

2021-2022 **ANNUAL REPORT**



Health and Community Services



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am pleased to present the 2021-22 Annual Performance Report of the Department of Health and Community Services. In accordance with the requirements of a category one entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, the report outlines the accomplishments achieved during the second year of the three-year planning cycle for the department's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. As Minister of Health and Community Services, I acknowledge my accountability for the results reported in this annual report, and any variations contained herein.

Throughout 2021-22 the Department of Health and Community Services (the department) continued to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic with the arrival of the omicron variant in the province. In October 2021, the healthcare system saw another unprecedented emergency with a cyber-attack that impacted information systems across the healthcare system. Addressing these challenges, as well as challenges related to recruitment and retention of our health workforce, required significant collaboration with partners at the provincial and national levels to regain capacity and ensure that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador received the healthcare they needed.

The efforts put forward this last year to meet these significant challenges speak to the dedication and resolve of the individuals who work in healthcare in this province and I would like to thank our staff and partners for their commitment to our province during this challenging time. The lessons learned in the last year will inform the way we work going forward as we endeavor to support population and public health, improve quality and access, and enhance health innovation and efficiency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Osbourne', written in a cursive style.

Hon. Tom Osbourne

Minister of Health and Community Services

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Departmental Overview

Organizational Structure

The Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) (the department) is responsible for the overall strategic direction and priorities for the health and community services system throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

In keeping with its mandate, the department works to provide leadership, coordination, monitoring and support to the regional health authorities (RHAs) and other entities that deliver programs and services. The department also ensures the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the healthcare system and effectively administers and provides funding for insured medical and hospital services, dental and pharmaceutical services, and the purchase of seats and bursary programs for students in select professional or technical fields.

As of March 31, 2022, the department employed 247 staff in four locations across the province: Confederation Building (West Block) and Major's Path in St. John's, Grand Falls-Windsor and Stephenville.

Information on the department's mandate, lines of business, values, branches, and divisions can be found at: www.health.gov.nl.ca/departments/index.html.

Staff and Budget

Division	# of Employees				Budget
	Male	Female	Vacant	Total	
Minister's Office	1	3	0	4	\$ 290,900
Executive Support	2	8	1	11	\$1,297,500
Communications	0	2	0	2	\$188,900
Financial Services	5	6	3	14	\$1,431,800
Administrative Support	0	0	0	0	\$1,016,800
Information Management	2	3	4	9	\$811,900
Insured Services	10	23	16	49	\$2,752,900
MCP St. John's	2	3	1	6	\$307,500
MCP Grand Falls-Windsor	1	24	4	29	\$1,708,500
Audit Services	2	9	1	12	\$848,600
Pharmaceutical Services	3	12	4	19	\$1,423,800
NLPDP Assessment Office	3	8	1	12	\$ 614,700
Physician Services	3	6	0	9	\$1,290,300
Regional Services	0	11	2	13	\$1,244,100
Provincial Blood Coordinating Program	0	2	1	3	\$341,000
Infrastructure Management	1	0	0	1	\$106,200
Public Health	2	9	0	11	\$1,216,200
Mental Health and Addictions	1	7	2	10	\$1,023,300
Primary Healthcare	0	4	2	6	\$ 387,900
Policy, Planning and Evaluation	0	6	3	9	\$1,330,600
Health Workforce Planning	3	1	0	4	\$ 365,600
Emergency Response	4	2	2	8	\$1,154,900
Healthy Living	0	4	2	6	\$1,342,600
Total	45	153	49	247	\$ 22,496,500

Highlights and Partnerships

Highlights

COVID-19 Response

Throughout 2021-22 the department continued to work to address the COVID-19 pandemic. While a public health emergency was in effect, the Chief Medical Officer of Health was able to introduce special measures that were believed necessary to protect the health of the population. The public health emergency continued throughout 2021-22 and special measures orders were managed, with new orders being issued and others being amended or revoked as the epidemiology and risk associated with the virus evolved.

