

# **Provincial Wellness Advisory Council**

## **Annual Performance Report**

**2013 - 2014**

## Chairperson's Message



I am pleased to provide the 2013-14 Annual Performance Report for the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council in accordance with the requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act* for a Category 3 Government Entity. The strategic directions of the Provincial Government, as well as the mandate and activities of the Advisory Council, as communicated by the Minister of Health and Community Services, were considered in the development of this report.

This Annual Performance Report provides an overview of the activities of the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council and the extent to which planned objectives were met during the third fiscal year covered by the Council's 2011-14 Activity Plan. This report also highlights activities undertaken over the last three years to meet the 2011-14 goals as identified in the plan.

The report indicates the actual results towards the achievement of the specific objectives; for objectives that were not achieved the variances are noted in the report. As Chair of the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council, my signature below is indicative of the entire Council's accountability for the preparation of this report and the actual results reported.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Donovan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Catherine Donovan, MD.  
Chairperson, Provincial Wellness Advisory Council

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## **1.0 Overview**

In 2002, the Provincial Government, through its strategic health plan, recognized the importance of maintaining a healthy population and established the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council (Advisory Council). The Minister of Health and Community Services appointed the Advisory Council members from a wide representation of disciplines and sectors. The Advisory Council brings a broad perspective to wellness issues and provides collective advice to the Minister on actions to advance wellness in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Recommendations from the Advisory Council informed the development of *Achieving Health and Wellness: Provincial Wellness Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*, released in 2006. Since that time the Advisory Council has provided advice on wellness priority areas such as healthy child development, injury prevention, and mental health promotion. During the course of the 2011-2014 Activity Plan the Advisory Council focused on the healthy built environment which is an emerging area of interest in the field of health living and wellness.

To advise the Minister on health promotion and wellness issues, the Advisory Council reviews current reports and research findings, receives presentations from content experts and prepares recommendations on an issue. The Advisory Council strives to collect and review the best available information and to consider the information from various perspectives to provide the best advice to the Minister.

### **Membership**

In 2013-14, the Advisory Council consisted of 28 members representing non-government agencies, professional associations and various Provincial Government departments. The Advisory Council membership appointments were made by the Minister of Health and Community Services (see Appendix A).

### **Meetings and Expenditures**

In 2013-14, support and secretariat services were provided to the Advisory Council by the Healthy Living Division, Department of Health and Community Services.

The Advisory Council held three meetings during the 2013-14 fiscal year (October 2013, February 2014, and March 2014). The Advisory Council expenses, such as meeting costs and, when necessary, travel for members to attend meetings, were covered by the DHCS. The yearly expenditures in 2013-14 were approximately \$3,100.

## **Mandate**

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council exists to provide advice and guidance to the Minister of Health and Community Services on the development and implementation of the Provincial Wellness Plan.

The role of the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council is to:

- expand and define the components of the wellness plan,
- identify gaps and priorities based on evidence and research,
- recommend action strategies,
- monitor the achievements of the wellness plan, and
- provide ongoing leadership for wellness.

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council's work is based on five key directions:

- 1) strengthen partnerships and collaboration,
- 2) develop and expand wellness initiatives,
- 3) increase public awareness,
- 4) enhance capacity for health promotion, and,
- 5) evaluate and monitor progress.

## **Primary Clients**

The Advisory Council recognized the Minister of Health and Community Services, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador as its primary client. By fostering an environment of understanding within government about healthy living and wellness, the communities, organizations and the people of the province are also served.

## **Values**

The Department of Health and Community Services' values were reflected daily as employees fulfilled their roles and responsibilities in serving their clients. The Advisory Council supported the following departmental values:

### ***Professionalism***

Each person is qualified and competent, and supported in their work through a culture that encourages continuing education and employee development.

### ***Excellence***

Each person makes decisions based on the best evidence available and follows proven best practices to ensure individual and departmental performance is maintained at the highest possible standard.

### ***Transparency and Accountability***

Each person takes their responsibilities to their clients seriously and contributes to a culture of openness and transparency in decision-making and reporting.

### **Collaboration**

Each person engages others, both within and external to the department, in a positive manner, respectful of others and their different perspectives.

### **Privacy**

Each person manages and protects information related to persons/families/organizations/communities and the department appropriately.

## **Vision**

The Advisory Council supported the vision of the Department of Health and Community Services:

***The vision of the Department of Health and Community Services is for individuals, families and communities to achieve optimal health and well-being.***

The Advisory Council contributed to achieving this vision by providing the best available advice to the Minister on efforts to advance and support healthy living and wellness in the province.

