



IWK Health

CONTRACT

Physician Co-Leader – Provincial Preschool Autism Service

The Provincial Preschool Autism Service (PPAS) is a partnership between IWK Health (IWK), Nova Scotia Health (NSH), Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) and Autism Nova Scotia (Autism NS). It provides person and family-centered services to preschoolers across Nova Scotia who are suspected of or have a diagnosis of Autism.

PPAS delivers a needs-based model of care that is responsive to the unique strengths, needs, and goals of children and families. Services include a single point of access for supports and diagnostic assessment, followed by ongoing care coordination. Services are tailored to match child and family goals and may include a toddler parent coaching intervention program, an interprofessional autism interventions team, and a 12-month intensive service for the children with the greatest social communication and behavior needs. Foundational to all of this is education for caregivers and professionals. The Nova Scotia Provincial Preschool Autism Service aims to enhance and foster development of child and family skills to achieve goals.

As an expert in their clinical area, the Physician Co-Leader works closely with the Director, Provincial Preschool Autism Service, and is a champion for the program's vision, mission, and strategic priorities, while modelling and upholding IWK Health's mission, vision, and values. The Physician Co-Leader provides system-level clinical leadership and oversight, where required, to support high-quality, evidence-informed, and family-centered autism services across Nova Scotia. This includes providing advice regarding clinical standards, models of care, care pathways, quality and safety priorities, and emerging evidence relevant to provincial service delivery.

Working in partnership with stakeholders across organizations, the Physician Co-Leader helps strengthen clinical alignment, advance evidence-informed practice, and promote consistent service delivery throughout the province. Together, the Physician Co-Leader and Program Director provide a shared leadership model that integrates clinical expertise with operational priorities to support effective decision-making, continuous quality improvement, and positive outcomes for children, youth, and families. Commitment to a close, collaborative working relationship is fundamental to the success of this partnership.

POSITION DETAILS:	Physician Co-Leader
TIME COMMITMENT:	Minimum 0.2 FTE (1 day/week) up to 0.3 FTE (1.5 day/week) to be confirmed with successful candidate
START DATE:	As soon as possible, November 2026
POSTING DATE:	October 14, 2026
CLOSING DATE:	October 29, 2026
TERM:	The Physician Co-Leader is appointed for period of 2 years
COMPENSATION:	Compensation will be provided reflective of FTE and will be determined based on employment/contractual arrangement of the successful candidate
LOCATION OF WORK:	We welcome applicants from all Zones; work will be largely virtual with opportunities for in-person meetings where appropriate

Qualifications:

- ❑ Minimum 3 years clinical experience as a licensed physician, combined with an interest in working at a provincial level;
- ❑ Substantive clinical expertise in working with pediatric populations and specifically in the assessment, management, or delivery of services for autistic children and their families, with a strong understanding of current evidence-informed and neurodiversity-affirming approaches to autism services;
- ❑ Demonstrated academic, scholarly, educational, quality-improvement, or knowledge-translation contributions related to autism, child development, or pediatric care are considered an asset;
- ❑ Experience as a physician/clinical leader (preferably in a provincial capacity);
- ❑ Thorough knowledge of Nova Scotia's health care system and demonstrated leadership skills leading change in complex environments;
- ❑ Background in program planning, delivery, evaluation and outcome measurement;
- ❑ Interest in and appreciation for health economics, sustainability and health system planning;
- ❑ Champion of interprofessional, trans-disciplinary, team-based care
- ❑ The following are considered additional assets:
 - Knowledge of quality improvement, research, education, data management, standards and monitoring;
 - Knowledge of interprofessional practice frameworks and competencies; experience working in team-based environments.

Qualified candidates interested in this opportunity are asked to apply and include an updated CV and cover letter by the closing date.

**Attn: Natalie Ash, Interim Director Provincial Preschool Autism Service
c/o Myra Mingo
Myra.Mingo@iwk.nshealth.ca**

Click here for job posting: <https://iwkhealth.ca/employment-opportunities/physician-employment>

Please note that interviews will be conducted for selected candidates.

