

# Education

## Budget Background

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

Skills agenda will help  
fill the gap

Halifax: April 4, 2002

There are more jobs available than skilled workers to take them in some sectors of the Nova Scotia economy. The government is determined to help fill the gap, with a skills agenda.

Small businesses, manufacturers, and construction and energy industries are all experiencing labour shortages.

Without action, the gap could get wider. By the year 2025, there will be 130,000 more Nova Scotians over the age of 65 than there are today (Statistics Canada). The demand for skilled workers must be met for the provincial economy to grow.

The Department of Education will lead the government's efforts to develop and implement a skills agenda for Nova Scotia. A new Skills and Learning division will be created in the department to support work-force development. An advisory forum will bring together experts to advise on business, industry, and labour market issues.

The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) will play a key role. The college has changed dramatically in recent years to respond to the needs of Nova Scotia's economy with programs that produce skilled workers for the service, information technology, and trades industries.

However, Nova Scotia industries need more workers than the college can provide. In other provinces, about 30 per cent of students who pursue post-secondary education choose college over university. In Nova Scotia, the number is only 17 per cent.

One of the reasons for this imbalance is the lack of space at the NSCC. In 2001-02 the province provided an additional \$1 million to the college to add 200 more seats, for a total of 7,600 in full-time core programs. Still, the college cannot meet demand and gets 20,000 applications each year.

To ensure that Nova Scotia's skills gap is closed, the college must grow, and it has proposed a strategy to gradually increase its seats by 50 per cent. Government allocated \$1 million in 2001-02 to help the college develop a plan to address its capacity shortfall. The plan will include an analysis of program demand, an assessment of facilities, and a comprehensive financial plan.

Skilled workers must have a basic education, so life-long learning remains a priority for Nova Scotians. The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning will continue to help adult Nova Scotians open doors to new opportunities through education. Provincial funding for the school will increase by \$950,000 this year, for a total of nearly \$2 million. The increase will help more Nova Scotians earn credits toward the Nova Scotia High School Diploma for Adults.

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Matching educational needs with future job demands

# Health

More money  
for health care

## Budget Background

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

Halifax: April 4, 2002

The 2002-03 budget for health is \$1.98 billion. It is the single largest expenditure by the province, accounting for more than one-third of provincial government spending annually. This year, health care funding increased by \$134 million. The additional funding will help to maintain the high standards of care, including additional operational funding for the district health authorities, which will be distributed based on need and demonstrated efficiencies. The budgets for all of the nine district health authorities and the IWK will increase this year. There will be no hospital closures.

What does more money for health care mean for Nova Scotians?

- Construction will proceed for a new hospital to replace Highland View in Amherst and for a replacement facility for the Cobequid Multi-Service Centre. Residents of Yarmouth can expect renovations to continue at their regional hospital.
- \$23 million to long-term care and \$7 million to home care will help ensure that seniors' and other peoples' care needs are met.
- \$1.5 million is being invested next year to help children and youth with mental illnesses.
- \$1.8 million will provide services for women and youth with addictions throughout Nova Scotia, with a focus on rural areas.

- Services including renal dialysis will be expanded to meet the growing demand, and there will be improved access to orthopaedic services in northern Nova Scotia.
- Work will continue on implementing a health human resource strategy to help recruit and retain the doctors, nurses, and other health professionals we need.
- Funding will continue for the four primary care demonstration sites previously funded by the federal government. Money has also been set aside to hire four additional nurse practitioners.
- The introduction of an advanced hospital information system linking 33 hospitals—the largest in Canada—will benefit patients, health care professionals, and administrators. It will mean that patients will no longer have to repeat the same medical history over and over, and will reduce wait times for test results and X-rays, and will eliminate duplicate tests.
- \$116 million in 2002-03 will go to cover wage increases negotiated last year for doctors, nurses, health care workers, and others.

The year ahead will see improvements to the health care system as well as additional changes in the way health care services are delivered. Care continues to be the focus, as we look for and implement efficiencies that make sense.