## **Mission**

The Advisory Council adopted the mission of the Department of Health and Community Services as stated in the Department's Strategic Plan 2011-2014 as follows:

***By March 31, 2017 the Department of Health and Community Services will have provided leadership to support an enhanced health care system that effectively serves the people of the province and helps them achieve optimal health and well-being.***

The Advisory Council contributed to the above mission statement and provided the best available and collective advice on healthy living and wellness to the Minister of Health and Community Services. This advice helped to inform wellness policies and initiatives to support the people of the province in achieving optimal health and well-being. The performance indicators that accompanied the Department's mission related to leadership, support and implementation, which are separate and distinct from the Advisory Council, which had an advisory capacity to the Minister.

## **3.0 Report on Performance**

### **Issue 1: Addressing Identified and Emerging Wellness Issues**

Newfoundland and Labrador has among the highest rates in Canada for chronic diseases including heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes. Contributing to the high rates of chronic disease are the high rates of common risk factors such as unhealthy eating, physical inactivity and tobacco use. These risk factors also contribute to other risk conditions such as high blood pressure, high blood sugar and excess body fat.

Efforts to reduce the rates of chronic disease and improve the rates of the common risk factors have focused mostly on individual health behaviour changes including awareness, promotion and skills development for healthy eating or smoking cessation support for people trying to quit smoking. In some wellness areas population based approaches such as no-smoking legislation have been implemented to support change in behaviour. However, a more comprehensive approach is required to improve the overall health of the population.

There is a growing body of research nationally and internationally which indicates that the built environment plays an important role in addressing the links between the common risk factors and chronic diseases. Healthy built environments include the constructed spaces where people live, learn, play, work and commute. Examples are buildings, roads, parks, trails and other green space in communities. A healthy built environment influences physical, mental and community health and is a key support for the wellness priorities. For example, communities that have created 'walkable' neighbourhoods with sidewalks and adequate lighting have increased the proportion of people who are physically active.

During 2013-14, the Advisory Council continued to explore the various aspects of the healthy built environment and prepared a paper on Health Impact Assessments and presented to the Minister current information on the emerging area of the healthy built environment.

Work undertaken during 2013-14 contributed to the Provincial Government's strategic direction of "Improved Population Health", particularly in the area of wellness.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have continued making recommendations on issues that impact the health and well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

**Measure:** Continued making recommendations

| Goal Indicators   | Progress during 2011-2014   |
|---|---|
| Obtained the expertise of Council members to identify emerging issues.      | The Advisory Council obtained the expertise of Council members to identify issues and potential action strategies and continued making recommendations to the Minister. The Advisory Council received a presentation on Community Planning from Municipalities NL, a presentation on food security from Dietitians of Canada NL, and information from the NL Centre for Applied Health Research presentation on health impact assessments.  |
| Completed environmental scans to determine policy relevance                 | The Advisory Council completed environmental scans to determine policy relevance and continued making recommendations to the Minister. The Advisory Council reviewed the original recommendations on wellness presented to the Minister between 2003 and 2010, used the Building Healthy Communities Conference 2011 to scan the provincial situation among potential partners, and reviewed the literature and completed an environmental scan related to health impact assessments. |
| Established working groups as necessary.                                    | The Advisory Council established working groups for mental health promotion, environmental health, and healthy child development which reviewed current information related to these wellness priority areas. The Advisory Council also participated in the establishment of the Building Healthy Communities Collaborative which was used as the working group which continued making recommendations in the report and to the Minister on the healthy built environment.            |
| Presented position papers to the Minister of Health and Community Services. | The Advisory Council continued making recommendations to the Minister when it presented the following position papers and reports: <i>Report and Recommendations 2011</i> ; <i>Report on Health Impact Assessments</i> ; and, draft of the <i>Healthy Built Environment Wellness Paper</i> .  |

**Annual Objective:**

By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have provided commentary and recommendations on addressing priority wellness issues to the Department and Minister of Health and Community Services.

