

# Living Well, Living Respectfully

## Strategic Plan 2014-17

Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social  
Development

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**Paper\***

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**Reference Period**

This Strategic Plan covers the reference period April 1, 2014 through March 31, 2017. The period covers the previously existing mandate areas, programs and services of the former Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (Recreation and Sport Division); the Healthy Living Division and the Seniors and Aging Division of the Department of Health and Community Services; and the Disability Policy Office and the Poverty Reduction Division of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. These divisions were combined to form the new Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development on September 30, 2014.

**Published by**

Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

## Message from the Minister

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In accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan for the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development (SWSD) which was established in September 30, 2014. SWSD is a Category One entity and this is the first Strategic Plan for the Department under the Act.

The new Department aligns government-wide efforts to improve the overall well-being of our province's population across the lifespan, and to bring into more direct focus issues around an aging population. We know that a healthy, active and engaged population today means a more vibrant and prosperous tomorrow, and better opportunities for all to live longer, happier, healthier lives. To achieve our vision of all people in our province reaching their full potential and well-being, it is clear that solutions must involve fundamental changes, and the development of partnerships across government and all sectors of society.

Through this strategic plan and the annual performance reports, SWSD will seek to achieve its goals based on the vision, mission and mandate of the new department to advance efforts across government and sectors to focus on our population's overall wellness and to help ensure all people are able to contribute to, and benefit from, our society and economy. In developing this three-year strategic plan, SWSD considered the Provincial Government's Strategic Directions, as well as the mandate of the new Department. These strategic directions are contained in Appendix Two and are reflected throughout this strategic plan. As Minister, my signature below acknowledges that I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of the specific goals and objectives contained therein.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clyde Jackman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**CLYDE JACKMAN, MHA**  
Burin-Placentia West  
Minister

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# Executive Summary

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## Mandate

The Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development (SWSD) takes a proactive, preventative and integrated approach to living well and living more equitably and inclusively in the province by addressing social and economic factors from the earliest stages of life and across the lifespan. Through clear, aligned goals and more integrated policies across the board, SWSD aims to influence the achievement of positive outcomes while broadening the capacity of many partners to participate at the individual, institutional and government levels needed to carry out change. The Department has dedicated focus and efforts in the following specific areas:

- Seniors
- Adult Protection
- Wellness
- Recreation and Sport
- Poverty Reduction
- Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

## Vision

**All people in the province are equal, included, supported and empowered to achieve their full potential and well-being.**

## Values

- Respect
- Equality
- Inclusion
- Leadership
- Wellness
- Relationships
- Collaboration
- Accountable

## Mission Statement

By March 31, 2017, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have provided leadership to align government-wide efforts and facilitate positive change to improve overall health and well-being.

## Strategic Issues, Goals and Objectives

### **Strategic Issue One: Living respectfully in an inclusive, equitable society for all.**

**Goal:** By March 31, 2017, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have removed barriers and supported inclusion for all.

### **Strategic Issue Two: Living well as our way of life in Newfoundland and Labrador**

**Goal:** By March 31, 2017, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have advanced an integrated approach to wellness across government and sectors.

# Introduction

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This 2014-2017 strategic plan of the newly created Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development (SWSD) marks a new approach to social development by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Government wants to support people in making choices that help them live productive and rewarding lives, and to improve our province's overall quality of life.

The Department of SWSD brings together resources and combines efforts for seniors and aging, poverty reduction, inclusion of people with disabilities, health promotion, wellness and recreation and sport within a social development approach. The Department is taking a leadership role across government and other sectors to promote a common vision of well-being for people in our province, and to develop and support policies and solutions that will make a real difference in our society and economy.

Government recognizes that many factors influence people's well-being. These basic determinants as outlined in the **Provincial Wellness Plan** (2006) include: social support networks; income and social status; employment and working conditions; social environments; physical conditions; education level; healthy child development; health services; personal health practices and coping skills; biology; gender; and culture. While individuals are responsible for their own personal well-being, and efforts at education can result in changed behaviours and improved outcomes, Government recognizes that social and economic conditions play an even greater role in the fabric and quality of our lives. The choices we make are shaped by the choices available to us.

## Social Development Approach

Social development concerns the well-being of people, the community and society. It is a more holistic, systematic approach that focuses on helping to create the social conditions, and promoting processes of planned social change, that support people in achieving their full potential and living better lives.

Living well and achieving our full potential, both as individuals and as a society, involves social dimensions and environments, equity of access to opportunities and services, and respect for all persons regardless of age or other circumstances. While our province has inherent strengths, persistent gaps remain and we must do more to remove barriers and eliminate disparities in our province even as new challenges arise.

This is a dynamic process over the lifespan because our lives are constantly changing. Certain barriers and hazards early in life will affect well-being later in life unless they are reduced or removed. Over the course of people's lives, some of these factors (including those that can be modified) interact and influence how well we live and age. The impact of our aging population is being felt throughout our society and is giving it a new face. Our challenge as a society is that if we are living longer lives, we also want to live better lives.

The Department of SWSD is refreshing its own strategies and strengthening its links with other government sectors to ensure integrated, coordinated approaches and more effective outcomes. SWSD's goal is to work with partners to strengthen capacity and create the supportive social and physical environments needed for well-being. The key is to identify what strategies will have the greatest "upstream" impacts.

The Department of SWSD will focus on upstream interventions such as health promotion, injury prevention, poverty reduction, inclusion, recreation, sport, physical activity and healthy aging to improve the overall health and well-being of our population. A second, equally important focus is identifying what types of other interventions to employ, who should undertake them, to whom they will be directed, and when they will be implemented in order to best contribute to the desired outcomes for optimal well-being.

### Upstream Approach

A basic example of an upstream approach is the concept of preventative health care, or the idea that the goal of the health care system is to have healthy people. It makes more sense (in terms of outcomes and costs) to focus on keeping people well (for example, through physical activity and good nutrition) than to try and cure illness.



In addition to the Department's own strategies that promote and support well-being, we recognize the need to be involved in strategies that impact our province's social development and quality of life such as education, literacy, employment, early childhood development, labour market activities and other policy initiatives. If we want to live better lives, all government departments and all sectors must share in this common vision and work together.

