



## NSHEN 2012 Fall Conference

### *A look back at Ethics of Efficiency: Working in a Moral Environment*



*Following the March 2012 conference, the NSHEN Advisory Council made a decision to move this annual event from spring to fall. This decision took into account the fact that this may, among other considerations, be a better time of year for possible participants to attend the conference and arrange time away from work. In light of this decision, the Advisory Council chose to hold another, shorter (one-day) conference on October 24th, 2012, rather than wait eighteen months for the next NSHEN conference. Given that all partners in NSHEN are addressing issues of resource allocation and the implementation of these decisions on an ongoing basis, this became a topic of interest for our conference. Because of the focus on efficiency as one of the values in these discussions about health care and*

*its delivery, we chose the theme, “The Ethics of Efficiency: Working in a moral environment.” The conference included a keynote address, three breakout sessions (each presented twice), and a panel discussion to bring it all together.*

*Dr. Christy Simpson, the keynote plenary speaker, opened the conference with an exciting presentation entitled, “Ethics of Efficiency: What does it mean?” in which she challenged us to think differently and more creatively about the notion of “efficiency.” She raised questions about what we understand by the term, its relationship to the concept of “sustainability,” and what role considerations of efficiency do, and should, have within our healthcare decision-making and practice. She took us on several philosophical “detours” designed to stimulate our imagination by exposing us to some unique projects initiated by researchers in other, seemingly unrelated fields. By the end of her talk, she had succeeded in persuading us that these were in fact very relevant detours as they pushed us to reexamine some deeply held values and presuppositions about “efficiency,” and left us buzzing with hope and new possibilities.*

*The three breakout sessions encouraged us to explore further the ethics of efficiency within the healthcare setting. Gail MacDougall facilitated a session entitled, “Reflecting on professional boundaries in the context of efficiency.” Deborah McLane spoke to an attentive group about “Evidence: Changing practice, the ethics of how new evidence makes change.” Leslie McLean, with Cathy Simpson and Jeff Kirby, offered a workshop entitled, “Moral Distress: Is it just part of our work? How does it relate to burn-out and compassion fatigue?” to consider how the push for efficiency may be related to moral distress and burn-out.*

*The panel discussion was designed to move the conference theme full circle from its more “theoretical” opening to an opportunity to focus more on the “practical.” Speakers, who represented different initiatives that each have*

efficiency as one of their drivers, were asked to participate and share their reflections on the values and ethics-related aspects of being involved in these projects. They treated us to a number of different, thought-provoking perspectives.

*Dr. David Gass, Physician Advisor in the NS Dept of Health and Wellness, spoke about the need for and challenges of physician resource planning and its impact on primary health care.*

*Heather Simmons, Interim Manager Interprofessional Practice at the IWK, described her experience of facilitating new models of care with teams at the IWK.*

*Linda Dieltgens, Manager of Assessment and Placement for Continuing Care, CBDHA, and Dr. Peter Littlejohn, Medical Director for a 50-bed nursing home and an organization caring for mentally challenged adults in the New Waterford area, each provided their views (the perspective of a long-time area resident v. healthcare practitioner) concerning the new Collaborative Emergency Centre proposed for their area.*

*Joanne Young, Care Coordinator/Team Lead for the new INSPIRED COPD Outreach Program at the QEII, introduced us to details of the program's development and delivery. The session concluded with a patient and family caregiver describing in very emotional terms their personal experience of and profound appreciation for this program and those who deliver it, as well as their delight in being invited to share their thoughts with us. Their story testified most convincingly to the idea that the drive for efficiency can result in helpful, much needed change when that change is guided by imaginative vision enriched by other equally important values.*

*As the day wrapped up there was a renewed sense among participants that for healthcare professionals with an ultimate goal of person-centred care, efficiency is but one among many significant values to be considered.*

***Thank you to all who attended and special thanks to those who presented. As always we wouldn't be able to do these events without your help.***

Nova Scotia Health Ethics Network

## Personal Health Information Act

### What does PHIA mean to me?

The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) is a new provincial law that governs the collection, use, disclosure, retention, disposal and destruction of your personal health information. PHIA will come into force on June 1, 2013. The Act recognizes both the right of individuals to protect their personal health information and the need of custodians to collect, use and disclose personal health information to provide, support and manage health care.

- There are currently strict measures in place to protect your health information. PHIA provides improved privacy protection measures.
- PHIA balances your right to privacy with the benefits of sharing your personal health information with other health care providers involved in your care.
- You may request access to your personal health information or request that your personal health information be corrected.
- If you feel that your information has been accessed inappropriately, the law allows you to make a complaint to the custodian of your information.
- There are stronger requirements for safeguards to protect information housed in electronic information systems.

NSHEN currently has a library of books that may be of interest to you. Please contact the Administrator for the title listing or to arrange a book loan.

Where can you find more information on PHIA?  
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/phia/>  
902.424.5419, or toll free at 1.855.640.4765  
[phia@gov.ns.ca](mailto:phia@gov.ns.ca)  
[http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/phia/PHIA\\_FAQ.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/phia/PHIA_FAQ.pdf)

Questions?  
Comments? Want to join the mail list?

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## NSHEN: Coming Events...

*Stay tuned for our 2013 newsletter for events NSHEN will be offering in the new year.*

### What Makes NSHEN Unique?

While there are other ethics networks and centres across the country, there are a few features that make NSHEN unique within Canada.

- \* Our collaborative structure facilitates dialogue between partners
- \* Our strategic goals are collectively established by the collaborating partners
- \* NSHEN involves academia, government, and health care organizations in a single network

This results in a network that is innovative, efficient, and responsive to ethics needs in Nova Scotia.