Responding to COVID-19 in Newfoundland and Labrador required immense human, physical, and financial resources, as well as collaboration with the regional health authorities, Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI), health sector unions, regulated health professional governing bodies, federal/provincial/territorial governments, Indigenous governments and organizations and other government departments. Some key highlights and partnerships from the COVID-19 response include:

- In partnership with Treasury Board Secretariat, established a mandatory vaccine policy for provincial government employees and certain other sectors working with vulnerable individuals.
- The development of a COVID-19 Wastewater Surveillance initiative in partnership with Memorial University and the City of St. John's in February, 2021 to allow for the detection of the virus in a large population through genomic testing.

- The implementation of an interactive dashboard for reporting COVID-19 trends in partnership with NLCHI and the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.
- The development of a vaccine passport in partnership with NLCHI and Digital Government and Service NL. This was used as a certified record of proof of vaccination that allowed access to a business or venues for non-essential and recreational activities.
- Expanding eligibility for COVID-19 vaccine boosters to make them available to anyone over 18 years of age.
- Implementation of a highly successful COVID-19 vaccination campaign for 5-11 year olds which began in November 2021.
- The elimination of travel restrictions in July 2021.
- Rescinding the Public Health Emergency on March 14, 2022.

Support for Physicians

In March 2022, the Provincial Government launched two new programs to support physicians in the province and help improve access to primary healthcare: The New Family Physician Income Guarantee Initiative and The Family Practice Start-Up Program.

The New Family Physician Income Guarantee initiative is designed to attract and retain new, qualified family physicians to provide primary healthcare services in Newfoundland and Labrador by providing funding to help alleviate the financial burden of opening or taking over an existing family practice.

The initiative guarantees a minimum income equivalent to that of a salaried family physician to new family doctors who bill on a fee-for-service basis and open a family practice clinic – or join an established clinic – for the first two years of their practice. This will ease some of the uncertainty associated with the business aspects of opening a clinic by increasing financial certainty.

In addition, the Family Practice Start-Up Program will provide \$100,000 to new family practice physicians who open a family practice clinic, or join an existing family practice in the community, and stay in the practice for five years.

The Family Practice Renewal Program (FPRP) aims to transform family practice for better health. The program is part of an Agreement between the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association and the Department of Health and Community Services. This agreement recognizes that improved population health and health system sustainability will require a renewed focus on primary healthcare reform, and on family practice reform, in particular, and that, family physicians have an important role to play in the improvement and full integration of primary care and primary healthcare services and supports.

Increase Graduates from Healthcare Programs

In October 2021, the Provincial Government made a number of commitments to increase the number of graduates from healthcare programs in the province. The commitments included:

- To increase the number of graduates from Licensed Practical Nursing Programs by 40 per cent, and Personal Care Attendant Programs by 20 per cent;
- a commitment to increase Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program seats by 25 per cent;
- Offering of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Gander, and Grand Falls-Windsor, beginning September 2022, through the implementation of a rural program with remote teaching.

Patient Connect NL

In December 2021, the Provincial Government announced the creation of Patient Connect NL. This is a provincial list of individuals who have identified as being without a Primary Care Provider. The information provided on Patient Connect NL will be used to

plan and improve access to primary healthcare in NL, with the goal of connecting individuals to a primary care provider. This service was launched in Eastern Health in December 2021 and will be expanded provincially in June 2022, with support from NLCHI.

In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) Travel Assistance

In March 2022, the Provincial Government announced the creation of an IVF Subsidy Program for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians requiring IVF treatments. A subsidy of \$5,000 per IVF cycle is now available to all applicants that meet clinical eligibility, up to a maximum of three IVF cycles throughout their lifetime. The program is aimed at providing assistance to those who need to travel out of province for IVF treatments and aligns with government's commitment to increase access to fertility treatments.

Partnerships

Virtual Care Agreement with Government of Canada

In August 2021, the Provincial and Federal Governments signed a bilateral agreement to expand virtual healthcare services for residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. Under the agreement, the province will invest federal funding based on agreed-upon pan-Canadian priorities for accelerating virtual healthcare services, which was instrumental for delivering care during the pandemic and which are helping to improve access to needed services. Through this bilateral agreement, Newfoundland and Labrador received over \$4.5 million to expand virtual health services.