**Measure:** Provided commentary and recommendations

| Annual Objectives Indicators              | Progress in 2013-14  |
|---|--|
| Obtained expert and member group opinions | The Advisory Council obtained expert and member group opinions from the Building Healthy Communities Collaborative, the NL Centre for Applied Health Research and Dr. Karen Lee, Senior Advisor with the City of New York. The Advisory Council used this information when it provided commentary and recommendations to the Minister of Health and Community Services on wellness priorities and the emerging issue of the healthy built environment. |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Assessed resource capacity to develop issues                    | The Advisory Council assessed its resource capacity to develop the emerging issue of the healthy built environment. The issue of the healthy built environment is a broad issue and other government departments such as the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs and the Department of Transportation and Works were engaged in discussions to inform the development of commentary and recommendations on the healthy built environment for the Minister of Health and Community Services. |
| Reviewed available health status information on emerging issues | The Advisory Council reviewed available health status information from the Department of Health and Community Services and partner organizations such as the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation to inform the commentary and recommendations for the Minister.   |
| Reached consensus on issue to be addressed                      | The Advisory Council used the advice of the above noted experts, health status information and current research to reach a consensus on the issue of the healthy built environment to prepare commentary and advice for the Minister of Health and Community Services.  |
| Prioritized identified/ emerging issues                         | The Advisory Council used the available information and assessment of capacity to prioritize the emerging issue and prepared the commentary and recommendations for the Minister. These priority issues included: health impact assessments; active transportation; food security; land-use policies, and healthy building designs.   |
| Developed working or policy papers                              | The Advisory Council prepared commentary and recommendations and prepared a draft policy paper on the healthy built environment which was submitted to the Department of Health and Community Services in March 2014.   |

## Discussion of Results

In 2013-14, the Advisory Council achieved its annual objective and indicators and prepared commentary and recommendations for the Minister of Health and Community Services on the emerging wellness area of the healthy built environment. The Advisory Council presented information on the issue of the healthy built environment to the Minister at their February 2014 meeting and prepared a draft paper with recommendations in March 2014. Through these actions the Advisory Council also met its Goal for 2011-2014 and continued making recommendations on issues that impacted the health and well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians such as the wellness priorities in the *Report and Recommendations 2011* and in the *Healthy Built Environment Wellness Paper*.

## Issue 2: Monitoring and Surveillance

During 2013-14, the Advisory Council contributed to the Provincial Government's strategic direction of "Accountability and Stability of Health and Community Services". In keeping with this strategic direction the Advisory Council focused on increased monitoring and utilization of information for decision making to inform its recommendations and reports to the Minister of Health and Community Services.

The Advisory Council developed partnerships and reviewed current information related to the wellness priority areas and the emerging issue of the healthy built environment to help inform its recommendations to the Minister.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2014, Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have monitored available information in a manner that provides evidence to inform wellness related policy and legislation.

**Measure:** Monitored available information

| Goal Indicators  | Progress during 2011-2014   |
|--|---|
| Advised the Department on the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data related to existing wellness priorities. | The Advisory Council monitored the available information including the initial wellness recommendations and the wellness indicators provided by the Department of Health and Community Services and advised the Department on the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data with the concept of a wellness report card. |
| Improved the coordination of data collection and analysis related to existing indicators managed by council members.   | The Advisory Council monitored the available information on the wellness priority areas and improved the coordination of data collection and analysis related to the existing indicators managed by council members when it developed the <i>Report and Recommendations 2011</i> .  |
| Engaged the university and academic research community to discuss increased capacity.                                  | The Advisory Council engaged Memorial University and the NL Centre for Applied Health Research and discussed their capacity to assist with the monitoring of available information on the wellness priorities and other emerging wellness issues such as the supportive environment and healthy built environment.            |

### **Annual Objectives:**

By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have achieved increased capacity in monitoring through partnership and collaboration.

**Measure:** Increased capacity in monitoring through partnership and collaboration.

| Annual Objectives Indicators       | Progress in 2013-14   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Created new partnerships to assist | The Advisory Council increased its capacity for monitoring and created a partnership with the NL Centre for Applied Health Research. The Centre |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| with and/or support monitoring.                                    | used its expertise in analysis, interpretation and synthesis of scientific research and supported the Advisory Council to monitor the available information on the emerging issue of the healthy built environment through a literature review and environmental scan.              |
| Collaborated on initiatives to assist with and support monitoring. | The Advisory Council increased its capacity for monitoring and collaborated with the NL Centre for Applied Health Research and collected current information and prepared a paper on health impact assessments (a tool to support assessment and monitoring of built environments). |

## Discussion of Results

In 2013-14, the Advisory Council achieved its annual objective and indicators and increased its capacity in monitoring through partnership and collaboration with Memorial University and the NL Centre for Applied Health Research. Through these partnerships and collaboration the Advisory Council also met its Goal for 2011-2014. The Advisory Council monitored the available information on the wellness indicators and developed the *Report and Recommendations 2011* on the wellness priorities and developed the draft healthy built environment wellness paper with recommendations and submitted to the Department of Health and Community Services in March 2014.

