



Noteworthy

Government releases Strategic Health Plan

Gerald Smith, Minister of Health and Community Services, recently released *Healthier Together: A Strategic Health Plan* for the province which sets out directions for the health and community services system for the next five years. Minister Smith stated that the strategic health plan is for the entire health and community services system and one of a number of important milestones to be reached in the next five years.


"Our goal is to operate a quality, accessible and sustainable system for this province," said Minister Smith. "A coordinated approach to service delivery and increasing the health of the population will set us in the right direction."

Healthier Together sets out three major long-term goals focused on wellness, community capacity building and health services renewal. The goals are:

- improve the health status of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador
- improve the capacity of communities to support health and well-being
- improve quality, accessibility and sustainability of services.

Healthier Together outlines a proactive approach to health and well-being and emphasizes the importance of adopting healthy attitudes and behaviours. The province ranks among the highest in the country for risk factors such as smoking, obesity and physical inactivity - all connected to chronic disease and all avoidable. The plan also establishes a Provincial Wellness Advisory Committee to oversee development and implementation of a wellness strategy. As well, a Provincial Primary Care Advisory Committee will be established to oversee the development of a provincial plan for primary health care.


"Working together we will renew the system to meet the needs of the people of this province. *Healthier Together* focuses on the importance of partnering. Partnering for quality. Partnering for sustainability. Partnering for health."

Healthier Together is available at www.gov.nf.ca/health/strategiehealthplan. 

Community Accounts launched

Government launched Community Accounts of the Strategic Social Plan (SSP) as a resource providing significant social and economic information about communities, regions and the province as a whole. Gerald Smith, lead Minister for the SSP and Minister of Health and Community Services and Judy Foote, Minister of Education and chair of the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet launched Community Accounts to provide detailed information to assist in program and policy design.

"This is one of the most exciting pieces to come out of the Strategic Social Plan," said Minister Smith. Minister Foote said: "Community organizations, researchers, students and all members of the public can access information which helps identify a community's strengths and needs and provides a picture of the social landscape in one's own backyard and beyond. We will all have access to the same information, which will no doubt enhance our discussions on important issues."

Community Accounts reflects government's commitment to use evidence-based decision-making techniques, and will also serve as an important tool for the first ever social progress and audit report to be completed in 2003. On the Internet, it can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca 

Government keeps commitment to report on water quality

Environment Minister Kevin Aylward released the province's annual report on drinking water safety, outlining the progress and accomplishments under the multi-barrier strategic action plan for drinking water safety. The minister has provided information to all municipalities, local service districts and other community organizations.

"Over the past year, government has focused on strengthening our action plan through the new Water Resources Act, updating standards, providing additional source protection and enhancing resources," said Minister Aylward. The minister also outlined government's investments toward ensuring safe, clean and secure drinking water, including extra funding and staff for

monitoring, funding for municipal water disinfection systems and operator training programs.

"Water quality is important to the people of our province and government is working to ensure a reliable supply of clean and safe drinking water. This is the first annual report to the users of our drinking water and we will continue to provide data directly to communities and also to the general public on the Department of Environment's web site on a regular basis."

The report and a summary brochure can be viewed at www.gov.nf.ca/env/dwsreport or received by contacting (709) 729-2563. 