



Fiscal Year 2020-21
Quality and Sustainability Plan
June 2020





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Message from the President and CEO

Nova Scotia Health Authority's 2020-21 *Quality and Sustainability Plan* highlights our vision for this second year of our overall 2019-24 plan. As noted with last year's submission, the transition from an annual business plan to a five year strategy has allowed us to set longer term goals within our strategic plan, Healthier Together, and to show the clear connection between our efforts to provide high quality and safe patient care and how we manage the valuable financial resources provided to us.

This document reflects our original plans and priorities for 2020-21 and was developed in keeping with the identified priorities of the Department of Health and Wellness and the requirements and expectations of NSHA for the fiscal year. Unfortunately, as we worked to finalize this plan, the unanticipated service changes and associated financial impacts of COVID-19 drastically altered our day-to-day operations. Despite our organizational priorities remaining true to our original commitments, the reality of the state of emergency order and subsequent pandemic response has had a material impact on everything we do and has required the full attention of our staff and leadership team.

While COVID-19 has presented us with unique and unforeseen challenges, it has also helped draw public attention to something we have always known – our employees and physicians are quite simply the best and are truly committed to providing quality care to Nova Scotians no matter what the circumstances.

Over the past months, they have continued to come to work every day all the while knowing they may be exposed to a virus about which much is still not known. Many of them were willingly redeployed to roles they likely never dreamed they would be expected to fill.



Others, particularly our leadership teams, worked tirelessly to develop and implement processes that ensured the continued health and safety of patients and staff alike.

Although our original 2020-21 vision for moving forward with this plan's priorities has slowed, NSHA remains committed to those goals and to financial accountability, transparency and sustainability. We will continue our efforts to prepare for a potential second wave of the pandemic while at the same time rebuilding momentum across the organization to achieve the objectives outlined in this plan. We will maintain our focus on having a health system that provides the best possible care delivered by the right provider, in the right place, at the right time – one that supports our vision of healthy people, healthy communities – for generations.

Dr. Brendan Carr
President and CEO



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2019-22 Strategic Plan • Healthier Together

VISION

Healthy people, healthy communities
– for generations

MISSION

To achieve excellence in health,
healing and learning through
working together

VALUES

Respect is caring for each other and those we serve

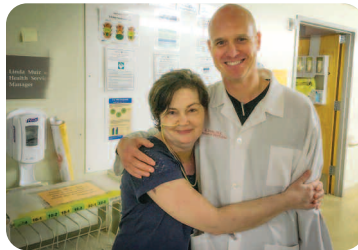
Integrity is being honest and ethical

Courage is doing what is right even when it may be difficult

Innovation is being open to change, learning new things and exploring new possibilities

Accountability is answering to the people we serve and each other for our decisions and actions

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



Our Services

Deliver a high-quality and sustainable health system



Our People

Strengthen and support a healthy, high-performing workforce



Our Community

Work with our communities to improve the health and wellness of Nova Scotians

Collaboration Diversity Engagement
Equity Evidence-Informed Quality
Integration People-Centred Research Safety

3

Our Mandate

Nova Scotia Health provides health services to Nova Scotians and a wide array of specialized services to other Maritimers and Atlantic Canadians. Nova Scotia Health operates hospitals, health centres and community-based programs across the province. Our team includes employees, doctors, researchers, learners and volunteers. We work in partnership with community groups, schools, governments, foundations and auxiliaries, and community health boards.

On April 1, 2015, Nova Scotia’s nine district health authorities came together as one to form Nova Scotia Health Authority. Under the Health Authorities Act, together with the IWK Health Centre, we have a legislated responsibility to govern, manage and provide health services to Nova Scotians and to engage with the communities we serve.

Nova Scotia Health is the largest health organization in Atlantic Canada — and the largest employer in Nova Scotia. We serve a population of about 971,000 Nova Scotians. Within our \$2.3 billion budget, we are responsible for hospital and community-based services including mental health and addictions, public health and primary health care.

Our settings range from one specialty hospital, the QEII Health Sciences Centre, to nine regional hospitals, and more than 30 community hospitals and health centres.



Within the organization, there are about:

24,500 employees
7,000 volunteers
5,500 learners
2,500 physicians and medical residents
160 contracted continuing care service providers
37 community health boards
41 hospital foundations
33 auxiliaries



3

Our Mandate



The health and wellness system in Nova Scotia is responsible for the delivery of health care as well as the prevention of disease and injury and the promotion of health and healthy living.

