



CONTINUING CARE STRATEGY FOR NOVA SCOTIA SHAPING THE FUTURE OF CONTINUING CARE



We thank the many people who participated in working groups or attended consultation meetings around the province. Volunteers, sector representatives, care providers, staff, and community members shared experiences and perspectives that have been invaluable as we work toward a high-quality continuing care system that responds to the needs of Nova Scotia families.



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INTRODUCTION

Neighbours helping neighbours, parents encouraging their children, adults caring for their aging parents, and individuals supporting their communities through volunteering – these attributes are what make our communities strong, and what makes us proud to call Nova Scotia home.

These attributes also set a strong foundation for government programs and services aimed at helping Nova Scotians achieve maximum health and independence.

Nova Scotians have a desire to remain in their own homes, to do as much for themselves as possible, and to make choices about their lifestyle and their care. They want to build on what is already in their communities and to further develop local solutions to meet their needs. And, as their health needs change, Nova Scotians want to know that supports and care options are in place when they need them most.

Nova Scotia's demographic and health status realities affect how this province is able to deliver health services today and in the future.

Seniors are the fastest-growing segment of the population, with 8,100 Nova Scotians celebrating their 65th birthday in 2005. Nova Scotia has the oldest population in Atlantic Canada and the third oldest in Canada.

By 2021, the life expectancy in Nova Scotia is projected to increase to 78.2 years for men and 83.9 years for women.



Statistics Canada reports that 52.6 per cent of Nova Scotians over the age of 12 do not participate in sufficient activity to obtain optimal health benefits. The problem of inactivity is pronounced among Nova Scotian seniors.

Nova Scotia also has:

- an increasing number of people with cognitive impairment and dementias
- the lowest disability-free life expectancy in the country
- the highest death rates in Canada from cancer and respiratory disease
- the highest rates of arthritis and rheumatism
- the second highest rate of diabetes.

As a result, our hospitals are increasingly being used to care for people whose health-care needs could be supported in their homes or in long-term care. This adds unnecessary cost and pressure to the health system and has a negative impact on families, volunteer organizations, and the quality of life for many people.

Currently, Nova Scotia's continuing care system provides home care, self-managed care, long-term care, adult protection, care coordination, and ongoing care management for people with physical and mental health needs.

Nova Scotians have told us that they want these services and more, and they are ready for change.



Over the next decade, we will need to make some tough decisions to ensure that we spend taxpayers' dollars on programs and services that best respond to the needs of Nova Scotians. This will mean realigning current resources, investing new dollars, and working with our partners and stakeholders to develop and implement innovative and effective solutions.

This document outlines the direction government will take to meet its commitment to Nova Scotians.

This 10-year strategy to enhance and expand continuing care incorporates the voices of more than 1,400 Nova Scotians, national and international research of best practices, and detailed analysis of community needs and population trends.

Providing programs and services, such as home care, respite, and palliative care, in homes and communities is a main focus of this strategy. This approach is the most economical, provides the greatest ability to be flexible to diverse needs, and offers individuals and families the highest level of independence and quality of life.

Ensuring that Nova Scotians have access to long-term care when they need it is just as important. This strategy calls for 1,320 new long-term care spaces in the next 10 years, in response to the aging population and community needs.

We look forward to keeping Nova Scotians informed of our progress.



STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Vision:

To have every Nova Scotian live well in a place they can call home.

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to supporting Nova Scotians in their homes and communities.

A high-quality, client-centred, accessible, and affordable continuing care system will:

- acknowledge the role individuals and families have in achieving maximum health and independence
- celebrate and support local initiatives that help individuals remain in their homes and communities as long as possible
- ensure that caregivers and health providers are well supported
- offer a range of services to children, youth, adults, and seniors
- provide long-term care when and where it's needed

In order to achieve these goals, government will focus on five key action areas:

- Support Individuals and Families
- Support Community Solutions
- Invest in Providers
- Strengthen the Continuing Care Services
- Invest in Infrastructure



SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Nova Scotians and families are taking responsibility for their own health. We will help to enhance their skills and knowledge to maximize their independence.

DEVELOP A CAREGIVER STRATEGY

Caregivers are partners in care and clients in their own right. A comprehensive caregiver strategy will include caregiver assessment and a menu of supports that offer choice and meet social, economic, and health needs.

