



Business Plan

2023-24

Health and Wellness

© Crown copyright, Province of Nova Scotia, 2023

Budget 2023-24: Business Plan
March 2023
ISBN 978-1-77448-508-8

Health and Wellness

2023-24 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

Health system transformation is the priority of the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) in this fiscal year. Through [Action for Health \(novascotia.ca\)](https://novascotia.ca/actionforhealth) government has articulated a multi-year roadmap to transform the health system.

- Action for Health provides a framework, identifying the priorities for the year, in partnership with the Office of Addictions and Mental Health (OAMH), the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment, the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) and the IWK; and
- Outlines solutions for creating a world-class health system that will be ready when Nova Scotians need it, is responsive to their needs and provides reliable care they can count on.

A whole-of-government approach is being taken to deliver Action for Health and it requires integrated, system-wide solutions and investments to change the trajectory of our health system in Nova Scotia. Action for Health will focus on innovation and finding new ways to address long-standing generational issues within the health system.

2023/24 Priority Actions

The 2023/24 fiscal year will be a critical year for progress in the following priority areas of Action for Health.

Surgical Access Improvements: The following initiatives will increase access to surgeries and reduce wait times for diagnostic services across the province.

- Increasing the available capacity provincewide to do more surgeries and continue to address the surgical backlog and the waitlist for orthopedics, ophthalmology, and general surgery and other surgeries.
- Increasing the hours of operation for operating rooms.
- Increasing access to diagnostic imaging tests such as Medical Resonance Imaging (MRI), Computed Tomography (CT) scans and Ultrasounds.
- Moving from paper-based surgeon referrals to an electronic referral system and a centralized booking system.
- Improving communication with patients.

Cancer Care Improvements: The following priorities will improve access to cancer care services, provide an increased focus on prevention, stabilize cancer care resources, and improve health outcomes.

- Increasing funding to strengthen services at QEII and Cape Breton Cancer Centres.
- Investing in cancer care services in community to allow care closer to home and shorten patient wait and consultation times.
- Implementing a prevention and early detection of lung cancer program with improved access for vulnerable populations.

- Introducing an integrated, province-wide Cancer Information System.
- Testing new models of care.

Improving Patient Movement through the Health System: The following priorities will improve the patient experience by providing care in the right location and safely supporting people to go home sooner.

- Using the new Care Coordination Centre to better move patients in and out of hospital beds across hospital sites and ensure they have timely access to services while in hospital.
- Using licensed healthcare professionals (e.g., physiotherapists, occupational therapists) to provide care seven days a week in hospital (from five days per week) will enhance patient support earlier and reduce demand for nurses.

Emergency Health Services (Ambulances and Paramedics): The following priorities will improve emergency care by using the right resource at the right time and changing how EHS responds to non-emergency calls.

- Increase non-emergency transport capacity to free up local ambulances for emergency response.
- Match the right resource with patient needs, using different technologies to support 911 calls.
- Strengthen workforce through increased training and expanding scopes of practice.

Workforce Strategy: DHW will support the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment, the Office of Addictions and Mental Health (OAMH) and the health authorities in their efforts to recruit and retain much-needed healthcare professionals.

Primary Health Care: The following priorities will provide more options for Nova Scotians to get primary care when and where they need it.

- Expanding team-based care (including family doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers, and dietitians).
- Opening more clinics to support urgent health concerns.
- More support for Primary Care Clinics to take on more patients.
- Expansion of virtual care services.

Infrastructure: Through the development of a provincial strategy that will help guide future spending decisions on healthcare infrastructure and medical equipment, DHW will advance the following priorities.

- Execution of the new plan to deliver the QEII New Generation vision to rethink and rebuild healthcare.
- Continued replacement and expansion of medical equipment to support safe, quality care, including upgrades to laboratory services, diagnostic imaging, and cardiac care.
- Establish the Transition to Community Facilities that will free up more hospital beds for those who need them.

Prescription Drug Coverage:

- Conduct a full review of the formulary, which includes the list of drugs covered by Pharmacare.

Health Equity: The following priorities will provide more engaging and improved access to care for Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, African Nova Scotians, people of African descent and other health equity groups.

- Deliver more services that reflect the population by launching an Indigenous patient navigation program as identified by First Nations communities.
- Expand prideHealth (a primary health care support service who are part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community) to be more accessible across the province.
- Launch a summer internship program for Grade 11 and 12 students from equity-seeking communities.
- Develop a Health Equity Framework to better understand and address disparities of health outcomes in Nova Scotia.
- Develop a health system public engagement strategy to ensure all residents can inform key health initiatives, regardless of where they live.

Public Health: The following priorities will reduce the burden on primary and acute care by improving health and well-being.

- Pilot a prenatal intervention program for families at highest risk, enhancing navigation to services and supports.
- Increase investments in existing early years programming so more families can access services.
- Expand the Topical Fluoride Program to increase access to preventative oral health care.
- Continue to plan and prepare for potential surges in COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses.

Digital Solutions: The following priorities will meet the needs and expectations of providers and patients to deliver world-class healthcare.

- One Person One Record (OPOR) will enable a digitally supported patient centered health system, which will allow patients and providers to have seamless access to the information and care processes they need, no matter where care is given or received.
- Modernize the patient experience by developing an online application that provides health system navigation support and will allow Nova Scotians to securely access their personal health records, information about health services and connections to those health services.
- Continue to invest and expand virtual care options for Nova Scotians.

Financial Summary

Departmental Expenses Summary			
(\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2022 -2023 Estimate</u>	<u>2022-2023 Forecast</u>	<u>2023-2024 Estimate</u>
General Administration	2,539	2,973	2,637
Strategic Direction and Accountability:			
Public Health	6,818	5,788	6,343
System Integration	3,735	3,241	4,174
EHS, Benefit Programs & Eligibility	4,862	4,472	4,893
Strategy, Performance & Partnerships	18,825	16,471	21,214
Health Transformation	—	903	1,769
Physician Services	2,110	2,060	2,631
Service Delivery and Supports:			
Physician Services	1,038,560	1,045,360	1,051,055
Pharmaceutical Services and Extended Benefits	373,715	365,597	381,776
Emergency Health Services	180,674	186,014	212,158
Other Programs	305,672	378,712	301,512
Health Authorities:			
Nova Scotia Health Authority	1,913,522	2,137,017	2,323,293
IWK Health Centre	211,294	236,398	244,008
Capital Grants and Healthcare Capital Amortization:			
Capital Grants and Healthcare Capital Amortization	204,000	156,982	296,610
Total - Departmental Expenses	4,266,326	4,541,988	4,854,073
Ordinary Recoveries	104,794	162,790	104,928
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	253.5	209.4	263.2
Note:			
For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2			
For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1			

