups, and any other group with a common interest, to provide us with submissions. Any group may send its collective views to the President of the NLMA by emailing president@nlma.nl.ca, and they will be incorporated in the Board's deliberations. **Submissions are requested by May 19.**

I take this opportunity to advise members that, as the NLMA will be transitioning between Executive Directors during the course of these negotiations, we have hired an external Chief Negotiator to be a consistent presence at the table throughout the process. The Chief Negotiator will be Mr. Ron Pink, a Halifax-based lawyer, who has considerable experience negotiating on behalf of medical associations in other jurisdictions and is also the negotiator for the Professional Associations of Residents of

Newfoundland & Labrador (PARNL). We welcome Mr. Pink to this role, and we look forward to our team taking a strong mandate to the table in the coming months.

Finally, the NLMA committed to members last year that we would review and improve the Atlantic Parity formula before tabling positions in the next round of negotiations. In preparing for this review, we are mindful of the rise in physician shortages across Canada over the last two years, the momentum towards national licensure, and the need to have the very best standard for measuring competitiveness. There is a question on this topic in the survey, and we invite your feedback on it as we set a course for negotiations.

Sincerely,



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President



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