**\$134 million more for health care**



People will get the care they need, in environments that are proven to be clinically sound and follow proven national trends. Decisions will continue to be based on solid information and fact. This is critical if we are to ensure that people get the care that they need at a cost that Nova Scotia taxpayers can afford. Nova Scotia continues to have one of the finest health care systems in the country. This in large part is due to the commitment and hard work of health care practitioners throughout the province including doctors, nurses, volunteers, administrators, care coordinators, and all others.

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# Budget Background

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

## Health

### Continuing to invest in Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy

Halifax: April 4, 2002

A nursing shortage is not unique to Nova Scotia—the rest of Canada and many other parts of the world are facing a similar shortage. The issues that led to this situation took years—in some cases decades—to develop. They can be addressed only with a long-term, comprehensive approach.

Last April, Nova Scotia responded with a \$5-million nursing strategy to support district health authorities, long-term care facilities, and Home Care Nova Scotia in their efforts to recruit and retain nurses.

The strategy emphasizes orientation, continuing and specialty education for practising nurses, and co-operative work experience and bursaries for student nurses. It also includes enhanced recruitment initiatives such as relocation allowances and attendance at major job fairs across the country. Several employers are increasing the impact of the strategy by adding their own incentives.

Since the strategy was announced a year ago, many nurses are beginning to benefit from its programs and initiatives. For example:

- 80 per cent of the funding has gone towards orientation and continuing and specialty education for practising RNs and LPNs.
- 60 student nurses have completed paid co-op work terms, and 90 more are beginning this spring.
- 75 RN students received bursaries and have completed or will soon begin service agreements at facilities across the province.

- 46 LPNs received bursaries upon completion of a refresher or pharmacy course, and 95 more are in progress.
- More than 90 new nurses were recruited from outside the province through new recruitment initiatives, including relocation allowances.

To build on the success of the first year, government will continue to invest \$5 million in Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy. A continued commitment to the nursing strategy means that Nova Scotians will benefit from quality nursing care, now and in the future. It will also help ensure that important health care services can be sustained over the long term, as nursing shortages can contribute to issues such as surgery cancellations and bed closures.

Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy was developed by the Provincial Nursing Network, a group representing nursing employers, educators, professional associations, unions, and practising nurses.

Nurses account for approximately 60 per cent of all health care workers and are a vital part of our health care system.

New initiatives will be added to the strategy later this month. A detailed update is available at [www.gov.ns.ca/health/reports](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/reports).

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Nursing strategy makes progress

# Budget Background

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

## Education

Focusing on  
education basics

Halifax: April 4, 2002

For students to succeed, they need a solid foundation in the basics—reading, writing and math. The Department of Education will work with teachers and school boards to ensure that students get this foundation in the early years. The department's budget will be targeted to implement the following priorities in 2002-03:

- **Math**

The department is spending \$1 million on Math Matters/Les mathématiques, ça compte, a strategy to help teachers deliver the new math curriculum. About \$216,000 will be invested this year in professional development for teachers, and \$200,000 will provide practical teaching resources, including sample lesson plans, homework, and other learning activities. Other investments made in 2001-02 include graphing calculators for senior high, fraction block sets for junior high, and books to help elementary students learn math through reading.

- **Reading**

Active Young Readers/Jeunes lecteurs actifs has brought thousands of new books into classrooms across Nova Scotia. The program will continue to provide materials, professional development, and support for literacy development in grades primary to 6. With \$1 million this year, it will expand to include grade 7 English students in September 2002. The program was implemented in francophone and immersion schools in September 2001.

- **Writing**

Building on the success of the reading program, Writers in Action/Écrivains à l'oeuvre will help teachers deliver the writing components of the language arts curriculum. More than \$400,000 will provide a new writing book for each student, as well as more classroom resources and support for teachers. This program begins in grade 4 English classrooms and grades 4 and 7 in francophone schools in September 2002. It will expand through higher grades in the future.