Everyone in our province has the right to achieve their full potential. Over the plan period, the Department of SWSD will focus on horizontal strategies and initiatives that support our province's people as they move through life's transitions – from families with children to seniors, from school to work, from one job to another, from unemployment to employment, and from the workforce to retirement. We will work to create better outcomes for our province's people by engaging with partners and individuals to nurture a culture of commitment to broad social development goals, and building healthier communities.

This horizontal, integrated approach will focus on identifying common priorities, raising public awareness about choices and actions, enhancing community capacity, strengthening partnerships and collaboration, demonstrating accountability, and measuring and reporting progress. We will encourage people across government – and across the province – to use their abilities and resources to develop solutions to the key issues that impact our well-being. We are committed to having individuals, partners and stakeholders be integral to these processes in order to bring about positive change.

### Integrated, Aligned Approach

- A healthier, more active population reduces costs and pressures on health care, freeing up resources for other areas of well-being such as education
- A more educated workforce is more innovative, making us more productive and prosperous
- A wealthier economy can afford better social programs and cultural activities for all people whose overall health outcomes, in turn, benefit from closer ties to community and each other
- A more inclusive society means access to opportunities for all, removing barriers and supporting persons with disabilities to contribute to all aspects of society
- A more sustainable environment protects people and jobs, produces nutritious foods, and provides for recreation, sport and quality family time.

# Departmental Overview

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An overview of the Department is contained below and includes the mandate, legislation, staff complement, office locations, organizational structure and corporate values. For further information relating to the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, please visit [www.swsd.gov.nl.ca](http://www.swsd.gov.nl.ca).

## Mandate

The Department of SWSD's mandate is to lead a comprehensive and dynamic approach to supporting and promoting social well-being through a focus on wide social processes and structures. The Department is responsible for policy, planning and programs for seniors and aging, adult protection, health promotion, wellness, recreation and sport, and government-wide strategies to alleviate and reduce poverty, promote equity and enhance the inclusion of all persons including those with disabilities.

The goal of this approach is change – to produce an environment where people are empowered and capable of acting and making their own decisions in the broadest sense. It is a process that promotes improved outcomes for people by focusing attention on the potential for action as they shape their daily lives, meanwhile understanding the constraints and barriers impacting them, and focusing interventions on creating the capacity and supportive environments so that solutions can be found and barriers removed. In this, the capacity of individuals, families, local communities and organizations are central to and part of, these intervention strategies as well as governments at every level and stage.

The Department of SWSD and its partners in government and community work together to address complex, systemic issues that prevent our province's population and population groups, especially those who are vulnerable and at risk, from realizing their full potential and well-being. These issues involve many departments, agencies and organizations and require comprehensive, multi-disciplinary responses and a focus on root causes. The Department of SWSD leads a more cohesive, integrated and structured approach to these issues on the public policy agenda, and works horizontally in recognition that the solutions lie beyond a single department and involve multiple sectors and multiple departments.

The Department of SWSD takes a proactive, preventative and integrated approach to living well and living more equitably and inclusively in the province by addressing social and economic factors from the earliest stages of life and across the lifespan. Through clear, aligned goals and more integrated policies across the board, SWSD aims to influence the achievement of positive outcomes while broadening the capacity of many partners to participate at the individual, institutional and government levels needed to carry out change. The Department has dedicated focus and efforts in the following specific areas:

- Seniors: to promote healthy aging across the lifespan and foster a healthy society which honours, listens to and includes seniors in building stronger, more dynamic communities
- Adult Protection: to administer the **Adult Protection Act**, which protects adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect, and who do not understand or appreciate that risk
- Wellness: to provide leadership and focus on progressive measures to help all people in the province to adopt healthier habits and more active lifestyles over the life course
- Recreation and Sport: to promote and support physical activity and the recreation and sport delivery system, including through the promotion and support of physical activity for children and youth
- Poverty Reduction: to focus on reducing, alleviating and preventing poverty and ensuring that every citizen is provided the opportunity to share fully in our society and economy
- Inclusion: to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society including access to economic, social and cultural opportunities on an equal basis with others.

## Legislation

The Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development administers the following legislation:

- **Smoke-Free Environment Act.** The **Smoke-Free Environment Act** was brought into force in June 1994 with a goal of reducing the exposure that people have to environmental tobacco smoke. The **Smoke-Free Environment Act** (2005) promotes the creation of healthy public environments, prohibits smoking in all indoor public places including bars, decks and bingo halls, prohibits designated smoking rooms in workplaces and prohibits smoking in motor vehicles while persons under 16 years of age are present.

- **Tobacco Control Act.** The **Tobacco Control Act** was brought into force in June 1994 and aims to reduce the number of young people who begin to smoke by restricting youth access to tobacco products. The Act makes it illegal for anyone, including retailers, family and friends, to give or sell tobacco products to youth under the age of 19, restricts how tobacco products can be displayed, stored and promoted at retail, and limits the type and number of establishments that sell tobacco.
- **An Act to Establish the Boxing Authority of Newfoundland and Labrador (Boxing Authority Act).** This act establishes the Boxing Authority of Newfoundland and Labrador and sets out the requirements for boxing competitions in the province.
- **An Act Respecting the Protection of Adults (Adult Protection Act).** This act protects adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect, and who do not understand or appreciate that risk.

### Where We Operate

The Department of SWSD is located mainly in the Confederation Building Complex, West Block (second and third floors), St. John's, and operates a regional office in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (Recreation and Sport). The Department also operates a training centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (which includes a pool), and two swimming pools – one in Gander and one in Corner Brook – that are co-located with the Arts and Culture Centres in their respective communities. Figure 1 (overleaf) shows the location of the Department of SWSD's offices, sites and facilities.