IWK Provincial Program Physician Co-Leader Role Description

Title: Physician Co-Leader – Provincial Preschool Autism Service

The Provincial Preschool Autism Service (PPAS) is a partnership between IWK Health (IWK), Nova Scotia Health (NSH), Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) and Autism Nova Scotia (Autism NS). It provides person and family-centered services to preschoolers across Nova Scotia who are suspected of or have a diagnosis of Autism.

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Role Summary

The Physician Co-Leader works with the Director of the Provincial Preschool Autism Service and is a champion for the program's vision, mission, and strategic priorities, while modelling and upholding IWK Health's mission, vision, and values. The Physician Co-Leader provides system-level clinical leadership and oversight, where required, to support high-quality, evidence-informed, and family-centered autism services across Nova Scotia. This includes providing advice regarding clinical standards, models of care, care pathways, quality and safety priorities, and emerging evidence relevant to provincial service delivery.

Working in close collaboration with the Program Director, Managers, and Program staff, the Physician Co-Leader contributes to the identification and achievement of strategic priorities and program objectives while maintaining accountability to IWK Health. This shared leadership model is important to ensure that clinical expertise is blended with operational priorities to improve service quality and informed decision-making. Commitment to a close, collaborative working relationship is fundamental to the success of this partnership.

Provincial programs must always be focused on quality and patient safety as well as system and process improvement, while working in partnership with other programs within IWK, Nova Scotia Health (NSH), DHW / Office of Addictions and Mental Health, Autism Nova Scotia, Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia, and other partners. The Co-Leader will work collaboratively across organizations to strengthen partnerships, advance evidence-informed practice, and support consistent service delivery throughout Nova Scotia. The Co-Leader and Program Director will work as a team with multiple partners within and across partner organizations.

The Co-Leader will actively participate in leadership, governance, planning, and quality meetings by providing clinical expertise, reviewing recommendations, identifying risks and opportunities, and contributing to decisions regarding program direction. Specifically, they will participate in monthly Clinical Leadership Council meetings and monthly Partnership Table meetings. The Co-Leader may from time to time be required to chair/co-chair meetings with/for the Program Director. Where appropriate, the Co-Leader participates in working groups, committees, and advisory groups to support the

development and improvement of different components of the Program.

Primary Working Relationships

- ❑ The primary working relationship is with the Program Director. There is also a primary working relationship with Clinical Managers, Clinical Leaders, and staff.
- ❑ The Physician Co-Leader will liaise with provincial clinical leaders, physicians, and staff in the IWK, NSHA, DHW, health and government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and health professional associations to facilitate collaboration required to achieve the mission of the Program and the IWK.
- ❑ Reporting will be to the Vice President Clinical Care, Learning and Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President, Medicine, Quality & Safety. Functional reporting will be identified as appropriate to support alignment with health system transformation initiatives (i.e., Executive Lead).

Competencies

The Physician Co-Leader will provide leadership and advice on relevant medical/clinical opportunities to support the Director in co-leading program planning, committees, working groups, and planning activities that will facilitate a safe and quality service.

Key Competency Areas: Clinical Expertise, Demonstrated Leadership Ability (at a provincial level is an asset), Change Management, Communication, Collaboration, Education/Knowledge Translation, Strategic Thinking, Facilitation, and Professionalism, Strong Communication and Relationship Building Skills, Champion of Interprofessional Team-based Care, Flexibility and Adaptability, Innovation, Strong knowledge of and commitment to equity, diversity, inclusivity, anti-racism, reconciliation, and neurodiversity

Key Deliverables

- ❑ In collaboration with the Director, Program Staff and working together with members of the PPAS Leadership Team (IWK, HSNS, ANS, NSH), the Physician Co-Leader provides clinical leadership and contributes to the planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the Provincial Preschool Autism Service;

There will be significant focus on:

- Inspiring and promoting a shared vision through the establishment and communication of meaningful goals, priorities, and outcomes aligned with the Provincial Preschool Autism Service strategic direction.
- Supporting the ongoing evaluation, refinement, and optimization of provincial service delivery to ensure high-quality, evidence-informed care and positive outcomes for children and families.
- Providing leadership regarding emerging evidence, clinical standards, best practices, and innovations relevant to autism services and early childhood development.