### Issue 3: The Supportive Environment

A supportive environment is a broad concept which includes both the built environment and social environments which support people to be healthy. The Advisory Council has continued to assess both elements to prepare advice for the Minister of Health and Community Services. Supportive environments, including both the social and physical environments, are those where people feel connected to each other and empowered to take action to make choices and changes as needed. The social aspect of the environment includes the personal capacity (skills, abilities and assets of individuals and households), as well as their connection to their community through friendships and organizations and the socioeconomic environment. The built environment refers to the infrastructure of the community such as the buildings, bike paths, green spaces, parks and sidewalks, and is addressed in Issue 1. In both cases the environment plays a significant role in supporting people to be healthy.

In addressing the issue of the supportive environment the Advisory Council contributed to the Provincial Government's strategic direction of "Improved Population Health" with a particular focus on wellness.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have promoted the concept of the supportive environment with respect to its impact on the health of the population.

**Measure:** Promoted the concept of the supportive environment

| Goal Indicators   | Progress during 2011-2014  |
|---|--|
| Applied the wellness framework/perspective to policy and programs relating to the supportive environment. | The Advisory Council promoted the concept of the supportive environment and applied the wellness framework and perspective when it reviewed the policies and programs relating to the wellness priorities, health impact assessments, and the healthy built environment.   |
| Made recommendations regarding resources on health literacy.  | The Advisory Council promoted the concept of the supportive environment and reviewed information on health literacy, but was not able to make recommendations regarding resources on health literacy due to limited current information.   |
| Identified target audiences and key messages  | The Advisory Council promoted the concept of the supportive environment through workshops and information sessions with the identified target audience including municipalities, municipal planners and the NL Institute of Planners. Through these sessions key messages were shared including the link between health and the environment and the need for various sectors to be involved in addressing the issue. |
| Strengthened existing partnerships to address this issue.   | The Advisory Council promoted the concept of the supportive environment and strengthened existing partnerships with groups such as Memorial University and NL Centre for Applied Health Research to address the issue of the supportive environment.   |
| Engaged new partners to address this issue.   | The Advisory Council promoted the concept of the supportive environment and engaged new partners to address the issue such as Municipalities NL, Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, and Office of Public Engagement. Individual Council Members also engaged new partners to address this issue including service organizations such as Rotary and Lions Clubs  |

### Annual Objectives:

By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have assessed the progress of initiatives undertaken to promote the concept of supportive environment.

**Measure:** Assessed progress of initiatives undertaken to promote the concept of supportive environment.

| Annual Objectives Indicators  | Progress in 2013-14   |
|---|---|
| Prepared an inventory of initiatives promoting supportive environments. | The Advisory Council assessed progress of initiatives undertaken to promote the concept of supportive environment through the following activities: Through its partnership with the NL Centre for Applied Health Research prepared an inventory of supportive environment initiatives which was included in the paper on health impact assessments. Through its partnership with the Building Healthy Communities Collaborate working group prepared a listing of current initiatives which was included in the wellness paper on the healthy built environment. |
| Provided a progress report to the Minister on initiatives               | The Advisory Council assessed progress of initiatives undertaken to promote the concept of supportive environment   |

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| promoting the supportive environment. | and reported on progress to the Minister of Health and Community Services at the Advisory Council meeting in February 2014. |
|---------------------------------------|---|

## Discussion of Results

In 2013-14, the Advisory Council achieved its annual objective and indicators and assessed the progress of initiatives undertaken to promote the concept of supportive environment. This information on initiatives was included in the paper prepared on health impact assessments and additional information was included in the development of the wellness paper on the healthy built environment. Through these actions the Advisory Council also met its Goal for 2011-2014. The Advisory Council promoted the concept of the supportive environment with respect to its impact on the health of the population through workshops and information sessions, written reports on health impact assessments and the healthy built environment, and when the Advisory Council presented to the Minister of Health and Community Services in February 2014. While the Advisory Council was not able to make specific recommendations on the resources for health literacy they were able, through the many other activities, to promote the broad concept of the supportive environment.

The objective and indicators for 2014-15 is provided in the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council Activity Plan 2014-17 which is available on the Department of Health and Community Services website at: [www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications](http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications).

## 4.0 Challenges and Opportunities

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council expects to fulfil its mandate in 2014-15, given the Minister's support for the Council's work.

There are partnership opportunities and initiatives which may support and/or direct the Advisory Council's work in the coming year, including:

- Participating in the Provincial Wellness Review an initiative of the Provincial Government to better understand the existing system and structures which support health promotion and wellness in the province, and,
- Meeting with the Minister's Cancer Control Advisory Committee to discuss common themes and emerging issues.