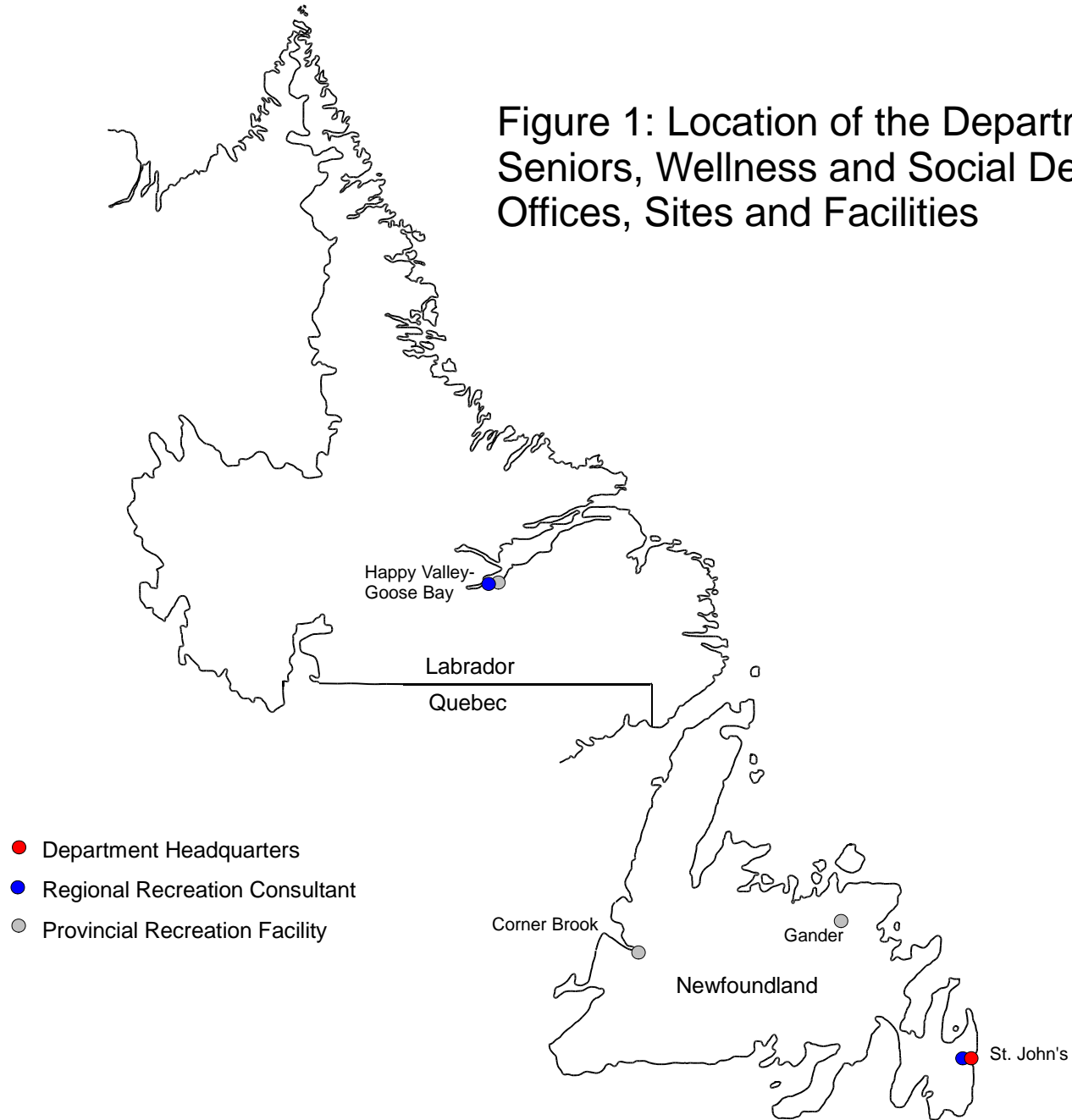
### Our Employees

As of March 31, 2015, we have a core staff of 46. Most (89 per cent) our employees are located on the Avalon Peninsula. The Department of SWSD has 38 female employees (83 per cent) and eight male employees (17 per cent).

### Financial Information

In 2014-15, the Department's estimated total budget is \$20,838,200 (gross expenditure less related revenue). Funding for the fiscal year 2014-15 by program (gross expenditure) is as follows: Executive and Support Services is \$1,574,800 or seven per cent of the total budget; Health Promotion, Wellness and Sport is \$16,156,200 or 78 per cent of the total budget; and Seniors, Aging and Social Development is \$3,107,800 or 15 per cent of the total budget.

Figure 1: Location of the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development Offices, Sites and Facilities



## Lines of Business

The Department of SWSD's Lines of Business are the discrete and coherent sets of programs, services and/or products that represent what the Department delivers to its external clients. Accordingly, the Lines of Business have been identified as follows:

### Horizontal Approach and Initiatives

The Department of SWSD's horizontal initiatives cross over many government departments and sectors and often involve multiple approaches to complex issues that have many facets and dimensions shared by two or more departments and involve multiple partners and stakeholders. Activities within this line of business related to departmental mandate areas are:

- Addressing equity and rights issues especially concerning vulnerable and at-risk populations
- Administering the **Adult Protection Act**
- Engaging citizens, partners and key stakeholders to identify joint issues and key priorities
- Leading and collaborating on the development and implementation of horizontal strategies, policies and approaches across government and sectors
- Monitoring and measuring progress made, publically reporting on results and making necessary adjustments to inform future actions. This allows all partners to have a common understanding of goals, how to work together to achieve them and how they will measure and report on results
- Forming productive partnerships with defined goals and outcomes
- Sharing information, authority, responsibility, resources (such as time, funding and expertise), and risk among partners, stakeholders and collaborators for mutual benefits
- Overseeing implementation and promotion of integrated and aligned policy and program priorities and initiatives
- Developing and applying a social development policy lens to public policy issues
- Removing barriers for persons with disabilities resulting in inclusion for all.

