FROM WHERE I SIT:

I can recall sitting in an Emergency Department at 3 AM while on call, faced with a really sick patient presenting with an unusual constellation of symptoms. What do you do at 3 AM?

When I first started to practice, I would have pulled out a Harrisons’ or Cecil’s Textbook of Medicine to try and solve a medical conundrum. As medicine has progressed, the tools we need to assist us are now at our fingertips. The internet is a vast source of material of varying quality. The gold standard for determining the correct approach is to access the literature critically, including original articles and literature reviews and come to a reasoned opinion on how to diagnose, and manage a patient. At 3 AM? Not entirely practical.

What I needed and what I used is now referred to as an “E-resource for point of care”. Something that I could quickly scan that was current and medically sound. Something that could assist me working through a case that was unfamiliar to me. A standardized E-resource for point of care for the NSHA is now being considered. Some of the previous DHAs did have this available to all staff, others did not.

In Canada, there are currently 3 resources that are available. NSHA will be trialing each of these products and is asking for physicians in each zone to use and assess the products based on ease of use, quality of information and overall cost. If you are interested in being involved, please contact your Zone Medical Executive Director for more details.

Lynne

- Joanne MacKinnon, NSHA Physician Recruiter provided an historical overview of her role and the transition from DHW to NSHA. One of the priorities of her position is to create a more coordinated approach to physician recruitment across the Zones. In support of this, there are new roles being created and established positions being realigned so that there will be a dedicated recruitment consultant in each management zone. Joanne and her team will increase awareness amongst physicians of this resource available to them and will also work collaboratively with any physician or community led recruitment initiatives. Joanne can be reached at joannem.mackinnon@nshealth.ca or 902 473 7174.

- Tricia Cochrane, VP Integrated Health Services Program, Primary Health Care and Population Health updated us on the progress of a provincial plan for Primary Health Care which is a major focus of NSHA. She also updated us on other aspects of her portfolio including Palliative Care and Public Health.

- Interviews for an NSHA Senior Director position for Medical Affairs have been completed and Grayson Fulmer has accepted this position. This provincial role will be pivotal in leading the operational work of medical affairs in all zones.

- NSHA will be inviting physicians to participate in a clinical trial for an E-resource reference tool for Point of Care. Please see Lynne’s column.

- The responsibility for approving new physicians into the system will be moving from DHW to NSHA this fall. In preparation for this, over the summer, there were several meetings of a representative group to discuss what a fair and logical process might look like. Since then, an NSHA industrial engineer has been working with Dr. Harrigan and Dr. Jangaard (VP Medicine, IWK) to create a flow chart outlining key steps and decision points throughout the process. The group will be meeting soon to review the work to date and once ready, will share for feedback.

- A new committee is being struck to review the Physician Compensation Framework for administrative roles. This committee will be tasked with reviewing compensation for division heads and other medical director positions along with compensation for committee work. Zone Medical Executive Directors will be reaching out to medical staff through their department heads for physicians to join the committee.

- Dr. Harrigan and Catherine Gaulton (Chief Legal Officer) have been attending meetings being held by Doctors NS all over the province regarding Medical Assistance in Dying. For more information on this service, please call 902 491 5892 or visit the website at http://www.nshealth.ca/about-us/medical-assistance-dying

HA-MAC Membership:
- Dr. Lynne Harrigan, VP Medicine (Chair); Catherine Gaulton, VP Quality and System Performance and Chief Legal Officer; Janet Knox, President and CEO; Dr. Nicole Boutilier, Executive Medical Director, Northern Zone; Dr. Celina White, Family Practice, Amherst; Dr. Daniel Petrie, Diagnostic Radiologist, New Glasgow; Dr. Jeremy Hilliard, Executive Director, Eastern Zone; Dr. Patty Menard, Family Practice, Antigonish; Dr. Dale Miller, Urology, Sydney; Dr. Todd Howlett, Executive Medical Director (Acting), Central Zone; Dr. Rick Gibson, Family Practice, Central Zone; Dr. Lynn Johnston, Internal Medicine/Infectious Disease, Central Zone; Dr. Alenia Kysela, Executive Medical Director, Western Zone; Dr. Bruce Palmer, Urologist, Western Zone; Dr. Ivo Brodarec, Family Practice, Yarmouth; Dr. David Anderson, Dean of Medicine, Dalhousie University, Dr. Krista Jangaard, VP Medicine, IWK