

Regulating in a Political World

The 2026 Halifax Regional Symposium will explore how regulators across the Atlantic provinces are navigating an increasingly complex political, social, and economic environment. Demographic pressures, workforce shortages, rising affordability concerns, and heightened public expectations are converging with evolving government priorities, interprovincial mobility commitments, and broader national and international policy pressures. Through a mix of presentations, panels, and facilitated discussions, attendees will examine issues such as labour mobility and credential recognition, workforce retention in rural and coastal communities, public safety and accessibility, regulatory streamlining and oversight, and the shifting dynamics between governments and independent regulatory bodies. The program will also consider how external pressures such as trade tensions, political ideology, and fiscal constraints shape regulatory decision-making and public trust. This one-day symposium offers a candid, pragmatic, and regionally grounded exploration of how regulators in Atlantic Canada can remain resilient, responsive, and effective while upholding regulatory integrity in a political world.

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **Registration & Breakfast**

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. **Welcome & Introductions**
 Beverley Zwicker | *CEO & Registrar, Nova Scotia Pharmacy Regulator*

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. **Understanding the Forces Shaping Regulation: Governance, Risk, and Political Context in Atlantic Canada**

Victoria Rees K.C. | *Counsel, Professional Regulation, Pink Larkin*

Regulators across Atlantic Canada are operating in an environment defined by increasing political attention, evolving public expectations, and sustained pressure to improve access, efficiency, and workforce mobility. As governments pursue regulatory reform and system-level change, regulatory bodies are being asked to adapt quickly without compromising public safety, all the while navigating uncertainty, competing priorities, and heightened scrutiny.

Drawing on decades of experience advising and working with regulatory bodies across Canada and internationally, Victoria L. Rees, K.C., will set the stage for the day by exploring the forces shaping regulatory practice, including:

How political and policy pressures are influencing regulatory frameworks and decision-making;

Emerging risks and challenges facing regulators, including workforce pressures and evolving public expectations;

The role of governance, ethics, and principled decision-making in maintaining regulatory integrity;

Opportunities for regulators to adopt proactive, risk-informed, and sustainable approaches; and

How regulators can build on existing strengths and best practices to navigate ongoing change

The session will consider how regulators can move beyond reactive responses to external pressures and instead adopt proactive, risk-informed approaches that support fairness, consistency, and public protection, providing a practical and forward-looking foundation for the discussions that follow, equipping participants with a clearer understanding of the challenges ahead and the opportunities to strengthen regulatory systems in a political world.

10:15 – 10:30 *Break*

10:30 – 12:00

Collaboration, Mobility, and Public Protection: Lessons from Atlantic Canada’s Nursing Regulators

Moderator: Marlon Brown | *Director, Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs*
Brad Walsh | *Director of Regulatory Services, Newfoundland & Labrador College of Nurses*
Jillian Mosher, RN MN | *Director of Registration & Deputy Registrar, PEI College of Nursing and Midwifery*

Jennifer Best | *Senior Director Legislated Services & Deputy Registrar, Nova Scotia College of Nursing*

Janet Fogerty | *Director Registration & Deputy Registrar, College of Nursing of New Brunswick*

Nursing regulators across Atlantic Canada are navigating significant changes in workforce mobility, credential recognition, and registration processes. As expectations for timely registration and workforce responsiveness continue to evolve, regulatory bodies are working together to support mobility while maintaining consistent standards and protecting the public.

In this panel discussion, leaders from the four Atlantic nursing regulators will share how their organizations are adapting to changing workforce needs, supporting the integration of internationally educated nurses, and implementing increasingly streamlined registration pathways. Drawing on experiences from jurisdictions of varying sizes, structures, and resources, panelists will explore the practical realities of registration modernization, collaboration, and regulatory consistency across the region.

The discussion will also highlight the unique ways Atlantic nursing regulators work together to share knowledge, resources, and leading practices. Participants will gain insight into how strong inter-jurisdictional relationships, ongoing collaboration, and a shared commitment to public protection help regulators address common challenges while responding to the evolving needs of the nursing workforce.

12:00 – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch (provided) & Networking

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.

Navigating Change in Regulation: Challenges, Expectations, and Opportunities (Facilitated Roundtable)

Sam Lanctin | *Consultant, Sam Lanctin*

2:15 – 2:30 p.m.

Break

2:30 – 3:45 p.m.

Fireside Chat: Proactive Regulation in a Politicized Environment

Moderator: Daniel Roukema | *CEO, MDR Strategy Group*

Clare Bilek | *Legal Counsel, Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia*

Ryan Baxter | *Board Member, Partner, McInnes Cooper*

As regulatory environments become increasingly shaped by political priorities, legislative change, and public scrutiny, legal considerations are playing a more visible and complex role in regulatory decision-making. This session brings together legal experts working both within and alongside regulatory bodies to explore how these dynamics are unfolding in practice. Drawing on perspectives from private legal counsel and in-house regulatory counsel, the conversation will examine how political discourse and policy direction are influencing regulatory frameworks, risk, and decision-making across Atlantic Canada and beyond.

Through a moderated and interactive conversation, we will reflect on emerging legal trends, including the increasing scrutiny of regulatory actions, the implications of legislative change, and the challenges of balancing proactive regulation with legal defensibility. The session will also consider how regulators can navigate uncertainty to respond strategically while maintaining transparency, fairness, and public trust.

3:45 – 4:00 p.m.

Program Reflection & Closing Remarks

Beverley Zwicker | *CEO & Registrar, Nova Scotia Pharmacy Regulator*