## Capacity Building

The Department of SWSD works to support capacity building which focuses on enhancing the ability to address and evaluate issues and questions related to policy choices, and to promote social development options based on understanding needs and environments (socio-economic, physical and cultural) at the individual, government, sector and community levels. SWSD works to create an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, and to support engagement of all stakeholders (individual, public and private) so that social development interventions are more effective and bring about desired change. This includes understanding and removing the barriers that stop people, governments, institutions, and organizations from realizing their development goals, while enhancing the abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results. Individuals, communities and non-government organizations and networks are the main clients of capacity building, but all levels of government and the private sector need support in developing their capacity to better plan, organize, manage, partner and respond to social development needs and issues. Activities within this line of business related to departmental mandate areas are:

- Engaging people, communities, organizations, stakeholders and partners and others to share information and knowledge, and to collaborate effectively in decision making, policy development and the delivery of programs and services
- Focusing on client- and community-based perspectives, knowledge, needs and issues through research, consultation and evaluation
- Providing grants to support networks, organizations, community groups and Aboriginal governments whose programs and services align with and advance the mandate of the Department and are within the fiscal resources of the provincial government through SWSD granting programs
- Improving the quality and impact of social development processes and interventions by providing evidence-based policy and planning advice
- Promoting innovative, proven concepts to support developing and operationalizing improved policies, programs and services
- Identifying, developing and promoting person-centred and community-based policies, strategies and plans
- Undertaking and strengthening information sharing, progress monitoring and reporting and evaluation (measurement of results).

## Organization of the Department

The structure of the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development (shown in Figure 2 - overleaf) is as follows:

### Seniors, Aging and Social Development Branch with Responsibility for the Status of Persons with Disabilities

**The Seniors and Aging Division with Responsibility for Adult Protection.** The Seniors and Aging Division works with other government departments and agencies to promote healthy aging across the lifespan. Established in 2004, the Division acts as a centre of expertise and knowledge on seniors and aging. One of the main functions of the Division is to oversee the implementation of the **Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework** and to monitor the implementation process. This is done with the support of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Seniors and Aging, seniors' organizations and retiree groups, the federal government, other provinces and territories and multiple key stakeholders. The Division is also responsible for the administration of the **Adult Protection Act**.

**Poverty Reduction Strategy.** The **Poverty Reduction Strategy** has been a key component in the Provincial Government's overall social and economic approach to ensuring the province meets its full potential and that prosperity is shared. The strategy has been built over time through an incremental series of investments aimed at helping people living with or vulnerable to poverty succeed and become self-reliant. The Poverty Reduction Division oversees the implementation of the **Poverty Reduction Strategy** and works closely with other government departments and agencies, community groups, people living in or vulnerable to poverty, business and labour to ensure that the right supports and policies exist. Its focus is to ensure that poverty is given full consideration in policy and program development throughout the Provincial Government.

**Disability Policy Office.** The purpose of the Disability Policy Office is to: 1) promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society; 2) engage people with disabilities and advocates in developing ways to identify and remove barriers; 3) help government departments make sure their policies and programs do not exclude people with disabilities; 4) promote positive attitudes; and 5) raise awareness of disability issues. The Disability Policy Office works with all government departments and agencies to develop policies and programs that include people with disabilities and that are barrier free. This work is important to make sure persons with disabilities have access to the same opportunities



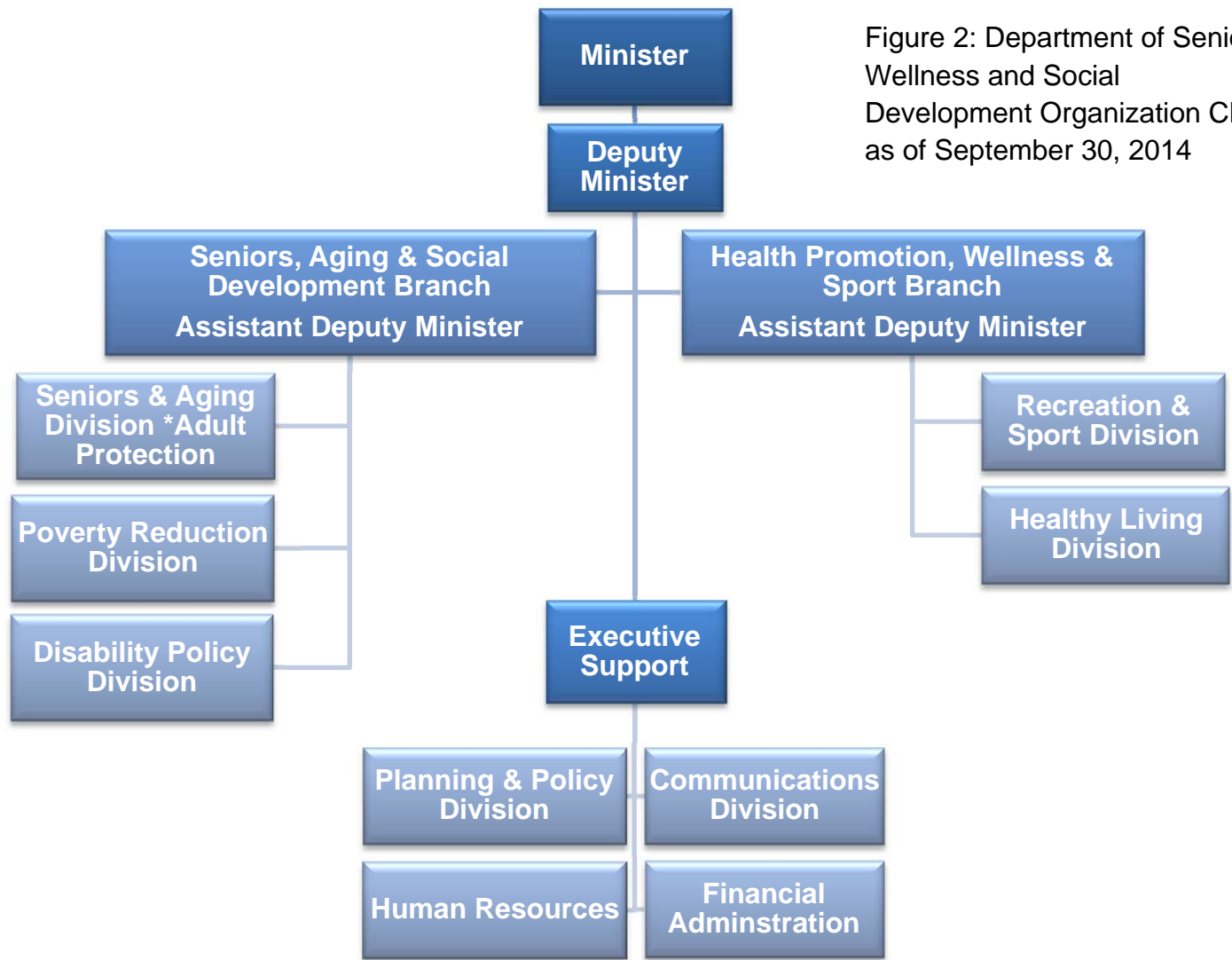


Figure 2: Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development Organization Chart as of September 30, 2014

as others. The Disability Policy Office is also responsible for implementation, monitoring and reporting of **Access. Inclusion. Equality: Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

