

Briefing Paper

December 15, 2025

Proposed Merger of the Municipal Recruitment and Retention Committee (MRRC) and the Community Navigator Oversight Committee (CNOC)

Purpose

The purpose of this briefing paper is to present for consideration a proposal to merge the Municipal Recruitment and Retention Committee (MRRC) and the Community Navigator Oversight Committee (CNOC) into a single, reconstituted committee. The intent of the merger is to reduce duplication, improve governance and accountability, and better align municipal, community, and provincial efforts related to the recruitment and retention of physicians and other health care professionals.

This briefing paper is intended to support discussion and decision-making by both the MRRC and the CNOC and may also be used by municipal elected representatives to inform their respective Councils and, where appropriate, seek endorsement of the proposed approach.

Background

The MRRC was established in 2019 as a committee of Council for participating municipal units with a mandate to provide community-level support to provincial physician recruitment efforts. Its mission has been to engage stakeholders, research best practices, and advise municipal Councils on strategies and programs to promote the region as an attractive destination for health care professionals.

The MRRC is composed of elected officials from each participating municipal unit, health care representation, and several ex-officio members, including Chief Administrative Officers and regional partners. Each participating municipal Council appoints its representative, reinforcing the committee's role as a formal extension of municipal governance.

The CNOC was formed at approximately the same time by the Yarmouth & Area Chamber of Commerce to provide oversight and direction for the Community Navigator program. Its focus includes:

- Retention of physicians and medical professionals already practicing in the region;
- Support recruitment of new physicians and medical professionals; and
- Engagement with youth and students interested in medical careers to encourage their eventual return to the community.

The CNOC includes representation from the Chamber of Commerce, the Yarmouth Hospital Foundation, the MRRC, local physicians, and ex-officio participation from the Chamber's Executive Director, Treasurer, and the Community Navigator.

Since the establishment of both committees, significant changes have occurred:

- Nova Scotia Health has assigned a dedicated physician recruitment consultant to the Western Zone;
- The role of the Community Navigator has expanded and evolved to respond to changing recruitment and retention challenges; and
- Membership and meeting agendas of the MRRC and CNO have increasingly overlapped, resulting in duplication of discussion and effort.

Recognizing this redundancy, the MRRC requested that CNO consider a potential merger. This request was received positively, and preliminary work on revising CNO's Terms of Reference has begun.

Analysis

The continued operation of two separate committees with overlapping mandates has become inefficient. In practice, many members serve on both committees, and similar information is presented and discussed at each table. A merged committee would:

- Streamline governance and decision-making;
- Reduce administrative burden and meeting duplication;
- Provide clearer oversight and direction for the Community Navigator role; and
- Create a single, unified forum for municipal, community, and stakeholder collaboration on physician recruitment and retention.

A merger would introduce formal municipal representation into the CNO structure, which historically has operated as a community-based oversight body. This change raises several important governance considerations that should be addressed through updated Terms of Reference:

- Public accountability
 - Municipal and provincial funding represents public money. Meeting processes, transparency, and reporting requirements may need to align more closely with those of other public or municipal committees.
- Financial reporting
 - Consideration should be given to whether accounting and reporting should conform to Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAB) and whether standardized financial reporting or audit requirements are appropriate.
- Charitable funding
 - A significant portion of program funding is derived through charitable donations via the Yarmouth Hospital Foundation. The governance model should recognize and respect this contribution and consider whether the Foundation's role in leadership or oversight should be enhanced.
- Committee leadership
 - With elected officials assuming formal oversight responsibilities, consideration should be given to whether the Chair should be an elected official, whether the position should rotate, or whether leadership should be shared between municipal and non-municipal funding partners.

As the MRRC is a formal committee of Council for participating municipal units, an official dissolution is required prior to, or concurrent with, the establishment of the merged committee. At a minimum, this requires:

- Reporting by each MRRC member to their respective municipal Council;
- Informing Councils of the proposed merger and committee substitution; and
- Seeking Council approval to dissolve the MRRC and replace it with the reconstituted CNOCS structure.

To support this process, each municipal elected representative on the MRRC is encouraged to provide an update to their Council. This briefing paper may be used as a supporting document for information-sharing or to seek an endorsement, at the discretion of each Council.

Recommendation / Conclusion

It is recommended that the MRRC and CNOCS proceed with the development of a single, merged committee through the dissolution of the MRRC and the formal reconstitution of the CNOCS with municipal representation embedded in its Terms of Reference.

This approach recognizes the evolution of recruitment and retention efforts, reduces duplication, and establishes a clearer, more accountable governance structure to support the Community Navigator program and broader physician recruitment initiatives.

The proposed merger reflects current operational realities and aligns governance with how recruitment and retention work is now being carried out in practice. A single committee will:

- Improve coordination among municipalities, community partners, and health stakeholders;
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability;
- Strengthen oversight of public and charitable funds; and
- Support the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of recruitment and retention efforts in the region.

Suggested Motions

That the Municipal Recruitment and Retention Committee (MRRC):

1. Endorse, in principle, the dissolution of the MRRC and the merger of its mandate and membership into a reconstituted Community Navigator Oversight Committee;
2. Direct each municipal elected representative to report back to their respective Councils on the proposed merger and seek Council approval where required; and
3. Authorize the use of this briefing paper as a supporting document for Council information and endorsement.

That the Community Navigator Oversight Committee (CNOc):

- Support the merger of the MRRC into the CNOc, subject to the formal dissolution of the MRRC by participating municipal Councils;
- Proceed with revisions to the CNOc Terms of Reference to enhance municipal representation and address governance, accountability, and financial reporting considerations; and
- Bring forward the revised Terms of Reference for approval by the appropriate funding partners and participating municipal Councils, as required.