Optometrists' Scope of Practice

In July 2021, the Diagnostic and Therapeutic Drug Regulations, of the **Optometry Act 2012** were amended to expand optometrists' scope of practice to include the diagnosis, management and treatment of glaucoma. The Provincial Government worked with the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Optometrists as these regulations came into

force, and the changes reflect the scope of practice in other jurisdictions across Canada. As a result of these changes, the public will now have better access to services in a timely manner.

Tentative Agreement with Physicians

In December 2021, the Provincial Government announced that it had reached a tentative agreement for the renewal of its Memorandum of Agreement with the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association which is pending ratification. Covering over 1,300 salaried physicians in the province, the agreement included \$35 million per year in new funding to help ensure improved physician services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Renewed Agreements with Dentists

In March 2022, the Provincial Government announced the renewal of three Memoranda of Agreements with the Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Association. These agreements are for the Children and Youth Dental Health Plan, the Adult Dental Program, and the Surgical Dental Program.

The Children and Youth Dental Health Plan provides all children under 12 with universal access to eligible dental services including examinations, cleanings, routine fillings and extractions. It also provides vulnerable youth 13-17 years with access to examinations, fillings and extractions. The Adult Dental Program provides basic services to those 18 years or older who are enrolled in the Foundation Plan of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program. The Surgical Dental Program provides insured services under the **Medical Care Insurance Act**. Combined, these initiatives are valued at over \$14 million annually.

Report on Performance

Strategic Issue 1: Supporting Public and Population Health

In support of the Provincial Government's strategic directions of "healthier people" and "better living" the Department of Health and Community Services is working to build capacity in identified areas of the healthcare system to enable government to better respond and contribute to positive health outcomes.

During the 2021-22 fiscal year, the department has focused on a number of elements of public and population health, including a review of the final report of Health Accord NL, administering COVID-19 vaccines, and support and implementing components of the Autism Action Plan and Towards Recovery Action Plan, in order to improve population health.

Goal: By March 31, 2023, the Department of Health and Community Services will have improved its capacity to contribute to positive health outcomes for the people of the province.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2022, the Department of Health and Community Services will have implemented further initiatives in support of improved public and population health.

Indicators:

- Commenced review and consideration of Health Accord NL recommendations to reimagine the healthcare system;
- Administered two doses of the COVID 19 vaccine to 75 per cent of the eligible population;
- Substantially completed all remaining recommendations from the Towards Recovery Action Plan;
- Developed a Health in All Policies Framework; and
- Explored development of new digital solutions for the prevention and management of chronic disease.

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Indicator	Results
Commenced review and consideration of Health Accord NL recommendations to reimagine the healthcare system	The Final report of Health Accord NL was released on February 17, 2022. The report contains 57 calls to action on improving specific social, economic, and environmental conditions affecting population health; providing better, more timely access to healthcare; and developing a more integrated, technologically enhanced, and sustainable health system. The department has commenced the review of these recommendations.
Administered two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to 75 per cent of the eligible population	As of March 31, 2022, 92 per cent of the eligible population had received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.
Substantially completed all remaining recommendations from the Towards Recovery Action Plan	All the remaining recommendations have been substantially completed. A final report is set to be released in Summer 2022.
Developed a Health in All Policies Framework	A Health in all Policies Framework has been developed in draft. The finalization of the document was delayed pending the release of the Health Accord Blueprint to ensure consistency and complementarity between the two documents.
Explored development of new digital solutions for the prevention and management of chronic disease	During 2021-22 the department explored a number of new digital solutions for the

	<p>prevention and management of chronic disease, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional and provincial committees have been working to further expand virtual care to enable access;• Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) programs have been implemented in each of the RHAs to enhance virtual care services where appropriate;• eDOCSNL advanced the mature use of Electronic Medical Record (EMR). Working with Diabetes Canada, digital tools were implemented for management of COPD and Diabetes patients;• Clinical quality improvement initiatives were advanced through the EMR in collaboration with the Family Practice Renewal Program.
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Discussion of Results

In 2021-22 the department was successful in achieving all indicators related to supporting public and population health. While the department started its review of recommendations from the Health Accord in 2021-22, significant work will be done in the coming years toward reimagining the healthcare system. A blueprint for implementation was released in summer 2022 which is also under review and will guide much of the work of the department in the coming years, including the finalization of a Health in All Policies Framework.