### Health Promotion, Wellness and Sport Branch

**Healthy Living.** The Healthy Living Division provides leadership, guidance and support for **Achieving Health and Wellness: Provincial Wellness Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador (Provincial Wellness Plan)**. Promoting and supporting the healthy behaviours of individuals and families where they live, learn, work, play and commute (in the home, school, workplace and community) is needed for overall health and well-being. This promotion and support is the shared responsibility of many partners working together to create the conditions and environments that support health and well-being. The **Provincial Wellness Plan** supports the following priority areas: healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco control, injury prevention, child and youth development, mental health promotion and environmental health. Advancing these priorities requires a variety of strategies including implementing healthy public policy, creating supportive environments, supporting community action and the development of personal skills.

**Recreation and Sport.** The Recreation and Sport Division provides leadership in physical activity, sport and community recreation with an overall goal of fostering healthy lifestyles within the framework of **Active, Healthy Newfoundland and Labrador**, the provincial recreation and sport strategy. The Division provides support for community-based recreation and sport organizations and provincial and national sports programs. Annual operating funding is provided to School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador (SSNL), Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador (RNL) and Sport Newfoundland and Labrador (SNL). RNL works with national, regional and local recreation organizations, recreation commissions, communities and organizations to develop and deliver a broad range of promotion and programming activities. SSNL works within the K-12 school system to promote and foster student development through physical activity and recreational and competitive sport opportunities. SNL works with over 40 provincial sport organizations (PSOs) to promote and support sport development and sport excellence.

## Executive Support

Executive Support for the Minister, Deputy Minister and the Assistant Deputy Minister (Seniors, Aging and Social Development Branch with responsibility for Seniors and Aging, the **Adult Protection Act**, Poverty Reduction and the Disability Policy Office) and the Assistant Deputy Minister (Health Promotion, Wellness and Sport Branch responsible for Healthy Living, Health Promotion and Recreation, Sport and Physical Activity) is provided by positions in administration, communications, and planning and policy. Human Resources and the Departmental Comptroller and Financial Administration are positions shared with other departments.

## Values

Our values are the building blocks for all that we do as individuals and employees of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are a daily guide to our actions and provide a common base for our decisions, individually and collectively, throughout the Department of SWSD. We have identified the following core values to guide our work every day, at all levels and in all circumstances:

**Respect** – We celebrate diversity and treat everyone with dignity and courtesy through open communication, fairness and support.

**Equality** – We seek to ensure that everyone has equitable access to participate fully in our society and economy.

**Inclusion** – We maintain an inclusive, accessible environment where everyone is secure, productive, can strive for excellence and have full participation.

**Leadership** – We know who we are and where we are going, and through collaboration and action, we will get there. We bring professionalism, expertise and innovation to our work to facilitate change and to lead by example.

**Wellness** – We actively support the right to make choices and we work to remove barriers toward healthy and fulfilling lives through our awareness and promotion of well-being in our workplace and through our work with others.

**Relationships** – We believe that our relationships are the means for achieving our goals. Relationships are the foundation of our efforts for change. We care deeply about the health and happiness of people and that motivates us to work hard to remove barriers and to take on challenges. We believe in teamwork because together we can do more.

**Collaboration** – We seek the knowledge and views of others when developing our policy advice. We believe that engagement and collaboration are essential in working together to achieve the best possible outcomes.

**Accountable** – We are all responsible for our actions, individually and collectively, and we seek to measure and demonstrate our progress as we move forward.

## Primary Clients

The Department of SWSD serves and is ultimately accountable to the people of the province. The Department has the following main client groups: individuals; federal, provincial, aboriginal and municipal governments, departments and agencies; researchers and academics; institutions; and community-based non-profit organizations and sector stakeholders including recreation and sport, healthy living and wellness, seniors and aging, people with low income and persons with disabilities.

The Department of SWSD receives strategic advice and works collaboratively with the entities of the Department in key mandates areas. Appendix One lists the other entities which report to the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

## Vision

A vision is a short statement describing the ideal state an organization is striving to achieve in the long term for its clients. Accordingly, the vision of the new Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development is as follows:

**All people in the province are equal, included, supported and empowered to achieve their full potential and well-being.**

This vision will be achieved when:

- Efforts across government and sectors are aligned and advanced
- Barriers are removed and access to programs and services improved
- Investments are made across the lifespan to enable and empower people to become resilient and self-sufficient
- Supportive environments are created
- Living equitably and inclusively becomes the everyday norm
- Healthy living is embraced as our way of life
- Value is added through collaboration and partnership
- Evidence and evaluation are strengthened.

The Department of SWSD recognizes that realization of this vision extends far beyond the three-year timeframe of this strategic plan. The achievement of the vision is included so as to guide SWSD as it establishes itself within its mandate, and lays the groundwork for this vision during the period covered by this strategic plan and its mission.

## **Mission (2017)**

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the Minister over the planning cycle 2014 to 2017. It represents the key longer-term results that the Minister and the Department will be working towards as they move forward on

Government's Strategic Directions (see Appendix Two). The statement also identifies the measure(s) and indicator(s) that will assist both the Department and the public in monitoring and evaluating success.

The Department recognizes the challenges affecting population health and wellness, and the development of an integrated social development approach to help ensure more positive outcomes for the people of the province. These outcomes, as articulated in the Strategic Directions, will take time extending well beyond the plan's three-year timeframe if all people in the province are to have improved access to and share in a better future; a more inclusive, healthy and active future for individuals, families and communities is to be achieved; and we have stronger, more dynamic communities where the needs of seniors are met.

