

Professional Review Committee 2022-2023 Annual Report

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Message from Chair

Honourable Minister Fitch, members, and stakeholders,

It is my pleasure to submit the Annual Report for the Professional Review Committee (PRC). The PRC continues to provide an invaluable service to New Brunswick citizens by ensuring that the principles and practices of Medicare billing are being upheld by the physicians.

Thank you to the Medicare and Financial Services staff for their hard work and dedication and to the committee members for their expertise and commitment to this service.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Andrew Berkshire, M.D., FRCSC
Chairperson

Professional Review Committee Mandate

The objectives of the Committee, as outlined in the Regulations under the *Medical Services Payment Act*, are:

- a) To enhance the standards of medical service
- b) To protect the interests of the public, government, and the medical profession in the operation of the Medical Services Plan (Medicare), and
- c) To provide experienced medical counsel to any medical practitioner whose pattern of practice under the Medical Services Plan appears not to be in the best interest of the public or the medical profession.

Board membership

As of March 31, 2023, the membership was as follows:

Dr. Andrew Berkshire (Orthopedics, Chairperson)
Dr. Suzanne Hall-Losier (General Practice)
Dr. Graham Bishop (Respiratory Medicine)
Dr. Anand Irrinki (General Practice)
Dr. David Flower (General Practice) Retired Dec 31, 2022
Dr. Susan Skanes (Plastic Surgery) Retired Dec 31, 2022

Legislation, policies, and by-laws

PRC is a committee that operates under guidelines outlined in the *Medical Services Payment Act*. It consists of up to five practicing physicians nominated by the New Brunswick Medical Society and appointed by the Minister of Health.

2022-2023 Highlights

The committee met on six occasions over 2022-2023. The major topics for discussion were:

- **High Earners Report** – Medicare presented to the PRC a new report they will be generating at the end of each quarter, which will identify physicians whose total billings are three or more standard deviations greater than their peer’s remuneration average over the course of the quarter. This report will be used by Monitoring and Compliance to identify potential audits.
- **Code 3268 (Single Arthrogram) and 3266 (Facet joint Injection)** – Monitoring and Compliance presented two service history reports showing these codes should not be billed together. PRC members suggested this be an educational item shared through the New Brunswick Medical Society.
- **High Earner Outliers** – Using the new quarterly high-income earners reporting, Monitoring and Compliance sent out 16 letters requesting justification for the deviation. Fourteen responses were provided and two were not. Many physicians have had increased workloads and are covering off multiple areas. Based on the responses to the letters, and the lack thereof, Monitoring and Compliance will be using the data obtained to assist in selecting whom to audit.
- **Illegible chart notes** – The committee discussed what should be done when chart notes are illegible or incomplete rendering them unbillable. Recommendation made that Electronic Medical Records (EMR) be adopted to support accurate, comprehensive, and legible documentation.
- **Altering Documentation** – The committee discussed what should be done when a Physician alters chart notes after the fact. An audit example was brought forth and reviewed by the committee where the physician had altered 24/29 initial records pulled for audit sample. The PRC recommended that a formal complaint be submitted by Monitoring and Compliance to the College of Physicians and Surgeons

Financial Information

Per section 29 of Regulation 84-20 of the *Medical Services Payment Act*:

“The members and co-opted members shall receive such remuneration and allowances as shall be determined from time to time by the provincial authority.”

For 2022-2023, the total remuneration and allowances paid was \$3,360.