During the reporting period, HCS aimed to achieve two COVID-19 vaccines for 75 per cent of the population. That target was surpassed with a vaccination rate of 92 per cent by the end of fiscal. This is an achievement and makes Newfoundland and Labrador the jurisdiction with the highest two-dose vaccination rate in the country.

In the last year work was undertaken to expand digital solutions for the prevention and management of chronic disease. The COVID-19 pandemic hastened the development of digital solutions for the provision of healthcare, and the department continues to work to advance digital health and virtual care solutions to streamline services and increase access to care for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2023, the Department of Health and Community Services will have continued to implement initiatives aimed at supporting population and public health.

Indicators:

- Implemented actions related to Our Path of Resilience, the five-year provincial suicide prevention and life promotion plan;
- Implemented actions from the Provincial Alcohol Action Plan;
- Entered into an agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada to support the maintenance of a pan-Canadian proof of vaccination program to support ongoing public health priorities;
- Began drafting a public health framework; and,
- Continued a review of the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Strategic Issue 2: Improving Quality and Access

Having access to quality healthcare services is essential for the health of the population. In improving access to services, the department considers the appropriateness of services and how they are delivered. Traditional health service delivery models have left

some services outdated and inefficient. Many services can be safely and efficiently delivered in a more innovative fashion and can be delivered by providers such as nurse practitioners, pharmacists, midwives and paramedics. Additionally, some services that were traditionally delivered in a hospital or institutional setting can now be safely delivered to patients in their homes, such as home-based dialysis.

By adopting modernized healthcare delivery models, the department is working to improve access to services. In support of Government's strategic directions of "a more efficient public sector" and "healthier people", the department is working to improve access to quality services in areas such as mental health and addictions and long-term care and community supports, as well as exploring new and innovative ways of improving access to other services, including expanding the availability of virtual care services.

Goal: By March 31, 2023, the Department of Health and Community Services will have improved access to healthcare services and quality of care by adopting modern service delivery models.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2022, the Department of Health and Community Services will have continued the implementation of modernized service delivery models aimed at increasing access and quality of care.

Indicators:

- Developed a Dementia Care Action Plan;
- Continued to expand the Home Dementia Care Program;
- Substantially completed 10 remaining medium term actions and four long term actions from the Autism Action Plan;
- Continued to explore options to expand midwifery in the province;
- Continued to advance development of a provincial model in one healthcare service;
- Worked with stakeholders to create new Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP) positions in rural areas;

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- Supported development of Advanced Care paramedic training opportunities in the province;
- Expanded virtual care capabilities across the continuum of care; and
- Commenced work on a virtual care framework in partnership with provincial and federal stakeholders.

Indicator	Results
Developed a Dementia Care Action Plan	A draft Dementia Care Action Plan has been developed. HCS is forming a Dementia Action Council to inform finalization of the draft actions and to support implementation.
Continued to expand the Home Dementia Care Program	In 2021-22, in Eastern Health, 203 individuals received services under this program and 90 individuals in Central Health. The program began in late 2020 in Central Health and HCS is working to expand the program to Western Health.
Substantially completed 10 remaining medium term actions and four long term actions from the Autism Action Plan	<p>The Autism Action Plan contains 22 medium term actions, 14 of which have been completed and 8 of which are in progress. There are five long term actions, of which one is complete, three are in progress, and one was not initiated within the reporting period but has since begun.</p> <p>The remaining actions within the Autism Action Plan are in progress and at various stages of completion but have been delayed for multiple reasons. A major challenge resulting in delay was the impact of the pandemic response at the provincial and regional levels. The status</p>