The Department of SWSD is identifying strategic work that requires longer-term intervention. The highest level result that can be achieved during the plan period is through the Department's leadership in developing and coordinating comprehensive, effective cross-government and cross-sector policies that are central to removing barriers and creating the conditions to achieve more positive outcomes for people. SWSD's own horizontal strategies and frameworks include: **Achieving Health and Wellness: Provincial Wellness Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador (2006)**; **Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador: Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework and Action Plan (2006)**; the **Poverty Reduction Strategy (2006)**; the **Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework (2007)**; **Active, Healthy Newfoundland and Labrador: A Provincial Recreation and Sport Strategy (2007)**; and **Access. Inclusion. Equality: Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador (2012)**.

The following mission demonstrates how the Department will move forward to address these challenges, while fostering and promoting a common lens through which to assess and prioritize what has the greatest potential to positively impact our population's health and well-being.

### **Mission Statement**

By March 31, 2017, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have provided leadership to align government-wide efforts and facilitate positive change to improve overall health and well-being.

**Measure:** Leadership provided to align government-wide efforts and facilitate positive change.

**Mission Indicators:**

- Updated horizontal provincial frameworks and strategies with key population outcomes developed
- Priority policy and program areas identified, aligned and strengthened
- Evaluation frameworks implemented
- Policy and program effectiveness demonstrated.

# Strategic Issues, Goals and Objectives

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Considering Government's Strategic Directions and the mandate and financial resources of the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, the following areas are the key priorities identified by the Minister for the next three years. The goals identified for each issue reflect the results expected in the three-year period while the objectives provide an annual, incremental focus towards the achievement of goals.

Measures and indicators are provided for both the goal and the first year's objectives to assist both the Department and the public in monitoring its progress and success.

Over the next three years, the Department of SWSD will monitor and consider the impacts on individual citizens of the province, community and provincial organizations and stakeholder groups in the focus areas of seniors and aging, adult protection, wellness and the promotion and support of physical activity for children and youth, poverty reduction and inclusion.

The goals and objectives in this plan will address the following strategic issues:

1. Living respectfully in an inclusive, equitable society for all
2. Living well as our way of life in Newfoundland and Labrador.



## Strategic Issue One: Living respectfully in an inclusive, equitable society for all

Everyone in our province has the right to achieve their full potential, regardless of such characteristics as age, socio-economic status, gender, language, sexual orientation, ancestry, culture, disability, geographic location or other factors. The fundamental conditions and resources for well-being are security/safety, shelter, education, food, income, stable environments, sustainable resources, social justice and equity. Not everyone in our province starts at the same place or with the same opportunities.

Well-being is determined by such factors as income, gender, geographic location, age, and culture, among other things. There are inequities that are socially and economically produced, systematic across our population, and unfair. We want to create a culture in Newfoundland and Labrador that strives for justice and equality and embraces, respects, accepts and values differences.

The Department of SWSD takes the lead role in informing, guiding and facilitating across government to ensure this common vision of a respectful, inclusive and equitable society for all. SWSD works to remove barriers, close gaps and create access to programs, services and opportunities across a broad spectrum. Leading the way are two horizontal government strategies addressing the key issues of equity and inclusiveness. **The Poverty Reduction Strategy** is a government-wide approach to promoting self-reliance, opportunity, and access to key supports for persons vulnerable to poverty. The strategy currently encompasses more than 80 ongoing initiatives that were informed by the input of the public and developed by 13 government departments and agencies in order to meet the needs of groups most vulnerable to poverty.

### Equity and Inclusiveness

Equity means that we strive to ensure equal opportunities for success for all, by addressing differences that are avoidable, unfair or systematically related to social inequality and disadvantage.

Inclusiveness means we seek to intentionally create and sustain environments that value and respect all individuals for their uniqueness, their talents, skills and abilities to the benefit of everyone in the province. We work to prevent and remove barriers that have historically excluded people, especially individuals who have disabilities.

Closely linked with this strategy is government's commitment to making sure that people with disabilities are included in all aspects of society. **Access. Inclusion. Equality: Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador** is a broad policy and human rights framework by which the Disability Policy Office works with all government departments and agencies to develop policies and programs that include people with disabilities and that are barrier-free. This work is important to make sure everyone has the same opportunities.

The Provincial Government has re-affirmed its commitment to preventing, reducing and alleviating poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador and an innovative engagement process in 2014-15 will inform the **Poverty Reduction Strategy's** next Action Plan. The new **Inclusion Action Plan**, based on rich information gathered through the 2010 consultation and advice from the Provincial Advisory Council of Persons with Disabilities, will advance inclusion and increase each citizen's access to and meaningful participation in, all aspects of our society so that all people in our province will enjoy equal access to services and opportunities.

The degree of success in achieving the goal associated with this issue will require the commitment of all divisions of the Department of SWSD, not just those most directly responsible for poverty reduction and inclusion. Seniors who wish to "age in place" can face barriers to remaining in their homes and staying active and engaged in their communities. The costs and benefits associated with aging and the impacts on communities and broader society make an investment in healthy aging imperative. Our **Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework** is an important complementary horizontal policy framework in this regard.

We continue to encourage more active, healthy lifestyles among all of our citizens by removing barriers to participation, as outlined in the province's recreation and sport strategy, **Active, Healthy Newfoundland and Labrador**. Children in Newfoundland and Labrador will be more likely to remain active and healthy as adults if they are supported to be active and healthy now. Inclusive recreation and sport promotes access for all to participate in a range of activities from community and seniors recreation activities to unorganized and organized sport activities including long-term athlete development across the lifespan. We can improve the well-being of everyone and especially people with low income by removing community barriers to physical activity and by promoting active living as a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines.

SWSD works with schools and community partners to help provide inclusive opportunities to increase physical activity and promote healthy, active lifestyles at all ages including through the identification and removal of barriers to help increase physical activity. Removing barriers, promoting fair play and celebrating the accomplishments of people with disabilities have been integral to financial and other supports for individuals, organizations and community groups.