IMPROVE SYSTEM NAVIGATION

Improving how individuals and their families access and move through the continuing care system is important so they can receive the right care at the right time. This may include creating a directory of services that is available in multiple languages.

DEVELOP A PUBLIC AWARENESS STRATEGY

As services continue to grow and change, communication with the public will ensure that those who need services have information about how to access the services available.

SUPPORT COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Nova Scotians want to build on what is already in their communities and to further develop local solutions to help them remain in their homes as long as possible. We will work with individuals, communities, and partners to promote and support sustainable community-based initiatives.

DEVELOP A TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

A sustainable, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-faceted transportation strategy will give many Nova Scotians greater mobility and independence.



EXPAND HOUSING OPTIONS

More affordable housing options will better support Nova Scotians as their health needs change.

EXPAND HOME REPAIR/ADAPTATION PROGRAMS

Expanding the Department of Community Services home repair and adaptation programs will allow seniors and low-income Nova Scotians the option to stay in their homes longer.

EXPAND THE EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM

Expanding the equipment loan program currently offered in long-term care to all Nova Scotians (e.g., home care, schools, broader community) will mean greater independence and comfort for those with special needs.

INVEST IN PROVIDERS

As with any sector, our ability to provide high-quality services to Nova Scotians is dependent on having a well-trained workforce. We will ensure that the continuing care system has the right mix of health providers to care for Nova Scotians.

DEVELOP A CONTINUING CARE HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

A continuing care human resource strategy will tie into Nova Scotia's Health Human Resource Plan. It will contain short- and long-term approaches to address staffing shortages and will outline strategies related to recruitment, retention, education, and training.

EXPAND THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS PROGRAM

Expanding the Challenging Behaviours Program in both home and long-term care environments will better support caregivers, health providers, and individuals with unique needs.



STRENGTHEN THE CONTINUING CARE SERVICES

The continuing care system provides a range of services to people in their homes, communities, and facility care settings. We will enhance and expand these services and implement new and innovative programming to meet Nova Scotians' diverse care needs.

EXPAND HOME CARE

Thousands of Nova Scotians will benefit from new models of care and service expansion, including home maintenance, housekeeping, nutrition, and social interaction. Service standards will be developed to address provider consistency, scheduling, and scope of practice.

PROVIDE CARE IN SCHOOLS

Home care services delivered in the school system will support children with complex health needs.

EXPAND HOME OXYGEN

Expanding home oxygen authorizations to include portable oxygen will result in increased mobility and independence for these home care clients.

EXPAND THE SELF-MANAGED CARE PROGRAM

More Nova Scotians will be able to manage and direct the support services provided to themselves or their loved ones.

EXPAND RESPITE OPTIONS

A wide range of respite options, including improving access to respite in home and long-term care, developing a provincial adult day program, and addressing emergency care service needs, will allow a person's care needs to be met while giving a break to caregivers.

DEVELOP A PROVINCIAL PALLIATIVE CARE PROGRAM

A palliative care program that includes home care authorizations, oxygen, and medication coverage will mean that families will have more choices when a loved one is faced with a life-threatening illness.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF CONTINUING CARE



EXTEND HOME CARE SERVICES IN FACILITY SETTINGS

Offering nursing home care services in Department of Community Services facilities, and Department of Health Community Based Options and Residential Care Facilities.

EXPAND THE ROLE OF LONG-TERM CARE

There are opportunities to introduce innovative models of care that support the needs of clients and the community.

PROMOTE ORAL, HEARING, AND VISION HEALTH

There is a need to improve access to oral, hearing, and vision services in long-term care facilities.

DELIVER PRIMARY CARE IN CONTINUING CARE

Primary health care is defined as the first point of contact with the health care system for individuals and the first element of the continuing care process. Services may include providing better access to physicians and nurse practitioners in various care settings.

EXPAND AMBULATORY SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY

For those who have some level of mobility, some services can be accessed in a variety of settings outside homes (e.g., wound management clinics).

DEVELOP A RESTORATIVE CARE PROGRAM

A restorative care program will help keep Nova Scotians of all ages healthy, active, and independent longer and will reduce premature and unnecessary admission to hospital and long-term care. This will include additional restorative care beds and expanding home care services to include occupational therapy and physical therapy services.