- Providing input into service planning, policy development, clinical governance, and provincial initiatives.
 - Participating in governance, planning, and decision-making processes related to provincial program priorities, service delivery, and quality improvement initiatives.
 - Creating environments of collaboration and cooperation that support high-performing interprofessional, trans-disciplinary teams and effective provincial partnerships.
 - Supporting academic activities including evaluation, implementation and knowledge-translation through collaboration with the Autism Research Chair. The Physician Co-Leader is not expected to independently lead research at part of this role but is expected to enable and support research at IWK Health as part of PPAS.
 - Supporting engagement and collaboration across organizations and sectors involved in the care of preschool children with autism.
 - Promoting continuous quality improvement and outcome measurement activities to enhance service effectiveness, consistency, accessibility, and accountability.
 - Supporting the implementation and integration of evidence-informed practices across the provincial service network.
 - Building and maintaining effective networks and partnerships across organizations, sectors, professional groups, government departments, and community agencies.
 - Facilitating an integrated provincial preschool autism service delivery model that promotes coordination, consistency, and equitable access to services.
 - Supporting communications and engagement activities with clinicians, staff, families, and partners regarding service delivery, quality initiatives, and program priorities.
 - Contributing medical expertise to provincial committees, working groups, and advisory structures as appropriate.
- ❑ In collaboration with the Director, identify emerging trends, opportunities, risks, and priorities requiring program attention;
 - ❑ Foster partnerships and linkages with partners/organizations/educators having an interest in the Program area, including professional associations; develop and maintain linkages with appropriate provincial and national bodies;
 - ❑ Demonstrate leadership and conduct consistent with IWK Health's mission, vision, and values, and support a culture of respect, integrity, inclusion, accountability, quality, and patient and family safety across all aspects of the role;
 - ❑ Facilitate discussion, disseminate information, and translate knowledge within the Program area, including supporting engagement with clinicians, families, partners, and the media (spokesperson). Represent Nova Scotia/IWK/Program at mutually agreed upon national committees.

Qualifications

The Physician Co-Leader should have strong written and verbal communication skills while demonstrating an interest/expertise in working as a member of an interprofessional team, fostering engagement among peers, problem solving, and group facilitation. They should be innovative and open

to new ideas/perspectives recognizing the value of specialty and generalist care within both the urban and rural practice settings.

- ❑ Minimum 3 years clinical experience as a licensed physician, combined with an interest in working at a provincial level;
- ❑ Substantive clinical expertise in working with pediatric populations and specifically in the assessment, management, or delivery of services for autistic children and their families, with a strong understanding of current evidence-informed and neurodiversity-affirming approaches to autism services;
- ❑ Demonstrated academic, scholarly, educational, quality-improvement, or knowledge-translation contributions related to autism, child development, or pediatric care are considered an asset;
- ❑ Experience as a physician/clinical leader (preferably in a provincial capacity);
- ❑ Thorough knowledge of Nova Scotia's health care system and demonstrated leadership skills leading change in complex environments;
- ❑ Background in program planning, delivery, evaluation and outcome measurement;
- ❑ Interest in and appreciation for health economics, sustainability and health system planning;
- ❑ Champion of interprofessional, trans-disciplinary, team-based care
- ❑ The following are considered additional assets:
 - Knowledge of quality improvement, research, education, data management, standards and monitoring;
 - Knowledge of interprofessional practice frameworks and competencies; experience working in team-based environments.

Term of Appointment

The Physician Co-Leader is appointed for period of 2 years. Further extensions of tenure are possible if mutually agreed to be appropriate and beneficial to both parties. There is a commitment to have a co-leadership model permanently for the Provincial Preschool Autism Service.