- **Teaching time**

In addition to books and teacher support, students need time to learn the basics. The department will continue to work with school boards on a Time to Learn strategy. The goal is to improve consistency in daily standards for time spent on mathematics and language arts at the elementary level.

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Skills that make a world of difference

# Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

## Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

## Education

Impact on  
municipalities

Halifax: April 4, 2002

Nova Scotia's 55 municipalities will collectively be better off financially as a result of the 2002-03 budget and measures announced prior to this budget.

Changes have been made to the municipal equalization program and to Nova Scotia Power Inc. property taxes. As a result of these program changes, the net impact will be an additional \$9.2 million in municipal revenues. Municipalities will also benefit from the completion of a five-year agreement, whereby the province assumes all social services costs. For municipalities, this will result in savings of \$6.6 million in 2002-03, as those costs are now paid by the province. Over the life of the agreement, the province has assumed over \$40 million in social services costs from municipalities. All municipalities benefit financially from this change.

Municipalities will now contribute toward the costs of the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority, French Special Programs, and teacher dental and medical premiums. In previous years, the province paid the complete cost of these programs. These programs form part of the cost of school board funding and should be cost-shared by municipalities.

Municipalities will feel the impact of the elimination of restricted licence plates. This change will cost municipalities approximately \$1 million each year. In addition, some provincial funding programs that municipalities access have been reduced. The Local Government Studies Program, Community Grants, and the Provincial Capital Assistance Program have been reduced by a total of \$400,000. However, these programs still provide a total of \$1.75 million for municipal projects.

Overall, despite the fee increases and increased education costs, municipalities are ahead financially, thanks to the equalization and NSPI property tax changes and the transfer of social services costs to the province.

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Municipalities benefit



# Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

## Energy

Budget sets  
energy strategy  
in motion

Halifax: April 4, 2002

In 2001 the Province of Nova Scotia released a long-range strategy to take advantage of energy opportunities. The 2002-03 budget reflects the government's commitment to implement the strategy and advance Nova Scotia's interests on many energy fronts.

### Funding for Energy Department

Planning for the creation of a new Department of Energy is well advanced. The search for a deputy minister to manage the department and to implement the strategy is under way. Funding for the new department is included in the 2002-03 budget. Budget estimates show a rise in Petroleum Directorate funding from \$5 million (estimate 2001-02) to \$7 million in 2002-03. Additional funding for energy-related matters is included in the budget estimate for the Department of Natural Resources.

### Implementing the Energy Strategy

Energy is recognized as a critical component of Nova Scotia's economy. Opportunities exist in offshore and onshore exploration and development; new electrical generation; renewable energy; natural gas distribution, and industrial growth through value-added processes. To gain maximum advantage in these areas, the government is revamping training programs; funding the development of a more competitive electricity market; and pressing for Nova Scotia benefits from offshore development. The energy strategy also highlights the need to promote conservation and address the challenges posed by global climate change. Funding is provided in this budget for new initiatives in each of these areas.

### Energy Training

The Petroleum Directorate budget estimate for 2002-03 includes approximately \$500,000 for training initiatives. Approximately \$300,000 is from within existing budgets, and \$200,000 is new funding. This includes support for a revised and expanded student co-op program and funding for new training. The student co-op program will now include training in all energy sectors, including opportunities in the offshore and renewable energy.

Moving forward our energy strategy



### Electricity Competition

The Petroleum Directorate budget estimate for 2002–03 includes approximately \$200,000 to cover the cost of designing a more competitive electricity market. Electricity sector stakeholders have chosen their representatives on the Electricity Market Governance Committee. The committee will recommend new rules to encourage limited competition in electricity markets as outlined in the energy strategy.

### Advancing Nova Scotia's Offshore Interests

A substantial portion of the additional funding included in the Petroleum Directorate's budget estimate for 2002–03 is required to ensure that the province is able to properly advance Nova Scotia's offshore development interests in the Deep Panuke Project. Additional funding will assist in the development of a new geological estimate of Nova Scotia's offshore potential based upon most recent drilling results and seismic data.