PROVIDE FIRST NATIONS CARE

Working with the federal government to expand home care services will ensure that residents on First Nations reserves have equitable access to the home care nursing program.



RESPOND TO DIVERSE NEEDS

Provincial policies and programs will be revised to better reflect diverse needs and ensure equitable access to services. This will account for diversity in culture, language, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and personal beliefs.

RESPOND TO COMPLEX HEALTH NEEDS

Clients with complex physical and mental health needs will be incorporated into plans to expand home care and long-term care services. For example, nursing services can support in-home dialysis (called peritoneal dialysis) for clients who usually receive treatment in hospital.

RESPOND TO ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY CARE NEEDS

Incorporate the needs of persons with acquired brain injuries in continuing care services.

IMPROVE ASSESSMENT AND CLASSIFICATION

Standards, policies, and procedures for assessment, classification, and placement should promote individuals achieving the highest level of health and independence with the right supports and care options.

DEVELOP STANDARDIZED CASE MANAGEMENT

An integrated provincial model of case management will ensure consistency in policy implementation, yet also allow more flexibility to develop client-tailored care plans.

INTEGRATE HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM

Aligning health-care services will better support Nova Scotians as they access and navigate services in homes, communities, hospitals, and facilities.



INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Providing high-quality continuing care services requires having the appropriate physical space, information systems, and processes that support the needs of individuals and their families.

DEVELOP AN INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW STRATEGY

Accessing and responding to replacement, maintenance, and upgrading needs of long-term care facilities will support high-quality care. Structural, functional, and architectural standards will be developed to reflect future service delivery needs.

ADD LONG-TERM CARE BEDS

Nova Scotia needs more long-term care facilities to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the aging population. In the next 10 years, 1,320 new spaces will be added across the province. Smaller facilities with greater geographical distribution will ensure that long-term care is accessible and affordable for Nova Scotians. Distribution of new beds will be based on: geographic disparity, population projections, community needs, and current pressures on acute care services.

Adding long-term care beds will provide opportunities for unlicensed facilities that meet or are willing to comply with provincial standards and guidelines.

DEVELOP AN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Information systems for improved research, data collection, analysis, and evaluation support evidence-based decision making.

INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY

Equipment and other technologies can enhance continuing care services.

DEVELOP LONG-TERM CARE FUNDING POLICIES

Provincial funding standards will mean fair and consistent funding approaches with all long-term care providers.



CONCLUSION

The issues facing Nova Scotia's health-care system are numerous and complex, with no quick or easy fixes.

Moving forward with a 10-year strategy to improve continuing care will mean a significant financial investment that the taxpayers of Nova Scotia will have to bear. We estimate that this strategy will cost about \$122 million in the first four years, with costs for future years to be assessed at that point.

However, we know that if no changes are made in how health care is delivered, Nova Scotians will pay more for and place additional pressure on hospital services. This is clearly not what Nova Scotians want.

In 10 years, Nova Scotians will have more options to help maintain their health and independence, and they will know where to turn when they need more care and support.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES		Improve system access
SUPPORT COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS	Expand home repair/adaptation programs (DCS)	
INVEST IN PROVIDERS	Expand Challenging Behaviour Program	
STRENGTHEN THE CONTINUING CARE SERVICES	Roll out Self-Managed Care Program Develop the following services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restorative care program • nursing home care services in DCS facilities • in-home peritoneal dialysis • increased home care services • primary care in long-term care • provincial palliative care program • home care in schools • expanded respite options • home care on reserves • expanded home oxygen 	Develop adult day services
INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE	Open <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51 beds in Cape Breton • Richmond Villa Make new bed commitments	Develop information management strategy



YEAR 3

YEARS 4-10

Develop a public awareness strategy

Develop a caregiver strategy

Expand the equipment loan program

Develop a transportation strategy
Expand housing options

Develop a continuing care HR strategy

Provide home care in DOH residential care facilities and community-based options

Expand

- self-managed care
- single-entry access
- home care options
- ambulatory care services

Respond to acquired brain injury needs

Improve access to oral, hearing, vision services

Standardize case management

Expand the role of long term care facilities

Develop new long-term care funding policies

Take action on infrastructure review

Invest in technology

Open new beds

Open new beds