Improvement in health and well-being requires a secure foundation in the basic determinants. Income, for example, is the first of these determinants, and is identified as a key determinant of healthy eating. The **Provincial Wellness Plan**, now being updated, and associated plans such as the **Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework and Action Plan** will push us to reach higher and more broadly to remove barriers and create opportunities for a more integrated, coherent approach to health and well-being.

Moving forward, this cross-cutting and horizontal work will collectively support the Strategic Directions to “Help all people in the province secure economic, cultural and social opportunities on an equitable basis and enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of our society” and “Foster a healthy society that honours, listens to and includes seniors in building stronger, more dynamic communities.” This transformation will take more than three years to fully achieve, however, key focus areas over the next three years are: poverty reduction, employment and self-sufficiency, inclusion, honouring and involving seniors and engaging with other Government departments and agencies. Progress will be tracked on a continuous basis to ensure results in these areas are achieved.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2017, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have removed barriers and supported inclusion for all.

**Measure:** Barriers removed and inclusion for all supported.

**Indicators:**

- Cross-government strategies that address the key issues of poverty reduction and inclusion implemented
- Horizontal policies that remove and prevent barriers developed
- Program and service delivery improvements to increase access to opportunities and services in the province implemented

- Supportive programming for individuals over the life course implemented
- Progress on horizontal strategies monitored and assessed.

**Objective 2014-15:** By March 2015, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have explored opportunities to remove barriers and support inclusion for all.

**Measure:** Opportunities explored.

**Indicators:**

- Engagement and consultation with partners and stakeholders implemented
- Enhanced provincial frameworks and development of action plans initiated
- Priority focus areas to support removing barriers and promoting and supporting inclusiveness identified and enhanced.

**Objective 2015-16:** By March 2016, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have initiated key actions and activities that improve horizontal policies and supports for people to have access to, and participate in, our province's society and economy.

**Objective 2016-17:** By March 2017, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have further supported and assessed the implementation of horizontal policies and supports for people to have access to, and participate in, our province's society and economy.

## **Strategic Issue Two: Living well as our way of life in Newfoundland and Labrador**

As noted, research has identified powerful determinants of population health and well-being in modern societies. To achieve improved wellness for the province's people, families and communities, there must be actions supported on all the determinants of health and across all the dimensions of well-being. Together, we need to take care of ourselves, each other, our families, our communities and our environment.

The Department of SWSD is focused on efforts that can effect positive change across all settings (home, school, workplace and community) and for all people in the province at every stage of life. Proven interventions are being expanded through more aligned approaches and broader benefits for people across the province and the life course.

The **Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework** and its key actions are being reviewed with recommendations for next steps with this population. Children and youth are another priority because of the compelling evidence that early investments have the greatest impact over a person's lifetime. Promoting and supporting inclusive physical activity for children and youth, for example, has been a prime focus of the provincial recreation and sport strategy, complemented by Healthy Living initiatives such as Healthy Eating and Active Schools. Whether it is programs that support physical literacy<sup>1</sup> for children, greater opportunities for adults and seniors to pursue lifelong physical activity and wellness, or innovative approaches to facility usage, both sport and recreation contribute to positive outcomes and stronger, collective well-being.

To achieve well-being for all people, the Provincial Government also has recognized that in addition to promoting health and preventing illness, social issues must be addressed. This has meant broadening and expanding the usual approaches of health promotion, prevention and education. The **Poverty Reduction Strategy** and the **Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador**, for example, are provincial horizontal strategies focused on a more equitable, inclusive society that fosters belonging, removes barriers and creates access to opportunities.

Continued action in all these areas will have an impact and fuel the momentum toward healthier people and healthier communities in our province. Government is committed to creating a more integrated, coordinated policy and social environment that will truly generate inclusive and equitable health and well-being for all. In order to create the desired culture shift as envisioned, we need everyone – individuals, communities, governments and businesses – to mobilize this change.

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals who are physically literate move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person. See <http://www.phecanada.ca/programs/physical-literacy/what-physical-literacy>.

Improving health and wellness encompasses policy that includes health and extends well beyond the borders of health. The most effective solutions are multi-sectorial and multi-faceted. An example is tobacco control in Newfoundland and Labrador which takes a comprehensive approach involving multiple strategies in a number of settings including public education, legislation, school and community policies and programs and the taxation of tobacco products. To really make a difference, Newfoundland and Labrador must implement solutions at all levels of society addressing the broad population. Over the next three years, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will take the leadership role in designing a robust and integrated horizontal approach to wellness through the new **Provincial Wellness Plan** as initiated in 2014-15.

This plan will complement and balance our primary health care system and build a coordinated Provincial Government approach across departments and sectors to advance the wellness of our population's health and to reduce disparities. We will consult key partners and present the insights and ideas that emerge that will help us think more broadly and shift the process from thinking about problems to innovative problem-solving for positive change. We will focus on improving population health and wellness by improving social conditions as well as influencing personal behaviours.

Promoting and supporting healthy behaviours of individuals and families where they live, learn, work, play and commute – in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities – is essential for overall health and well-being. The choices we make for healthy living are shaped by the choices we have available to us. Across government and in communities and regions, many individuals, agencies, partners and groups are already involved in supporting our province's people to live healthier, more safe, more secure, more equitable and more inclusive lives. The plan will reach across issues, sectors and populations, and help identify upstream investments and re-focus our efforts and resources where evidence tells us that we will have the greatest impact.

While the Department of SWSD will be focused on what can be accomplished in the next three years through the new Provincial Wellness Plan, the Provincial Government recognizes that improving the wellness of our population and addressing social conditions will take one, two and even three generations. Without taking this long-term view, our health

### Social and Economic Conditions

Some examples of the social and economic conditions that contribute immensely to well-being include: ensuring adequate housing, reasonable incomes, clean environments, socially oriented built environments, quality childcare, effective education, accessible recreation and opportunities for community engagement.

and well-being will suffer today and in the future. Demonstrating successes also may not be evident for another 10 or 20 years. However, without this long-term view, the wellness of our province's people suffers – both today and in the future.

