



## *Health—New Initiatives*

### ***Working together toward better care***

In 2005–2006, the Province of Nova Scotia will further shorten wait lists and improve access to care; expand home care services; deliver on government's plan to reform primary care and continue to train, recruit and retain more health professionals. With these new resources, the Department of Health will fulfill several of government's commitments outlined in the *Blueprint for Building a Better Nova Scotia*.

### ***Assisting low-income Nova Scotians with diabetes***

Over the next year, an income-based program will be designed and offered to families with low incomes and no prescription drug insurance. With \$2.5 million invested in 2005–2006, the new program will cover insulin, oral diabetic drugs, glucose test strips, syringes, needles and lancets.

### ***Implementing programs for stroke care***

With an investment of \$500,000, the province will work with partners to pilot the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated stroke program that includes stroke prevention, emergency and acute care and rehabilitation. As well, government will continue to engage stakeholders in ongoing system planning related to prevention and to improving outcomes of people with heart disease and stroke.

### ***Ensuring high-quality mental health programs***

The province is committed to ensuring Nova Scotians have access to high-quality mental health services no matter where they live in Nova Scotia by investing an additional \$2 million this year and \$2 million next year in mental health. These dollars will be directed to our priority areas, which include services for children and youth, crisis and emergency services, and mental health community supports for those with chronic and persistent mental illness.

### ***Improving home care services***

The department will invest \$750,000 to increase the scope of home care services. This will initiate an alternative level of care that will allow individuals to remain at home longer and will deter or prevent admission to long-term care facilities and hospitals. Also, \$500,000 has been allotted for a new Self-Managed Care Program for seniors and people with disabilities. This will provide some relief to home care, long-term care and acute care services. This program represents an alternative to home care services and allows individuals to take a more active role in managing their care needs.

### ***Providing 50 new restorative beds***

The department will spend \$1.65 million to establish 50 new restorative beds to the system to better meet the needs of individuals who require short-term rehabilitative care. Introduction of these new beds will help to increase access to the appropriate type of care patients need while an assessment of the province's continuing care and alternative levels of care services is completed.

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### ***Expanding dialysis treatment***

With renal disease growing by 10 per cent annually across Canada, there is increasing need for more dialysis capacity. A provincial approach to the development and long-term management of dialysis will focus on infrastructure, satellite dialysis, peritoneal dialysis and risk modification. The first priority is a review of the satellite dialysis program, recognizing the hardship placed on people who must travel for their dialysis treatment.

### ***Autism - Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) Treatment Program***

The implementation of the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention Treatment program for children with autism spectrum disorder will begin in 2005-06 with an investment of \$4 million. Recruitment and training of therapists will be a priority in order to maintain standards and ensure evidence-based practices through the DHAs/IWK.

### ***Introducing universal hearing screening for newborns***

A \$275,000 investment will help the Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres begin to deliver universal newborn hearing screening outside of the Halifax Regional Municipality, ensuring equal access to early detection and treatment of hearing loss for all Nova Scotia children. Early detection and treatment of hearing loss has been proven to have a positive impact on speech, language and literacy skills for children later on.

### ***Improving palliative care in South West Nova***

An investment of \$383,000 has been provided to the South West Nova District Health Authority for holistic palliative care services and support. The program is congruent with the work of the Provincial Hospice Palliative Care Project and includes the addition of a coordinator as well as designated time from professionals in a variety of disciplines who are part of an interdisciplinary palliative care team. These people will support individuals who are living with a life-threatening illness or are grieving the loss of a loved one.

### ***Reviewing pain management***

An investment of \$300,000 will be dedicated to a thorough review and analysis of existing pain management programs and wait times for patients experiencing chronic pain.

### ***Expanding community-based multi-disciplinary teams***

A community-based collaborative team approach is key to renewal of primary health care in Nova Scotia. Funding in the amount of \$650,000 will help support the formation of these new teams including nurse practitioners who are key members of the team approach. This year, we will hire four new nurse practitioners, allowing us to be more creative in how we meet the health-care needs of people in unique areas of our province such as Long and Brier Island or Advocate Harbour.

### ***Recruiting nurses for rural communities***

In 2005-2006, the province will invest \$300,000 to attract and retain nurses in our rural communities. The strategy will include marketing nursing opportunities in rural communities, funding opportunities for undergraduate nursing students in rural areas and enhancing continuing education opportunities for existing LPNs and RNs in rural areas.

### ***Dalhousie Medical School Funding***

For the third consecutive year, the province is funding eight additional students in Dalhousie University's undergraduate medical program, a \$450,000 investment in future doctors for Nova Scotia.

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Finance

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