

# What Is the Public Trustee of Nova Scotia?

The **Public Trustee of Nova Scotia is a substitute decision maker (SDM)** of last resort. If the public trustee is assigned as an **SDM**, they can give consent for a patient to receive psychiatric treatment.

Any health-care decisions the public trustee approves must be permitted by the law and be in the patient's best interests.

## How does the public trustee become an SDM?

The public trustee becomes the SDM when all three of these situations are true:

- A doctor assesses a patient and has found the patient does not have the capacity to make their own health-care decisions.
- The patient has no family member who has been in contact with the patient in the past 12 months and is willing and able to act as their SDM.
- The health-care decision is within the public trustee legislated authority under IPTA.

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## What the patient can expect

The public trustee will do their best to act in the patient's best interests. To do that, they will take into consideration the patient's wishes, values, and beliefs, if the public trustee can find those out. The public trustee may speak with the patient, their friends and family, their health-care team, and/or the patient's lawyer before making a decision.

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## How can you contact the public trustee?

Telephone: 902-424-4454  
Confidential Fax: 902-428-2159  
Email: [PublicTrusteeHCD@novascotia.ca](mailto:PublicTrusteeHCD@novascotia.ca)

## For more information:

See the brochure [What Is a Substitute Decision Maker?](#)

## 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			