The new Provincial Wellness Plan is intended to be a living document that will be continually reviewed and revised based on evolving information and experiences. It will employ mechanisms for public involvement and demonstrate accountability against identified outcomes. This plan will build on existing efforts and begin the process of defining and measuring well-being with valid, consistently gathered, and meaningful data. Doing so will guide the development and implementation of good public policy and will measure progress on what really matters to people in our province in the years to come.

This approach addresses Government's Strategic Direction: "Provide leadership and strengthen measures to support people in our province to adopt healthier lifestyles through wellness, including enhanced promotion and support for physical activity for children and youth," and "Foster a healthy society that honours, listens to and includes seniors in building stronger, more dynamic communities." The focus areas are: Healthy Aging and Seniors; Physical Activity Opportunities for Children and Youth; and Engagement with other government departments and agencies.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2017, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have advanced an integrated approach to wellness across government and sectors.

**Measure:** Integrated approach to wellness advanced.

**Indicators:**

- New provincial wellness plan developed
- Engagement, leadership and partnerships concerning wellness undertaken
- Policies and actions to advance wellness identified and initiated
- Improved integration of policies and actions to improve wellness
- Capacities to address wellness strengthened
- Wellness outcomes identified and monitored.

**Objective 2014-15:** By March 31, 2015, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have initiated development of a new Provincial Wellness Plan toward an integrated approach to wellness.

**Measure:** Provincial Wellness Plan development initiated.

**Indicators:**

- Processes to engage key partners and the public identified
- Relevant strategies and evidence base reviewed
- Information from key stakeholders on actions to advance wellness received
- Information from key government initiatives on wellness collected
- Key elements for the development of the provincial wellness plan identified.

**Objective 2015-16:** By March 2016, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have developed and initiated implementation of a new Provincial Wellness Plan.

**Objective 2016-17:** By March 2017, the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development will have continued to implement and monitor selected integrated actions for wellness.



## Appendix One: Entities Reporting to the Minister

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The following entities also report to the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development and undertake their own planning and performance reporting according to their categorization under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** as indicated in the entity overview provided below:

**The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC).** The NLHC is a crown corporation whose mandate is to develop and administer housing assistance policy and programs for the benefit of low to moderate income households throughout the province. NLHC is governed by a Board of Directors representing different geographic regions and special interest groups and reports to the provincial government through the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development who is also the Minister responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. The Chairperson of the NLHC Board also serves in a dual capacity as Chief Executive Officer and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of NLHC. The Corporation is a Category One entity.

**Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (PACAS).** The Provincial Advisory Council for Aging and Seniors advises government in preparing for an aging population by ensuring that a seniors' perspective is reflected in policy development and in planning for future service delivery. The mandate of this Council is to advise and inform government on issues, concerns and needs of seniors. The Council provides a mechanism for seniors to have a strong voice in the development of comprehensive programming to support the independence and well-being of an aging population. The Council consists of 12 members in addition to a Chairperson. All members and the Chairperson are appointed by the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. Members serve up to a three-year term. The Council is a Category Three entity.

**Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PACPD).** The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities advises the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on current issues and ways to make things better. This Council is made up of 12 to 18 people who have disability-related experiences and knowledge. They are women and men of different ages who come from small and large communities. All members and the Chairperson are appointed by the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, as the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. The Council is a Category Three entity.

**The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council.** The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council provided the leadership for the development of the Provincial Wellness Plan. The Wellness Council will continue to provide advice and guidance on the wellness priorities to government through the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. All members and the Chairperson are appointed by the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. The Council is a Category Three entity.

**Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Centre (NLSC).** Opened in St. John's in 2008-09, the NL Sports Centre serves as a venue for athlete training, and as host to provincial, national and international competitions for the more than 70,000 athletes, coaches and administrators that make up Sport Newfoundland and Labrador (SNL). All members and the Chairperson are appointed by the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. The NL Sports Centre is a Category Three entity.

## Appendix Two: Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communiqués. The **Transparency and Accountability Act** requires departments and public bodies to take into account these Strategic Directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across Government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments. Strategic Directions that are relevant to the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development are:

**Strategic Direction: Help all people in the province secure economic, cultural and social opportunities on an equitable basis and enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of our society.**

**Outcome: All people in the province have improved access to and share in a better future.**

| Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction | This Direction is:  |                                 |                                   |   |
|--|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
|  | To be addressed by other entities reporting to the Minister | Addressed in the Strategic Plan | Addressed in the operational plan | Addressed in the Branch/Division Work Plans |
| Poverty Reduction                      | ✓   | ✓                               |                                   |   |
| Employment and Self-Sufficiency        |   | ✓                               |                                   |   |
| Inclusion                              | ✓   | ✓                               |                                   | ✓   |

**Strategic Direction: Provide leadership and strengthen measures to support people in our province to adopt healthier lifestyles through wellness, including enhanced promotion and support for physical activity for children and youth.**

**Outcome: A more inclusive, healthy and active future for individuals, families and communities.**

| Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction | This Direction is:  |                                 |                                   |   |
|--|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
|  | To be addressed by other entities reporting to the Minister | Addressed in the Strategic Plan | Addressed in the operational plan | Addressed in the Branch/Division Work Plans |
| Healthy Living and Wellness            | ✓   | ✓                               |                                   | ✓   |
| Seniors and Aging                      | ✓   | ✓                               |                                   |   |
| Children and Youth                     |   | ✓                               |                                   | ✓   |

**Strategic Direction: Foster a healthy society that honours, listens to and includes seniors in building stronger, more dynamic communities.**

**Outcome: Stronger, more dynamic communities, where the needs of seniors are met.**

| Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction                | This Direction is:  |                                 |                                   |   |
|---|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
|   | To be addressed by other entities reporting to the Minister | Addressed in the Strategic Plan | Addressed in the operational plan | Addressed in the Branch/Division Work Plans |
| Honour Seniors  |   |                                 |                                   | ✓   |
| Involve Seniors                                       | ✓   | ✓                               |                                   |   |
| Engage with other Government Departments and agencies |   | ✓                               |                                   | ✓   |