

# Who Is Nova Scotia Legal Aid (NSLA)

**Nova Scotia Legal Aid (NSLA)** is a public service that provides free legal services to patients who have been involuntarily admitted to psychiatric treatment in Nova Scotia. **NSLA** can provide you with general legal information, specific legal advice, and represent you in **Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (IPTA)** Review Board hearings.

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## What does NSLA do?:

**NSLA** will work with you to find the right lawyer for your case. Your **NSLA** lawyer will contact you to make sure your personal information is correct and get your consent to access your health records. Your **NSLA** lawyer needs these to fully understand your case and provide you with the best legal advice. Your **NSLA** lawyer will then

- clearly explain your situation from a legal perspective
- work with you to identify all your legal options and decide what you should do
- represent your case during IPTA Review Board hearings

You have the right to refuse services from **NSLA** at any point. You also have the right to hire and pay for your own lawyer.

**NSLA** will work with you to make sure your rights are being respected throughout the IPTA process and will act based on your instructions and your best interests. However, if there is a conflict of interest or the **NSLA** lawyer feels your instructions are unreasonable, they may refuse to take you on as a client. In these cases they may be able to find you a different lawyer, or you may have to find and pay for a lawyer yourself.

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## What you need to do:

- You and your **substitute decision maker (SDM)** should make sure your lawyer has up-to-date contact information (address, email, and telephone number).
- You and your **SDM** should attend all the meetings with your NSLA lawyer and tell them anything they should know about your case.
- You and your **SDM** should give reasonable instructions to your **NSLA** lawyer.
- You should not sign any papers or make agreements without checking with your **NSLA** lawyer first.
- If you can't keep a meeting with your **NSLA** lawyer, phone the legal assistant to cancel and make a new appointment. Give as much notice as possible if you have to cancel.
- If you cannot attend a hearing, let your **NSLA** lawyer know and provide any instructions the lawyer may need to attend the hearing on your behalf.

## How to contact NSLA:

As soon as you are admitted, the hospital must inform you of your right to retain and instruct a lawyer and what you need to do to get free legal counsel from **NSLA**.

The **Patient Rights Advisory Service (PRAS)** will also help you apply to **NSLA**.

You can begin your application by visiting <https://www.nslegalaid.ca/online-application/>.

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## Any more questions?

You can contact any member of your care team at the hospital, your **NSLA** representative, or your **PRAS** advisor if you have any questions. Please record their information below for easy reference:

Position	Name	Telephone	Email
Attending Physician			
Assistant			
NSLA Lawyer			
Assistant			
Patient Rights Advisor			
Assistant			