The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Health and Wellness and Nova Scotia Health are:

Department of Health and Wellness:

- provides leadership for the health system by setting the strategic policy direction, priorities and standards for the health system
- ensures appropriate access to quality care through the establishment of public funding for health services that are of high value to the population
- ensures accountability for funding and for the measuring and monitoring of health-system performance

Nova Scotia Health:

- governs, manages and provides health services* in the province and implements strategic directions set out in the provincial health plan
- engages with communities served, through the community health boards

Nova Scotia Government – Department of Health and Wellness Priorities for 2020-21:

- Collaborative Primary Care
- Mental Health & Addictions
- Orthopedic Surgeries (Hip & Knee Replacements)
- Continuing Care
- Clinical Practice Standardization (*One Person, One Record*)

***Health Services** are defined in the *Health Authorities Act* as “services related to the prevention of illness or injury, the promotion or maintenance of health or the care and treatment of sick, infirm or injured persons, and includes services provided in the province through hospitals and other health-care institutions, public health services, addiction services, emergency services, mental health services, home care services, long-term care services, primary care services and such other services as may be prescribed by the regulations.”

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Our 2020-21 Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

Improving the health status of Nova Scotians is what guides the work of Nova Scotia Health. Currently that health status is not what it should be and that tells us we need to think differently about what services we provide, where and how we provide them. Much of our population is increasingly frail with more than one serious illness and a high prevalence of mental health disorders and substance abuse. We are also seeing a migration of people from rural to urban and semi-urban areas. We know too that our health system is not as efficient as it could be.

Our health care system has traditionally had an over emphasis on acute care when our focus really needs to be more on the health of the population and finding ways to support people and reduce their reliance on services delivered in hospitals. The number of acute care service locations, many of them with aging infrastructure, also creates health human resource challenges while not allowing for the critical mass of cases that helps us ensure the highest quality services continue to be available. We also must keep up with advances in technology and research if we want to maintain high quality health care for Nova Scotians.

The end result of all this is a system that faces a variety of risks and continually escalating costs. We must do things differently if we want to continue providing the quality care and services that Nova Scotians require — and expect — in a sustainable, fiscally-responsible manner.

The cornerstone of changing our direction is by continuing to build and enhance our primary health care model. Each and every Nova Scotian should have access to a primary care provider or collaborative family practice

team so they have quality care when and where they need it. We have made significant progress through the establishment of 85 new collaborative family practices but we still have more work to do. We all want a health system we can rely on to provide the care and support we need by the right provider, in the right place, at the right time.

To support this work, our 2020-21 priorities highlight where we will focus our activities and resource allocations for the coming year. They include:

- A Primary Health Care
- B Population Health
- C Mental Health and Addictions
- D Patient Flow
- E Surgical Services with a Focus On Orthopedics
- F Pathology, Laboratory Medicine and Diagnostic Imaging Services
- G Major Infrastructure Projects
- H One Person One Record
- I Our People
- J Research and Innovation

When establishing our priorities we consider several factors including the priorities of the Nova Scotia government, the health needs of our population, the work of the 37 Community Health Boards and the recommendations in their community health plans. Most importantly we listen to what employees, physicians, learners, volunteers, patients and the public are telling us about how we are doing and whether we are moving forward towards our vision of *healthy people, healthy communities- for generations.*

4

Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

A Improve Access to Primary Health Care

Primary Health Care is a multi-dimensional system that has a responsibility to organize care for individuals across the continuum of care and throughout their lifetime as well as to work with our partners to improve the health of our communities. Strong primary health care systems contribute to overall health system performance and the health of the population. Nova Scotia's primary health care system requires continued attention and investment in order to realize the benefits and outcomes observed in other jurisdictions where strong primary health care systems exist. Further, establishing a strong primary health foundation will serve to facilitate overall health system transformation and improve the health status of Nova Scotians.

Nova Scotia Health has been moving forward in a purposeful and planned way toward a broader vision for primary health care and improving access to primary care remains a priority.



As highlighted earlier in this report, we have been successful in enhancing our focus on collaborative family practice teams across the province. Creating more collaborative family practice teams, as well as supporting the ones currently in place, will help us recruit and retain family physicians and other health professionals in our communities which we know is critical to the future of our health care system. Furthermore, the Primary Health Care Chronic Disease Management and Wellness Clinical Network is in the development stage. This network will act as a catalyst to support innovation in practice, learning and quality.

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Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

A Improve Access to Primary Health Care (Cont'd.)