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	<p>and progress of the remaining action items is prioritized and significant work is underway to complete or substantially complete these remaining action items by fall 2022.</p>
<p>Continued to explore options to expand midwifery in the province</p>	<p>In 2021-22 recruitment efforts commenced to fill the vacant Provincial Chief Midwife position. When filled, the Provincial Chief Midwife will restart the Provincial Midwifery Implementation Committee and will work with Eastern Health and Labrador-Grenfell Health to establish this service in other parts of the province. The position will also be responsible for engaging with Central Health and the Gander midwives to continue providing leadership and guidance as the practice matures and access improves.</p>
<p>Continued to advance development of a provincial model in one healthcare service</p>	<p>Work is advancing in clinical program areas including cardiology, pharmacy, laboratory, and pain management. Provincial committees have been established including representatives from HCS, RHAs and NLCHI.</p> <p>The Provincial Cardiology Advisory Council is working to address priority areas such as catheterization laboratory, heart failure and the cardiology scorecard.</p> <p>The Provincial Pharmacy Advisory Council is working to address priority areas such as outpatient dispensing, long term care</p>

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	<p>dispensing, and the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) compounding standards.</p> <p>The Provincial Laboratory Formulary Advisory Council oversees the management of a provincial laboratory test formulary that was developed using an evidence-based approach concerning usage of laboratory services and consistent with best practice guidelines.</p> <p>The Provincial Pain Management Advisory Council is working with key stakeholders to inform, and enable the delivery of standardized, high quality, safe and sustainable pain management services throughout the province.</p>
<p>Worked with stakeholders to create Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP) positions in rural areas</p>	<p>The Department has funded two ACP positions with private operators and is currently working with other private operators to fund three additional ACP positions.</p>
<p>Supported development of ACP training opportunities in the province</p>	<p>Throughout 2021-22 the Department continued to work with the Department of Education, RHAs and CNA to facilitate ACP training throughout the province.</p> <p>In 2021, the Provincial Government commenced the funding of the full complement of 24 ACP seats (12 at Bay St George and 12 at Prince Phillip Drive campus).</p>
<p>Expanded virtual care capabilities across the continuum of care</p>	<p>Virtual Care (VC) has been expanded into Emergency Services (Virtual Emergency</p>

	<p>Rooms) with 12 sites equipped to date, Primary Healthcare clinics (currently 4), and Neonatal Intensive Care and work continues to expand VC into facility and home based services.</p> <p>During 2021-22 most clinical departments incorporated VC as part of their delivery model. Enhancing VC capabilities with examination cameras and stethoscopes.</p> <p>Virtual Care applications are available in and deployed to EMR users across care settings.</p>
<p>Commenced work on a virtual care framework in partnership with provincial and federal stakeholders</p>	<p>During the reporting period, the department commenced work on the development of a VC framework. Once implemented, the framework will increase patient access to healthcare.</p> <p>Through two-year funding from Canada Health Infoway to support virtual care projects, NLCHI and the RHAs continue to roll out initiatives in NLCHI's three-year virtual care SMART Plan.</p>

Discussion of Results

In 2021-22 the department made progress towards the implementation of modern service delivery models. With our aging population, the impact of dementia on communities and health services is ever increasing. Work to develop a Dementia Care Action Plan has continued, and the department is currently working with partners to finalize actions. In the meantime, the Home Dementia Care Program has seen continued uptake in Eastern and Central Health regions, and work is ongoing to expand the program to Western Health.

Work also proceeded to facilitate the use of advanced care paramedics in the province. Advanced care paramedics differ from emergency medical responders and primary care paramedics in that they perform advanced skills in respiratory, cardiac, trauma, obstetric care, pediatrics, pharmacology, and medical emergencies. The Provincial Government has funded the full complement of ACP seats at CNA, which is a four-semester post-diploma program offering training to Primary Care Paramedics who are presently practicing in one of the four regional health authorities. This will increase the skill set of the current paramedicine work force in the province and enhance the quality of care they can provide.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual care has been at the forefront of health service delivery. Work undertaken in 2021-22 has increased the quality of virtual care that can be provided in the province. The expansion of virtual care into emergency departments, primary care clinics, and neonatal intensive care units has allowed for the continued delivery of healthcare services where physicians cannot be physically present. The department has continued to work with partners to increase the scope and quality of care that can be provided virtually.