### Responsible Energy Use

The Nova Scotia energy strategy committed the province to ensuring that our energy resources are used wisely and responsibly. The new Department of Energy will have a broad mandate that includes responsibility for energy conservation and efficiency, as well as for managing the province's interests in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause global climate change. Approximately \$400,000 in funding is included in the Petroleum Directorate budget estimate for 2002–03 for these initiatives.

### Offshore Revenues

The recent rebound in North American natural gas prices supports a positive outlook for offshore royalty revenues to the province. Royalty payments from the offshore are estimated to reach \$10 million in 2002–03, consistent with the 2001–02 forecast. The royalty rate on the Sable Offshore Energy Project (SOEP) is fixed at 1 per cent of revenues for the first three years of the project. Accordingly the rate cap will be removed at the end of 2002. The government expects project owners to have recovered a significant portion of the investment at this time. The minimum royalty payment for 2003 will therefore be two per cent of gross revenues.

Royalty rates increase as the owners' investment is recovered and project returns accumulate. After a reasonable return is achieved, rates will switch from being calculated on gross revenues to being calculated on net revenues. Net revenues are the gross revenues from the project less the direct expenditures.

The current long-term projection of \$1.6–2.3 billion in royalties from SOEP recognizes the inherent uncertainty in natural gas prices. The projection includes a variability in natural gas prices of +/- \$0.25 US per million btu.

Natural gas price assumptions are based upon NYMEX futures market prices, royalty estimates, historic movement in commodity prices, actual sale proceeds, and the terms of sale contracts. At the time of preparing the budget estimate, the NYMEX natural gas futures prices were \$2.50 US for 2002 and \$3.00 US for 2003. On a full-year basis a shift of \$0.25 +/- would change royalty revenue by approximately \$1.0 million.

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# Community Services

## Justice

### Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

Family violence programs will be redesigned

Halifax: April 4, 2002

In 2002-03, the Department of Community Services will undertake a redesign of family violence and outreach programs in Nova Scotia. Current programs, including transition houses, women's centres, and men's treatment programs, were developed over the last 20-plus years, based on individual community needs and often operate independently of one other. This is not practical or efficient.

Beginning immediately, the department will examine all family violence-related programs to ensure that there is a range of services to assist families in preventing or dealing with the aftermath of family violence. The redesign will have an emphasis on outreach programs, as the department works to become more efficient in the delivery of family violence program initiatives.

This work will allow a more effective response to the changing needs of communities, reduce unused capacity in the system, and place resources where they are most needed. For example, there is an increasing demand for outreach services in many communities, yet programs are not currently designed around outreach services. On the other hand, transition houses provide shelter services that are staffed to expect full capacity around the clock, seven days per week, even though some facilities operate with a vacancy rate of 50 per cent or more.

Over the coming weeks, the department will begin looking for ways to deliver these programs to meet the needs of families in crisis within the department's existing resources, which this year will see a reduction of \$890,000 for this sector. Staff will begin consulting with program providers for their input immediately. The goal is to make changes that ensure that no person in need of service will go without. The department expects to have redesigned programs operational by this fall.

In addition to this work by the Department of Community Services, domestic violence legislation will ensure that victims can immediately apply for emergency protection orders, so their safety and economic well-being may be protected. The Department of Justice has set aside \$300,000 to create a justice learning centre in Truro. It will provide training for justice personnel and will begin with a focus on family violence. In addition, \$157,000 is set aside to establish victim assistance coordinator positions to work with police agencies and develop risk-assessment strategies. The department will also develop and administer protocols for response to high-risk cases.

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Family violence programs redesigned

# Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

## Finance

Revenue up from  
many sources

Halifax: April 4, 2002

The province is expecting an increase of about \$159 million in revenue in fiscal 2002-03, compared to the current forecast for 2001-02. Total revenues for fiscal 2002-03 are expected to reach \$5.31 billion, up from \$5.15 billion now forecast for 2001-02. A growing provincial economy, gas and tobacco tax increases, higher fees, and higher profits from provincial Crown corporations account for virtually all the increase.