We are committed to our previously stated 2019-24 Primary Health Care priorities:

- Create more and strengthen existing collaborative family practice teams in Nova Scotia, which will result in Nova Scotians being supported by a regular primary care provider and team who provide coordinated, continuous and comprehensive care and an accessible range of services
- Enhance the availability to primary medical care for those who do not have a regular primary care provider, including through the use of virtual care
- Work with others to support the ongoing development of the enablers of the primary health care system
- Together with communities, families and individuals, support Nova Scotians to live their healthiest life by focusing on wellness and the management of chronic conditions
- Influence and participate in the research agenda in Nova Scotia and elsewhere and embed quality and innovation into the work of primary health care leadership and teams
- Collaborate with key stakeholders to develop the Primary Health Care Chronic Disease Management and Wellness Clinical Network



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Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

B Population Health

Taking a population health approach to our work means investing in and focusing our efforts on the broad range of factors and conditions that influence our health. This work requires that we recognize health as not simply the absence or treatment of disease, but as a capacity or resource to be developed and one that enables a fulfilling life. Achievement of our organizational vision, *'healthy people, healthy communities – for generations'*, requires action on the social conditions that impact health.

The need for us to focus in this way has been validated through our efforts to renew Nova Scotia Health's strategic plan. During the winter of 2019, we engaged with many stakeholders including employees, physicians, patients, families, community health boards and community partners to confirm how we can work together to move toward the long term goal of improved population health. Not only was it clear through this process that Nova Scotians recognize the importance of the conditions that impact health, we also identified several priority goals that will help us build organizational and system capacity, strengthen our community partnerships, champion healthy public policies and support and inform our decision-making.



Working with our communities to improve the health of our population is one of our three strategic directions. We believe the key to long term improvement of our province's health status lies in our collective work – it's not something that either individuals or the health system alone can address. We need to build strategies that integrate meaningful public engagement with priority initiatives affecting health services and the health and wellness of Nova Scotians.

4

Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

C Enhance Mental Health and Addictions Service Delivery

Between the years of 2015-2017, Nova Scotia Health's Mental Health and Addictions Program of Care engaged in a health services planning process, in consultation with the IWK Health Centre, which culminated in the release of a report titled: *Milestones on our Journey, Transforming Mental Health and Addictions in Nova Scotia: A Provincial Model for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Care and Support*.

This process helped identify complexities in the broader mental health and addictions system of care and support which includes the Department of Health and Wellness, other government departments, primary health care, non-governmental organizations, community care givers, patients, and families. It also highlighted some fundamental differences in how our work is done across Nova Scotia.

Since the launch of *Milestones*, significant progress has been made in achieving the goal of having a truly provincial program of care and also towards implementing several priority initiatives including, but not limited to, the following:

- Implementing a provincial intake service and registration system for outpatient care;
- Setting standards for community mental health and addictions outpatient care wait-times;
- Enhancing urgent care and crisis services;
- Increasing access to, and enhancement of, treatment services in community;
- Investing in rural psychiatry recruitment and retention;
- Enhancing our peer support program;
- Establishing e-mental health solutions;
- Investing in services for children and youth;
- Increasing access to opioid treatment and recovery; and,
- Strengthening our quality framework, performance and accountability

4

Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

C Enhance Mental Health and Addictions Service Delivery (Cont'd.)



Mental Health and Addictions Program of Care's mission is to enable people experiencing mental disorders and addictions to manage their conditions and work towards recovery. Reaching our mission will be an iterative process and will require significant consultation and collaboration with government, other health programs, our partners, the community, patients and their families.

In 2020-21, our key areas of focus are:

- Partner to increase availability of, and support access to, early/brief intervention and self-management supports for people and their families with mild to moderate mental health/substance use problems. This includes expansion of e-Mental Health and the development of an e-consult model in collaboration with primary health care.

- Increase access and availability of services targeted to those with moderate to severe mental disorders, including addictions, that impacts their daily ability to function. This includes improvement initiatives to enable access to community mental health and addictions clinics within provincial wait-time standards, and improvements to intake services.
- Improve value and alignment of services to meet patient and family needs through the completion of program/service reviews in key priority areas.
- Improve quality and effectiveness of mental health and addictions care through continuous quality improvement to systematically improve program processes, analyze program performance and integrate patient and family feedback.
- Increase consistency across mental health and addictions service areas by providing consistent standards of service across the province and ensuring a competent, engaged and high quality workforce.
- Foster a culture of accountability and transparency by improving capacity to measure, manage and report on performance at local, zonal, and provincial levels.