Time Commitment and Compensation

A discussion about the scope and the needed physician advice should take place and be decided in consultation between the Director and Vice President Clinical Care, Learning and Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President, Medicine, Quality & Safety. A stipend will be provided reflective of FTE and be determined based on employment/contractual arrangement of the successful candidate.

For Provincial Preschool Autism Services:

- Minimum of 1 day per week (0.2 FTE), up to 1.5 days per week (0.3 FTE)
- Some travel required given the provincial nature of the role

Conflict of Interest

IWK acknowledges that the Provincial Program Physician Co-Leader may face challenges in carrying out advisory responsibilities because of their number and breadth of associations and connections. Recognizing that all parties follow their professional code of ethics, provincial programs strive to

develop a culture of integrity. Making unbiased, independent decisions on behalf of a Provincial Program can be challenging. It is important to recognize potential conflicts of interest and determine when these conflicts present areas of concern and what to do about them.

The Physician Co-Leader is required to clearly distinguish evidence and best and promising practices from their personal views in formulating advice. In public, professional, academic, and social-media communications, the Physician Co-Leader is expected to communicate responsibly, distinguish personal views from authorized organizational positions, and avoid statements or activities that are inconsistent with evidence-informed practices, professional obligations, IWK policies, or the responsibilities of the role.

The Co-Leader is required to disclose in a dated, standardized form to the Director on an annual basis, a complete list (including financial or other aid granted) of pharmaceutical/medical devices industry affiliations or private health care industries including but not limited to:

- a. membership in local, regional, national, or other advisory boards/committees;
- b. current or recent industry-sponsored clinical or applied research;
- c. the design of clinical studies concerning the use of products manufactured by the pharmaceutical/medical devices industry;
- d. the design, authorship, or intellectual property of specific programs/curriculum/educational materials that could be aligned for use within the program area;
- e. public advocacy, external communications, or social-media activities that could reasonably be perceived as creating an actual, potential, or perceived conflict with the Physician Co-Leader role; and
- f. paid speaker/consultant positions.

Any other potential or existing conflicts, including personal conflicts shall be directed to the responsible Director and Vice Presidents at the IWK.

Confidentiality

The Physician Co-Leader is required to sign a confidentiality agreement with the Provincial Program. This agreement will outline the procedures of the Program and/or IWK as it relates to confidentiality. Federal and provincial laws, policies and procedures regarding access to information and data that resides within the Program are included. The Physician Co-Leader is expected to maintain confidentiality with respect to the provincial program, its staff, and or committee/working group members, their activities and interests. The Physician Co-Leader is responsible to consult with the Director in determining approaches for sharing of confidential information when required.

Selection Process

Provincial Programs benefit from a wide range of medical/clinical, academic, leadership and program planning expertise. The Physician Co-Leader may be chosen from academic health care settings, provincial health authority settings or clinical and community settings.

The Physician Co-Leader from the academic setting will be identified by the IWK Director in consultation with the Vice President Clinical Care, Learning and Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President, Medicine, Quality & Safety and appropriate Department Chief/Head (where applicable). The final decision will be

made in consultation with the Vice President Clinical Care, Learning and Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President, Medicine, Quality & Safety, of the IWK. It is the responsibility of the Physician Co-Leader to consult with the Chief and/or Department / Division Head prior to finalizing the appointment.

Where a Physician Co-Leader is selected from outside of the academic setting, they will be identified by the IWK Director in consultation with the Vice President Clinical Care, Learning and Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President, Medicine, Quality & Safety. The final decision will be made in consultation with the Vice President Clinical Care, Learning and Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President, Medicine, Quality & Safety of the IWK.

Activities Review

To ensure that the Physician Co-Leader is meeting the expectations of the Program and the IWK, and to mitigate any concerns or issues arising, it is important to provide feedback on their role, responsibilities and outcomes. This should take place during an annual review, and should be coordinated by the Vice President Clinical Care, Learning and Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President, Medicine, Quality & Safety with input from the Director. The focus should be on the Co-Leaders' contributions to outcomes and any changes that are needed to ensure the satisfaction of the Physician Co-Leader, accountability to achieving program outcomes, and the effectiveness of the role.