Work to implement new service delivery models to increase the quality of care will continue into the next fiscal year.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2023, the Department of Health and Community Services will have implemented further service delivery models aimed at increasing access and quality of care.

Indicators:

- Implemented Provincial Stepped Care Model for mental health and addictions services;
- Continued to expand the Home Dementia Care Program;
- Begun implementing integrated air and road ambulance services;
- Worked with partners to initiate work on a standardized provincial approach to expansion and enhancement of virtual ERs;

- Begun implementation of Collaborative Community Teams;
- Initiated an evaluation of the The Short Stay Option in Personal Care Homes Demonstration Project; and
- Initiated the development of a Frail Elderly Program.

Strategic Issue 3: Enhancing Health Innovation and Efficiency

The purpose of health innovation is to develop or improve health policies, systems, products and technologies, and services and delivery methods to improve people's health. To maximize health innovation and efficiency, the department is working to support the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI) in the development of innovative technologies to allow the public and healthcare providers to have easier access to health information.

In 2017-2020, the department began implementation of provincial models for select administrative functions throughout the RHAs and NLCHI. Provincial shared service models improve business processes, reduce service duplication and lead to efficiencies in healthcare spending. With the announcement of the transition to a single Provincial Health Authority, the department will continue to increase efficiencies in the health system by continuing the development and implementation of shared administrative functions, such as procurement and supply chain, and information management and technology.

These initiatives support Government's strategic direction of "a more efficient public sector". The department will also pursue advancements in health innovation and efficiency through the expansion of shared electronic medical records, and the development of an online personal health information portal, which will increase access to health information.

Goal: By March 31, 2023, the Department of Health and Community Services will have enhanced health innovation and efficiency through enhanced digital services and streamlined service delivery.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2022 the Department of Health and Community Services will have implemented initiatives to enhance digital services and streamline service delivery.

Indicators:

- Entered into an agreement with the Government of Canada to secure funding to support the development of a Provincial Virtual Care Strategy and further implementation of virtual care capabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Developed a Virtual Care Action Plan in collaboration with provincial and national stakeholders;
- Continued integration of health data across the continuum of care to enhance the provincial electronic health record and electronic medical record;
- Continued implementation of digital services between citizens and the healthcare system;
- Initiated activities aimed at patient engagement and digital literacy to support the increased access of digital services across the continuum of care;
- Deployed phase 1 of a provincial personal health record, providing citizens with access to select personal health information;
- Initiated the integration of a corporate services model that will streamline the delivery of functions in the regional health authorities, such as payroll, finance, accounting, etc.

Indicator	Results
Entered into an agreement with the Government of Canada to secure funding to support the development of a Provincial Virtual Care Strategy and further implementation of virtual care	In July 2021, HCS entered into the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Bilateral Agreement for Pan-Canadian Virtual Care Priorities in Response to COVID-19, to receive \$4.5M to support

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<p>capabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador</p>	<p>development of a provincial virtual care strategy and further implement virtual care capabilities in NL.</p>
<p>Developed a Virtual Care Action Plan in collaboration with provincial and national stakeholders</p>	<p>In consultation with Health Canada, as well as provincial partners and stakeholders, HCS developed a Virtual Care Action Plan with three aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expansion, sustainment and evaluation of current virtual care services; • development of a provincial virtual care strategy; and • enhancing virtual care services in the province. <p>The action plan can be found here: https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/transparency/health-agreements/bilateral-agreement-pan-canadian-virtual-care-priorities-covid-19/newfoundland-labrador-action-plan.html</p>
<p>Continued integration of health data across the continuum of care to enhance the provincial Electronic Health Record and Electronic Medical Record</p>	<p>To support the continued integration of health data, the following activities have been undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 immunizations was made available in the Provincial Electronic Health Record (HEALTHeNL). • Electronic Death Notification project is in final testing phase, enabling death notifications to the Medical Examiner’s