While no challenges have been identified, the final report of the Provincial Wellness Review may present not only opportunities, but also new challenges that could impact the Advisory Council's work over the next three years. The final report on the Provincial Wellness Review will be released in 2014; the Minister will provide direction to the Advisory Council following the release of the report.

## Appendix A – Committee Membership as of March 2014

Chairperson: Dr. Catherine Donovan, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Faculty of Medicine

- Association of Allied Health Professionals – Lisa Durnford
- Alliance for the Control of Tobacco – Kevin Coady
- Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador – Lynn Power
- Canadian Cancer Society of Newfoundland and Labrador - Matthew Piercey
- Canadian Diabetes Association – Carol Ann Smith
- Canadian Mental Health Association – George Skinner
- Department of Advanced Education and Skills – Aisling Gogan
- Department of Child, Youth and Family Services – Jason Higgins
- Department of Education – Bradley Clarke
- Department of Environment and Conservation – Angela Burridge
- Department of Health and Community Services – Linda Carter and Éline Chatigny
- Department of Service NL – Donna Kelland
- Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation - Michelle Healey
- Dietitians of Newfoundland and Labrador – Member Group of Dietitians of Canada – Janine Woodrow
- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador - Heather Percy
- Memorial University of Newfoundland, Faculty of Medicine – Pauline Duke
- Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador – Lucy Stoyles
- Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research - Pablo Navarro
- Newfoundland and Labrador Lung Association – Greg Noel
- Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association – Jonathan Carpenter
- Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association - Fay Matthews
- Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association - Brian Shortall/Gronwyn Price
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association – Judy Beranger
- Office of Public Engagement, Rural Secretariat – Michelle Snow
- Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador – Tina Auchinleck-Ryan
- Regional Health Authorities – Natalie Moody
- Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador – Kelly Heisz

## Appendix B – Strategic Directions

**Title:** Population Health

**Outcome:** Improved Population Health

To achieve “improved population health”, focusing efforts on public health interventions that will; promote healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities, prevent acute and chronic illness and injury, and protect people from health hazards, are necessary.

An integrated and collaborative approach, which preserves and promotes health and prevents and controls disease, is needed to:

- reduce the incidence of many of the illnesses that currently contribute to the burden of illness in Newfoundland and Labrador; and
- prepare the health system for illnesses and threats to health that are expected to emerge as society and the physical environment change.

Activities in these areas will decrease the burden of illness and associated health care and treatment costs, and contribute significantly to a sustainable health system. Focus areas for 2011-2014 are found on the next page. Some are population specific and others are related to health initiatives or programs to improve population health.

| Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction 2011-2017      | The Population Health Strategic Direction is |                  |           |
|---|--|------------------|-----------|
|   | Addressed by The PWAC                        |                  |           |
|   | Activity Plan                                | Operational plan | Work Plan |
| Environmental Health                                  | √  |                  |           |
| Healthy Aging   | √  |                  |           |
| Healthy Eating/ Physical Activity                     | √  |                  |           |
| Injury Prevention                                     | √  |                  |           |
| Maternal/Newborn Health                               | √  |                  |           |
| Smoking Rates And Protection from Environmental Smoke | √  |                  |           |
| Wellness  | √  |                  |           |

**Title:** Accountability and stability of health and community services

**Outcome:** Improved system performance and sustainability

Health is a priority of the Provincial Government, such that record investments have been made for several consecutive years. In 2010-2011, health and community services consumed approximately 37% of all government expenditures with the largest percentage allocated to regional health services (70 %). The ability to sustain the provision of quality services requires the coordination and integration of services, increased standardization and monitoring of clinical practice and service, and innovation. A focus on increased monitoring and evaluation, the achievement of balanced budgets, the stabilization of health human resources and increased utilization of information for evidence based practice will lead to a more sustainable health system and contribute to improved health outcomes for the people of the Province.

| Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction 2011-2017 | The Strategic Direction of Improved Accountability and Stability in the Delivery of Health and Community Services within Available Resources, |                  |           |
|--|---|------------------|-----------|
|  | Is Addressed by The PWAC  |                  |           |
|  | Activity Plan   | Operational Plan | Work Plan |
| Evaluation of Legislation, Programs and Services | √   |                  |           |
| Health Research                                  | √   |                  |           |
| Information Management and Technology            | √   |                  |           |
| Performance Measurement/ Monitoring              | √   |                  |           |

## Contact Information

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