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Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

D Improve Patient Flow

In our complex health care system, improving patient flow has become a critical focus to help ensure patients have access to the right care by the right provider, in the right place, at the right time. Inefficient flow or transition from one care environment to another creates bottlenecks and constrains the ability of clinicians to provide people-centred care in a timely and efficient manner. Routinely, some hospitals in Nova Scotia are at or above 95 per cent occupancy while we know that a rate of 85 per cent occupancy is needed for the more efficient patient flow that supports a reliable, sustainable model.

Access to services and resources across the system are needed to ensure efficient patient flow including timely access to primary health care and to long-term care and/or community-based care and supports. Nova Scotians also need a responsive, effective and integrated system of Emergency Health Care with many access points. Within our current system there have been a rising number of emergency department closures across the province. This year, Nova Scotia Health is offering a series of community engagement sessions to discuss the current situation with emergency department closures, share information and gather public feedback. These engagement sessions will employ a multiphase approach to inform ongoing service planning.

Nova Scotia Health is implementing a multi-year quality improvement plan for patient flow with a system level approach that spans emergency departments, inpatient services and continuing care.

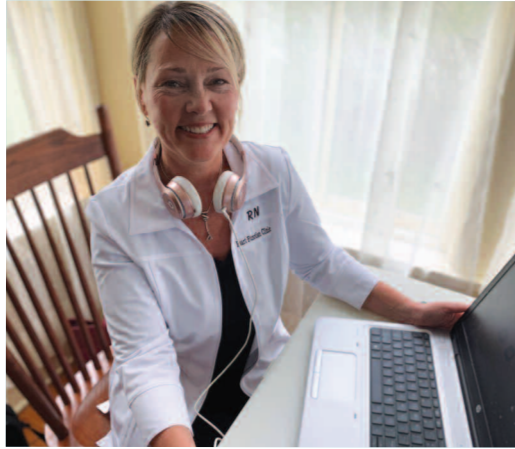


This plan includes a collective focus on accountability and governance of patient flow resources. We will be revising our escalation processes, physician accountabilities and accountable care processes. Technology and evidence will be leveraged to monitor inpatient bed utilization to inform planning for hospital and community resources. We will focus on improving ambulance offload times, timely access to inpatient beds for patients admitted in our emergency departments and on reducing surgical postponements due to an inpatient bed not being available.

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Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

D Improve Patient Flow (Cont'd.)



Nova Scotia Health’s *home first* philosophy promotes safe and timely care, as well as services and supports to help people live in their own homes, with as much independence and autonomy as possible, for as long as possible.

When care at home is no longer possible, we strive to provide more timely access to long-term care. With the right support, people who just five years ago would have moved to a nursing home are now able to live safely and comfortably at home.

The key areas of patient flow focus for 2020-21 are:

- Implement a multi-year quality improvement plan for patient flow
- Improve ambulance offload times
- Enhance access to the appropriate care setting to match the patient’s needs (acuity and complexity)
- Foster a “Home First Philosophy”
- Enhance timely access to home support services and long term care
- Engage with communities to discuss Emergency Department Closures and explore service options for the future.

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Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

E Improve Access to Surgical Services with a Focus on Orthopedics

Timely access to quality, safe, surgical services is important to Nova Scotians. Within Nova Scotia Health, there are more than 70,000 surgeries every year, in 17 locations, at a total cost of more than \$250 million. Nova Scotia Health's Perioperative (Surgical) Services Program continues to focus on efforts to improve care, access and outcomes.

Improving access and care for orthopedics (hip and knee replacements) remains a high priority for Nova Scotia Health. Over the past three years, we have made strides forward including reducing the length of time patients are waiting for hip and knee surgery, introducing wellness models, shortening lengths of stay in hospital after surgery and improving our patient's experiences.

Nova Scotia Health will continue with implementation of our multi-year plan for orthopedics to improve the care we offer and achieve national benchmarks for total hip replacements and total knee replacements. We will focus more on health promotion to prevent the need for surgery, increase preparation of patients for their surgery and create opportunities for patients to have a voice in their surgical journey.



4

Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

F Enhance and Modernize Pathology, Laboratory Medicine and Diagnostic Imaging Services

Diagnostic Imaging and Pathology and Laboratory Medicine services must be as responsive, accessible and sustainable as possible as we continue to look at ways to improve service to meet population needs.

This means taking advantage of new technology and applying innovative approaches to service delivery. Working with our partners at Department of Health and Wellness and the IWK Health Centre, our goal is to continue to develop an integrated, harmonized provincial service delivery model that will allow us to ensure our health human resources are utilized in the most efficient manner while we maintain a people-centred, high quality, safe and cost-effective diagnostic system well into the future.