	<p>Office and Vital Statistics via HEALTHeNL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ePCR project have been initiated to integrate paramedic documentation into HEALTHeNL. • Work began to enable Mental Health and Addictions community encounter viewable in HEALTHeNL. • Work is underway to enable patient primary care summary data from EMR to be available in HEALTHeNL, enabling this data to be available to the broader authorized providers.
<p>Continued implementation of digital services between citizens and the healthcare system</p>	<p>In 2021-22 work continued on the deployment of VC technology for Healthcare to support home appointments via VC.</p> <p>Video conferencing units were deployed within select Emergency and Primary Healthcare sites to increase access.</p> <p>Peripheral (digital camera and stethoscopes) devices have been implemented at community clinics for enhanced virtual care appointments.</p> <p>Noona, a digital patient-facing electronic symptom reporting tool was implemented for the provincial Cancer Care Program.</p>

	<p>Currently implemented at a regional site in Eastern Health, with a goal to evaluate and continue deployment to regional sites in remaining RHAs.</p> <p>Growth of eConsult digital services facilitated increased and equitable access to specialists by primary care providers.</p> <p>COVID-19 online tools such as the Self-Assessment and Reporting Tool, Patient Results Portal, and appointment booking were developed to support changing public health needs.</p>
<p>Initiated activities aimed at patient engagement and digital literacy to support the increased access of digital services across the continuum of care</p>	<p>NLCHI is developing a patient facing app that allows ease of connectivity and improves success for virtual appointments. NLCHI is developing guides to support digital literacy.</p> <p>Communications to communities on the Virtual ERs and Primary Healthcare Clinics/Collaborative Clinics were aimed at engaging patients and digital literacy.</p> <p>Patient Advisors are part of all provincial committees supporting virtual care, such as, Congestive Health Failure and Cancer Care Virtual Care Advisory Committee.</p>

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	<p>Stakeholder engagement sessions were completed as part of the Personal Health Record (PHR) Project.</p> <p>eDOCSNL supports patient engagement features in the form of a platform which enables self-booking, information sharing, and communications between patients and providers. Citizens have been using this platform for more than two years to book flu and COVID-19 vaccines in EMR-based clinics.</p>
<p>Deployed phase 1 of a provincial personal health record, providing citizens with access to select personal health information</p>	<p>Due to unforeseen circumstances related to the cyber-attack incident, this project was paused in late 2022 and subsequently the funding agency, Canada Health Infoway, extended the project one year from March 31, 2022 to March 31, 2023. Work continues to progress on schedule since resuming, and is tracking for go-live in February 2023. A variance is reported on this indicator.</p>

<p>Initiated the integration of a corporate services model that will streamline the delivery of functions in the regional health authorities, such as payroll, finance, accounting, etc.</p>	<p>Budget 2021 formally announced the direction to integrate the corporate service model for the RHAs. Budget 2022 included the consolidation of the four RHAs into one provincial health authority. Since that time, a transitional CEO has been announced and commenced the process of integrating the RHAs into one, with work including payroll, finance, accounting, etc.</p>
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Discussion of Results

In 2021-22 significant work was undertaken to enhance health innovation and efficiency. A funding agreement with the Government of Canada has increased the Province’s ability to advance virtual care capabilities with funding of \$4.5 million to support a virtual care strategy.

The continued integration of health data across the continuum of care will increase access to quality patient health information among providers to positively impact service delivery and better inform decision making, thus enhancing the quality of patient care.

The work undertaken to expand digital services will further enhance patient experience and quality of care. For example, newly acquired peripheral devices such as stethoscopes improve the quality and scope of the services that can be provided virtually and increase equitable access to providers, regardless of location. Further work being undertaken on the development of a patient-facing app will allow ease of connectivity and improved success for virtual appointments.

Work on the deployment of phase 1 of a provincial personal health record was delayed by a cyber-attack incident which impacted government information systems; however, since capabilities were restored, work has continued to progress on schedule and is anticipated to go live in February 2023.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2023, the Department of Health and Community Services will have implemented further initiatives to enhance digital services and streamline service delivery.