The government has asked the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation to increase its profits by about \$15 million, to \$160 million in 2002-03. The Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation's business-like approach to revenue generation, marketing, and promotion will help achieve higher returns based on retail price increases and improved efficiencies.

The Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation expects to increase its overall profits by \$13 million in 2002-03. The Gaming Corporation anticipates total net revenues of \$170.3 million for the year.

Economic growth will account for additional revenues, as Nova Scotia is expected to recover from the sluggish after-effects of 2001, with increasing growth through 2002. Growth is expected to accelerate to a healthy 3.7 per cent in 2003.

Increased employment is expected to add about \$40 million in personal income tax revenue to the province in 2002-03. Consumer confidence is expected to remain strong, resulting in an increase in sales tax revenue of \$36 million. These gains are partially offset by revenue declines elsewhere, including those from federal sources.

Nova Scotia is paying more of its own way. Three years ago the split in provincial/federal revenues was about 62/38. In 2002-03, 64 per cent of the province's revenue is coming from "provincial sources" and only 36 per cent from Ottawa.

Tax increases for gasoline, tobacco, and gypsum production will amount to \$47.1 million in added revenue in 2002-03.

The gas tax increases two cents per litre, from 13.5 cents to 15.5 cents, midnight April 4. The increase will add \$23.2 million, all of which is dedicated to highway improvements.

A carton of cigarettes increases by \$5 in provincial tax, and the taxes on other tobacco products increase accordingly, also effective midnight, April 4. This measure will bring in \$23.6 million.

The gypsum tax will increase by four cents per ton and is expected to add \$300,000 in revenue. The tax had not been adjusted since 1975 and goes from 12 cents to 16 cents per ton.

Increases in user fees, cost recoveries, and the Pharmacare premium total \$26.5 million.

The revenue picture



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# Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

Halifax: April 4, 2002

The Nova Scotia government has announced three tax increases and one extension in its 2002-03 budget. Individuals and businesses are affected.

- **Provincial Motive Fuel (Gasoline) Tax:**  
**Two cent per litre increase**

Nova Scotians have been asking the government to invest in the province's transportation infrastructure. The Nova Scotia government will dedicate 100 per cent of increased revenue from its gasoline tax to improve highways, roads, and bridges. Effective midnight, April 4, 2002, the provincial gasoline tax will increase from 13.5 cents to 15.5 cents per litre of gasoline. The tax on diesel fuel will remain the same. Approximately \$23.2 million in additional revenue will be dedicated to highway improvements such as 100-series construction, repaving of routes and trunk highways, and cost-shared paving of subdivision streets. The motive fuel tax was last increased in 1993.

- **Tobacco Tax: Increases for all tobacco products**

The greatest deterrent to smoking, especially for young people, is higher cigarette prices. Effective midnight, April 4, 2002, the Nova Scotia government will increase tobacco taxes by \$5.00 per carton of 200 cigarettes, bringing the provincial tax on a carton of cigarettes to \$21.04. The tax for cigarette sticks will increase by \$7.86 for 200. Fine-cut tobacco will rise by \$7.06 per 200 grams. This is in keeping with recent tobacco tax increases in other provinces, including Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. Nova Scotia expects to raise an additional \$23.6 million in tobacco tax revenue. The government estimates that it will collect a total of \$138.5 million in tobacco taxes for 2002-03.

- **Gypsum Tax: Four cent per ton increase**

Nova Scotia is a world-class gypsum producer, accounting for 85 per cent of Canada's production and seven per cent of world production. There are four gypsum operators in the province. All gypsum operators currently pay a tax of 12 cents per ton, a rate that has not changed since 1975. Effective immediately, the rate will increase 4 cents, to 16 cents per ton. This increase is expected to produce \$300,000 in new revenue. The government estimates that it will collect a total of \$1.2 million in gypsum tax for 2002-03.



## Tax Extension

- **Large Corporations Tax: Extended to March 31, 2004**

In October 2001, Finance Minister Neil LeBlanc advised the business community that the Large Corporations Tax, which was set to expire this year, would continue for at least one more year.