One area where we will focus our efforts during 2020-21 is the provincial radiology imaging repository known as PACS. PACS is a clinical tool/technology utilized at all sites across the province to store, view and report on radiology images. PACS is an essential part of a sustainable, high quality diagnostic service and presently the system requires significant upgrade to both software and hardware. Taking action to upgrade the PACS system now is necessary to reduce the risk level and prevent negative impacts on our clinician's ability to treat patients effectively. The upgraded system will allow for more efficient radiologist workflow, expanded storage capabilities, expanded integration of other types of imaging such as colonoscopy or dermatology, and continued support and maintenance.



Our priority initiatives in 2020-21 for Diagnostic Imaging/Pathology Laboratory Medicine are:

- Upgrade the PACS system (provincial radiology imaging repository) to protect the integrity of the system and ensure continued access to quality radiology images
- Continue to implement Point of Care Testing which is innovative technology that provides testing at or near the bedside and will continue to be implemented in rural community sites to provide testing that will support Emergency Departments. Point of Care Testing has already been fully implemented at several of our emergency departments across the province
- Ensure Nova Scotia Health has a robust, integrated transportation system for samples

4

Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

G Major Infrastructure Projects

We operate more than 40 hospitals and health centres resulting in a very large physical footprint that is far greater and older than the national average.

Unfortunately, many of our buildings and equipment are in need of significant repair or replacement which represents hundreds of millions of dollars in required investment. While we will continue to plan, build and invest in buildings and equipment where necessary, we also understand the type of care being delivered in our hospitals is evolving. To adapt to those changes, we need to focus on health promotion and illness prevention and reflect advances in technology, best practices and population demographics.

Our approach to the redevelopment projects in Cape Breton and Halifax are excellent examples of this renewed approach. We are modernizing and transforming care delivery in these communities by looking at the needs of the population and then redesigning our programs and services to meet those needs. We're investing in community-based care, maximizing our existing infrastructure and building/expanding where necessary so that we can make the best use of our talent, expertise and resources.



Work on the QEII Redevelopment is progressing. Renovations at the Halifax Infirmary site are moving forward with a tender issued for demolition of the former CBC building and renovations underway on the third and fifth floors that will see the opening of Atlantic Canada's first hybrid operating room as well as construction of two interventional suites. Construction of the new chemotherapy lab is nearing completion and a short list of candidates to build, finance and maintain the new community outpatient centre has been compiled.

The new Neville J. Gilfoy expansion at Dartmouth General Hospital opened in December 2019, doubling the number of operating rooms from four to eight. The expanded clinical space includes more exam and procedure rooms and the modernized medical device reprocessing area means state of the art equipment is being used for cleaning and sterilizing of medical devices and instruments.

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Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

G Major Infrastructure Projects (Cont'd.)

Local leaders with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Redevelopment project continue to work with staff, physicians and community stakeholders on expansions and renovations to the sites across the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. At the Cape Breton Regional Hospital, the new Cape Breton Cancer Centre as well as new critical care and emergency departments will be located at the back of the existing building. A replacement parking lot will be complete by the fall of 2020 and planning continues to increase the number of operating rooms and inpatient capacity.



A new ten-bed community hospice located in Membertou is under construction and is expected to be complete in the spring of 2021. A new community hub in New Waterford — to include a school, 60 bed long-term care home and a community health centre — will be located at the current Breton Education Centre site with initial construction beginning in the spring of 2021.



A new community health centre, 60 bed long-term care home and laundry facility will be built in the Northside Industrial Park beginning in the fall of 2020 to serve North Sydney and surrounding areas while planning continues for a new emergency department and other renovations at the Glace Bay Hospital. This project includes construction of a six-chair, satellite renal dialysis unit that is already well underway.

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Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

H One Person, One Record

Clinical Practice Standardization will help Nova Scotia prepare for the future of our health care system by having the right information available to the right person, at the right time and place.

At present, the three existing hospital information systems (Nova Scotia Health and IWK) deployed in the province are somewhat fragmented and costly to maintain. These systems collect information on patients but the systems are unable to “speak to each other” or share information across the continuum. ‘One Person-One Record’ (OPOR) is a vision and strategy for the transformation of these systems to one core clinical information system supported by technology but designed to serve people.