Indicators:

- Implementation of further enhancements to Bridgethegapp.ca;
- Worked with partners to develop a provincial virtual care strategy to guide the delivery and expansion of virtual care services within the province;
- Launched PHR to provide citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador with secure digital access to key personal health information and health services;
- Worked with the Health Transformation team to review recommendations and actions from the Health Accord and initiate implementation activities for digital solutions.

Opportunities and Challenges

During 2021-22 the department was in its second year of the 2020-2023 planning period and made significant progress towards goals in public and population health, quality of care and access, and health innovation and efficiency.

The department continued to work through a number of challenges to the healthcare system in 2021-22. The COVID-19 pandemic continued with a fourth wave that resulted from the arrival of the omicron variant. In response, the department made changes to the COVID-19 testing and isolation requirements in order to maintain system capacity. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, there have been opportunities to return to a more normal way of life. The approval of antiviral treatments for COVID-19, coupled with the province's high vaccination rate provided an opportunity to reduce some public health restrictions and ultimately rescind the public health emergency in March 2022.

System capacity was further challenged when the province experienced an unprecedented cyber-attack that occurred in October 2021 impacting critical IT systems

supporting healthcare providers in Newfoundland and Labrador. The accessed data compromised the personal information of current and former employees and select personal health information of patients of the regional health authorities.

The combination of the pandemic and the cyber-attack impacted the progress toward some of the department's planned work for 2021-22 as resources were redeployed and partners were unable to fully participate on some projects. This impacted the implementation of certain actions under the Autism Action Plan, as well as the development of the Personal Health Record.

The recruitment and retention of healthcare workers continued to challenge the province in 2021-22. In January 2022, Government announced the creation of the Provincial Health Professional Recruitment and Retention Office to assist with the development of a more comprehensive provincial approach to recruitment and retention. In late 2021 the Provincial Government also made the commitment to further increase the number of graduates from Licensed Practical Nursing Programs by 40 per cent, and Personal Care Attendant Programs by 20 per cent. Commitments have also been made to increase Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program seats by 25 per cent; offer of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Gander, and Grand Falls-Windsor, beginning September 2022, through the implementation of a rural program with remote teaching; and, facilitate immigration pathways for international health profession graduates. The recruitment of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, psychologists, as well as other highly valued healthcare professionals, is one of the biggest challenges facing our healthcare system right now, and efforts will be strengthened by a provincial approach to support and modernize new and existing human resource practices and programs.

Health Accord NL was created in November 2020 to reimagine the healthcare system to best deliver services to people in communities across the province. It was mandated to deliver a 10-year Health Accord with short, medium, and long-term goals for a healthcare system that better meets the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The Health Accord NL released its final report in February 2022. The report identified the directions needed to respond to the social, economic and environmental factors and to rebalance the health system¹ outlining 57 calls to action to transform the healthcare system in the province. The Health Accord documents present a significant opportunity for Government to better understand the healthcare needs of the population and possible solutions to achieve better outcomes. The department is currently reviewing the recommendations and actions from the Health Accord documents and will prioritize next steps for the reimagining of our healthcare system.

Financial Information

Department of Health and Community Services			
2021-22 Fiscal Year			
	2021-22		
	Actual Expenditure	Operating Budget	Original Budget
Minister's Office	\$ 261,263	\$290,900	\$290,900
General Administration	\$ 18,554,885	\$19,440,800	\$22,205,600
Drug Subsidization	\$ 164,572,242	\$171,255,700	\$163,933,700
Medical Care Plan	\$496,348,566	\$ 495,145,400	\$516,089,900
Memorial University Faculty of Medicine	\$57,352,400	\$ 57,352,400	\$53,876,400
Regional Health Authorities and Related Services	\$2,557,856,330	\$ 2,583,688,000	\$2,428,856,300
Building Improvements, Furnishings And Equipment	\$32,000,000	\$34,777,500	\$34,777,500
Total Department	\$ 3,326,945,686	\$ 3,361,950,700	\$ 3,220,030,300

¹ https://healthaccordnl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/HANL_Summary_Document_Plain-Text_Feb28-2022.pdf