The province currently collects approximately \$42.6 million from about 1,040 companies paying the Large Corporations Tax. The tax rate will not change, but the tax is further extended to March 31, 2004. The capital tax was first applied six years ago to offset the gains accruing to businesses after the introduction of the HST.

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# Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

## Finance

Changes to  
fees and recoveries

Halifax: April 4, 2002

Government will raise a total of \$26.5 million through new user fees, increases, and higher cost recoveries on existing fees.

### 2002-03 Budget

Government announced three new revenue measures in the budget, totalling \$4.22 million in revenue increases. These fees are effective at midnight, April 4, 2002.

- **Unlimited Liability Companies: \$3.2 million**

The registration fee for an unlimited liability company will increase to \$2,000 from \$335. The annual fee increases to \$1,000.

- **Ambulance User Fee: \$1.0 million**

This year the cost of an ambulance transport from home to hospital will increase from \$85 to \$105. The cost of a transport for an insurance related claim (e.g. motor vehicle collision) will increase from \$500 to \$600. The total ambulance fee increase is estimated to bring in \$1 million in revenue.

- **International Adoption Fee \$0.02 million**

The fee for international adoptions will increase to \$600 per application, for a total increase in revenue of \$16,000.

### Previously Announced Fees and Recoveries Schedule

Previously released fee and recovery changes will contribute \$22.5 million in revenue. These measures are mainly increases to various licensing and administrative fees collected by several provincial government departments. These cost-recoveries reflect as much as possible the cost of providing these services. Some of these measures will directly contribute to better safety and environmental protection for Nova Scotians. Many of these changes took effect April 1. A new Pharmacare fee structure was announced earlier which brings in \$4.5 million in revenue. Fees collected through Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) applications will account for \$175,000.

Changes to fees and recoveries



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**New Fees, Taxes and Revenues 2002–03****( in \$ millions)**

Announcements up to March 26 22.5

***Fees Announced on Budget Day***

Unlimited Liability Companies 3.2

Ambulance User Fees 1.0

International Adoption 0.02

***Taxes Announced on Budget Day***

Gas Tax 2 cents/litre 23.2

Tobacco \$5/carton 23.6

Gypsum Tax 16 cents/ton 0.3

***Increased Revenue***

Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation 15.0

Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation 13.1

**Total Fees, Taxes and Revenues 2002–03 101.9**

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# Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

## Health

### Positive implications of health budget increase to continuing care programming

Halifax: April 4, 2002

The province is committed to offering Nova Scotians the right care at the right time in the right place. This broadens the definition of health care to add a greater emphasis to care provided outside a hospital setting.

Continuing care provides an array of services to support people in their community. It includes home care, nursing home care, and protection for vulnerable adults.

In recognition of the widening scope of health care, the number one priority in the Department of Health for the coming fiscal year is continuing care. This is a commitment to provide the necessary services to help support the independence and well-being of seniors and others who need care on a daily basis for either long-term or short-term health problems. Examples of this type of care include nursing homes, homes for the aged, and smaller homes such as residential care facilities and community-based options homes, as well as providing home oxygen, nursing, and/or personal care at home.

Increasing the budget in continuing care will enable the Department of Health to enhance its help to people who can benefit from support in their homes or communities. It's interesting to note that less than half of the health budget goes to the district health authorities. A greater percentage is needed in program areas such as continuing care to meet the increasing demand for care outside hospitals.

Single entry access is the new and simplified approach to connecting Nova Scotians to the continuing care they need—an example of meeting demand with enhanced service. The former Home Care Nova Scotia toll-free number provides one contact for seniors and others to connect with Continuing Care in this province.

Additional investments in continuing care this year include the following:

- **Long Term Care**

The budget for long-term care in Nova Scotia is \$204.4 million this year, an increase of \$23 million. This money will go to improving the living environment for residents through capital improvements, upgraded accommodations, and increased money for daily operating costs. The value of long-term care staff is being recognized through increased employee benefits, in particular workers' compensation benefits.

