



## **NEWS RELEASE** **For immediate release**

### **Nova Scotia Physiotherapists Welcome Emergency Department Report**

**HALIFAX (October 27, 2010)** – The Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association (NSPA), along with our Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Advisory Group<sup>1</sup> colleagues, commends the innovative recommendations provided by Dr. John Ross in his highly anticipated report, *The Patient Journey Through Emergency Care in Nova Scotia: A Prescription for New Medicine*.

In particular, Nova Scotia's physiotherapists are encouraged by the themes of collaboration, team work, community care, and alternative models of access to care that are found throughout the report. Dr. Ross notes that the crisis faced by Nova Scotia's emergency care system is far more complex than simply a shortage of Doctors and Nurses, and that "a more rational approach to determining daily physician coverage AND some innovation in scheduling other types of clinicians—whether nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, extended-role paramedics, social workers, mental health social specialists, physiotherapists, or others—would improve wait times and quality of care." (Ross report, page 40)

The Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Advisory Group, in a backgrounder prepared for Dr. Ross in May 2010, proposed that the addition of physiotherapists (PTs) to first-contact emergency department personnel would be a cost effective and efficient way to accomplish a reduction in emergency department wait times, speed admission or discharge, and increase patient satisfaction. Emergency department patients who would be potential candidates for physiotherapy care include: individuals with chronic or acute pain due to musculoskeletal conditions; whiplash injuries; low back pain; ankle sprains; knee injuries; wrist, elbow and shoulder injuries; elderly patients with mobility or vestibular issues; and respiratory conditions.

Physiotherapists are also well positioned to facilitate improvements in access to community based care, also cited by Dr. Ross as a critical component to relieving the stress on emergency departments. In addition to the musculoskeletal rehabilitation that physiotherapists are perhaps best known for, physiotherapists also have expertise in cardiovascular rehabilitation, stroke recovery, cancer care, diabetes care and education, obesity management in children and adults, and rehabilitation following major surgeries such as hip and knee replacements. When physiotherapy is integrated into effective community care teams, seniors and individuals with chronic diseases receive the care that facilitates their ability to stay in their homes, and stay independent, active and mobile, and help avoid ER visits. Physiotherapists are accustomed to working collaboratively with other members of the health care team, and have the education, clinical expertise, and case management skills to be effective team leaders and participants.

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<sup>1</sup> NSPAG members are physiotherapists that represent different aspects of physiotherapy practice in Nova Scotia and are selected by the following organizations: **Dalhousie University School of Physiotherapy** – the academic program for entry-level and graduate-level physiotherapy in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada. **Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association (NSPA)** – the voluntary professional body for Nova Scotia physiotherapists. **Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists** – the provincial regulatory body. **Nova Scotia Occupational Therapy & Physiotherapy Leadership Committee** – the group representing physiotherapists in public practice. **Nova Scotia Section of the Private Practice Division (NSPPD)** – the group representing physiotherapists in private practice.

Whether providing front line emergency care, or working as part community care teams that divert patients from emergency departments through the provision of prompt, expert primary care, physiotherapists have much to offer. We welcome the innovative approaches outlined in Dr. Ross' report, and look forward to working with the Department of Health on the implementation of the recommendations for improved emergency care in Nova Scotia.

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**For more information and Nova Scotia spokesperson interview:**

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