

PROVINCIAL LEGAL SNAPSHOT

Nova Scotia

Abortion law, funding, and access — one-page reference

As of Jul 13, 2026

Research completed Jul 13, 2026

Confidence: high



● Abortion is legal at every stage of pregnancy — Canada has had no criminal abortion law since 1988 — but geographic gaps limit access in this jurisdiction.

LEGAL LIMIT	None (nationwide)	OFFERED LOCALLY TO	16 weeks (policy)	✓ INSURED SERVICE	Yes	✓ CLINIC ABORTIONS FUNDED	Yes
✓ MIFEGYMISO COVERED FOR ALL	Yes	✓ TELEHEALTH	Available	✓ SAFE-ACCESS ZONES	Law in force	✓ RECIPROCAL BILLING	Covered
✓ TRAVEL ASSISTANCE	Yes	INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTION	No	PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	Not required	MINOR CONSENT	Mature minor common law
PENDING CHANGE	See below						

§ Jurisdiction overview

Abortion is fully publicly insured in Nova Scotia, including Mifegymiso, but surgical services are concentrated in Halifax and a few regional hospitals, creating access barriers for rural, northern, and marginalized residents.

R v Morgentaler, [1988] 1 SCR 30 · R v Morgentaler, [1993] 1 SCR 462 · Protecting Access to Reproductive Health Care Act, SNS 2020, c 5

▣ Funding & coverage

Both procedural and medication abortion are fully insured services under the Nova Scotia Health Services and Insurance Act, with no co-payment or facility fee for residents with a valid health card.

Health Services and Insurance Act, RSNS 1989, c 197, s 8(2) · Government of Nova Scotia, 'Women to Benefit from Universal Coverage for Mifegymiso' (September 22, 2017) · Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, 'Nova Scotia Mifegymiso Factsheet'

CLINIC VS. HOSPITAL FUNDING

Unlike some provinces, Nova Scotia funds abortion regardless of facility type; the ROSE Clinic at the QEII is a hospital-based outpatient clinic and is fully publicly funded.

TRAVEL & OUT-OF-PROVINCE CARE

Nova Scotia operates an Out of Province Travel and Accommodation Cost Assistance Program, but it requires written pre-approval and applies only when services are unavailable in-province and the travel is more than 500 km one way.

● Where services actually are

Procedural abortion is available at four hospital sites — Halifax (ROSE Clinic at QEII), Truro (Colchester East Hants), Kentville (Valley Regional), and Sydney (Cape Breton Regional) — while Mifegymiso can be prescribed by primary care providers and dispensed at pharmacies province-wide. Procedural abortions are available in Nova Scotia up to approximately 15-16 weeks as a matter of service policy, not law; patients beyond that gestational age are referred out of province, most commonly to clinics in Ontario or the United States.

Nova Scotia Health, ROSE Clinic page · Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, 'Accessing Abortion Information and Services in Atlantic Canada' · Abortion Access Tracker, Nova Scotia

MINORS

Nova Scotia follows the common-law mature-minor doctrine; a minor who demonstrates sufficient understanding may consent to abortion without parental involvement, with no statutory age threshold.

SAFE-ACCESS ZONES

The Protecting Access to Reproductive Health Care Act (2020, c 5) establishes automatic 50-metre safe-access zones around facilities providing abortion, with the possibility of extending to 150 metres and establishing zones around residences and offices.

▣ Recent changes

- Jun 2025 The Nova Scotia Nursing and Midwifery Regulator (NSNMR) was formed, replacing the former Nova Scotia College of Nursing and Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia as a single multi-profession regulator for nurses and midwives.

- Nov 2024

The Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia authorized registered midwives to prescribe, order, and administer Mifegymiso under physician delegation.
- May 2024

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia adopted Professional Standards Regarding Conscientious Objection, requiring effective referral.
- Mar 2020

The Protecting Access to Reproductive Health Care Act (Bill 242) received Royal Assent, establishing automatic 50-metre safe-access zones around abortion facilities.
- Jun 2019

Bill C-75 received Royal Assent, formally repealing Criminal Code sections 287 and 288 (the remaining criminal provisions on abortion), effective September 19, 2019.
- May 2018

MSI introduced billing code 03.03V (Medical Abortion/Termination of Early Pregnancy, \$117.80) for physician oversight of medication abortion.
- Feb 2018

Nova Scotia eliminated the physician-referral requirement for abortion and launched the provincial self-referral line, making it possible to book directly by calling 1-833-352-0719.

⌵ Pending changes to watch

NSNMR consolidation and standards review

Policy · The NSNMR was formed June 30, 2025, and is reviewing and consolidating the codes of ethics and practice standards of its predecessor organizations.

May result in updated conscientious-objection policies for nurses and midwives, potentially harmonizing standards across professions. Unlikely to reduce access given existing CPSNS standards.

⌵ Key authorities

R v Morgentaler (1988) R v Morgentaler, [1988] 1 SCR 30 Struck down Criminal Code s. 251 as unconstitutional under s. 7 of the Charter, removing federal criminal barriers to abortion.
R v Morgentaler (1993) R v Morgentaler, [1993] 1 SCR 462 Struck down Nova Scotia's Medical Services Act as ultra vires criminal law, confirming provinces cannot legislate to restrict abortion.
Tremblay v Daigle Tremblay v Daigle, [1989] 2 SCR 530 Established that a fetus has no legal personality and that no third party — including the father — may enjoin an abortion.
Dobson v Dobson Dobson (Litigation Guardian of) v Dobson, [1999] 2 SCR 753 Held that a mother cannot be liable in tort for prenatal negligence causing injury to a child born alive.
Winnipeg Child and Family Services v G (DF) Winnipeg Child and Family Services (Northwest Area) v G (DF), [1997] 3 SCR 925 Held that courts cannot detain or treat a pregnant person to protect the fetus, affirming that the fetus has no independent legal personality.

Generated from the structured legal focused deep-research record for NS, Canada (research completed 2026-07-13). This snapshot condenses a much larger sourced dataset — full citations, quoted statutory text, and plain-language explanations are in the full Nova Scotia survey. This document has not been reviewed by a lawyer and should not be used as legal advice.