- **Home Care**

Home care spending will increase by \$7 million. An additional \$1 million has been given to the single entry access process to ensure its stability through this introductory year. Money was added to the budget to continue the development of home care services to best respond to the needs of clients. In addition, money was added to the home care budget base for increased salary costs, including nursing.

Continuing care programming





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# Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

## Health

Budget continues to support information management initiatives

Halifax: April 4, 2002

The Department of Health is involved in two major information technology initiatives designed to improve patient care, ease the workload of health care providers, and enhance health service delivery.

The hospital information system project will link 33 hospitals in Nova Scotia, allowing, among other things, the creation of an electronic health record that can be shared among facilities to improve patient care. This will benefit the patient and the provider, especially during emergencies when timely information can save lives.

The second initiative is Health Infostructure Atlantic (HIA)—an alliance of the four Atlantic provinces to implement several information technology projects. HIA received \$12 million in funding from the federal government, matched by the same amount from the four provinces to implement several initiatives to enhance health service delivery. One of the initiatives is the Tele-i4 project, which will allow radiology images to be transferred across Atlantic Canada to specialty hospitals.

Nova Scotia has been lagging behind the rest of the country in the implementation of information management initiatives in the health care sector. The Hospital Information System project and HIA will ensure that our health care system—its patients and providers—have the information technology infrastructure they need to enhance care and improve working conditions.

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Information links to improve care

# Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

## Health

### Province changes eligibility for children's dental program

Halifax: April 4, 2002

Nova Scotia will no longer be the primary insurer for the Children's Oral Health Program. Effective May 1, 2002, private insurance companies will cover the cost of dental care for children aged 10 years and younger whose families are insured. The province will continue to cover the costs of care for those children whose families do not have private insurance.

The children's dental program cost Nova Scotia over \$7.3 million in 2001-02. The number of children insured under the program is 108,500. Program funding is reduced by \$4.35 million in 2002-03. Health Canada Statistics estimate that approximately 50 per cent of Nova Scotians over the age of 14 are covered under private dental plans.

The government is working to ensure that its limited health care dollars assist in areas where they are needed most. Included in this funding are a variety of ancillary programs—programs that the Canada Health Act does not mandate. The Children's Oral Health Program (COHP) is one such program. Until now, the province provided dental care on a universal basis to all children up to the end of the month in which they reach their 10th birthday.

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Nova Scotians embracing opportunities

# Transportation and Public Works

## Budget Bulletin

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2002-03

Province of Nova Scotia

Major commitment to  
roads and bridges

Halifax: April 4, 2002

The government is making a major commitment to roads, bridges, and ferries with \$85.5 million in capital funding—an increase of \$32 million over 2001-02.

Nova Scotians recognize that our 23,000 kilometres of roads and highways support just about everything we do. That's why the provincial government has announced a significant increase in capital funding for improvements that will mean better, safer roads in our communities.

Fiscal 2002-03 marks the third consecutive year that the provincial government has increased capital funding for roads and bridges. It furthers a commitment to increase funding for road construction by \$31 million dollars over a three-year period. That's on top of the additional \$10 million in annual maintenance funding for rural roads.

Still, Nova Scotia faces an uphill battle. The department's 10-year needs assessment suggests that significant investments must be made over the next decade to bring our roads and bridges to acceptable standards.

While we continue to make strategic investments in our transportation system, we will also seek more substantial long-term funding from the federal government. Ottawa should contribute its fair share. Recent statistics show that the federal government reinvests less than three per cent of revenues from gasoline taxes it collects in Nova Scotia.

In the meantime, basic improvements cannot wait. The province is increasing its gasoline taxes by two cents per litre, effective midnight, April 4, 2002. The additional revenue will fund highway improvements such as 100-series construction, repaving routes and trunk highways that enhance local economic development, and cost-shared paving of subdivision streets.

Higher revenues from new ticket and cash fares on the provincially owned ferry system will also ensure that users pay a greater share of the cost of operating this service.

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**\$85 million for roads**