The goals of the OPOR system are to enhance patient safety, improve quality and clinical outcomes, improve patient experiences, improve access to health information, improve the health system’s use of information and allow for the redirection of savings to improving health. In partnership with the Department of Health and Wellness and IWK, we are presently in the procurement stage and we are following a robust process to ensure we ultimately have a solution that utilizes best practice in all areas of the strategy and offers Nova Scotia a health information system that will serve us into the future. Nova Scotia Health has initiated readiness activities, with a focus on clinical standardization, workflow process management, and stakeholder engagement.



4

Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

I Our People



Our people are, and always will be, our greatest resource. We are committed to shaping a positive work culture for all staff, physicians, volunteers and learners and provide a caring environment that supports and fosters a high performing workforce.

Nova Scotia Health's new People Strategy has the goal of creating a high performing workforce where our people are valued, inspired and engaged. Based on four key themes – caring for and connecting with each other, developing our people, fostering a culture of workplace safety, wellness and inclusion, and making it easier to work better together – the strategy is informed by best practice and data from physician engagement and the latest work life pulse survey. The People Strategy will focus our actions to help make Nova Scotia Health a place where our team members want to work, study and volunteer.

We are investing in our leaders by continuing to build leadership capacity within Nova Scotia Health. A number of specific leadership tools have been made available to both employee and physician leaders including a formal leadership program. Work is also continuing around clarification of roles and responsibilities to ensure efficient and effective decision-making within the organization.

Our focus on recruitment and retention continues particularly for hard-to-fill professions as well as hard-to-recruit to communities. Our provincial strategies for recruitment and retention are realizing success thanks to a multi-faceted approach including incentives, targeted outreach, collaboration with partners and various other opportunities.

4

Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

I Our People (Cont'd.)



Physician recruitment and retention continue to be a top priority.

From April to December 2019, Nova Scotia Health recruited 96 physicians and an additional 34 have accepted offers with pending start dates.

Workplace health, wellness and safety is critical to having a highly engaged and productive workforce. We will continue to champion a workplace safety culture through the implementation of multiple initiatives and programs such as attendance support, mental health and psychological safety in our workplace, safe patient handling and injury prevention and our comprehensive workplace violence prevention program.

Key areas of focus for 2020-21 include:

- Developing and implementing our people strategy for employees, physicians, volunteers, researchers, and learners
- Continued focus on restructuring at the executive level
- Effective and efficient employee recruitment
- Enhanced physician recruitment

Our physician recruitment strategy continues to strengthen by working with partners, educational institutions and physician leadership. Communities continue to play a key role in physician recruitment and retention.

Our efforts to strengthen relationships between Nova Scotia Health and community recruitment groups continue, resulting in positive recruitment outcomes. Nova Scotia Health will continue to aggressively expand active promotion of living and working in Nova Scotia through the development of a robust digital marketing campaign, significant career fair presences nationally and internationally, and a significant recruitment focus on Dalhousie residency and medical school.

4

Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

J Research and Innovation



Research and innovation play an integral role in how Nova Scotia Health moves forward its quality improvement mandate and commitment to safe patient care and service delivery that promotes health for every Nova Scotian.

Nova Scotia Health is committed to patient care improvement efforts by growing our research and innovation enterprise while strengthening our scientific approach to understand whether our strategy is working in real-time. This approach fosters a robust evidence-informed decision-making framework that will determine whether novel interventions and innovations truly lead to better outcomes for our population, providers and the system. These efforts include conducting in-depth reviews of relevant projects and programs with the goal of using leading-edge information and evidence to inform decision-making and strategy development.

Examples of Research and Innovation in Action:

- The groundbreaking work of **Dr. James Robar** who is pioneering safer radiation technologies to improve treatment outcomes
- **Dr. Michael Dunbar** is facilitating distance health care to reduce knee surgery wait times with motion tracking technology
- **Nova Scotia Health** has undertaken a number of innovative projects that are actively reshaping the provincial health care landscape. We're implementing evaluation practices to understand the impact of collaborative practice care teams and recently legislated changes to organ and tissue donation.

4

Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

J Research and Innovation (Cont'd.)

Virtual Care Technology

Expanding the use of Virtual Care technology is an innovative solution to support a variety of services within Nova Scotia Health. Virtual Care can connect patients and providers in different locations across the province (as well as out of the province). This solution presents an opportunity to deliver health services while facilitating or maximizing the quality and effectiveness of patient care. Our mandate is to leverage technology, skills, and knowledge to support the delivery of person-centered virtual health services through innovation and integration.

In 2019, Virtual Care supported over 7,000 appointments in over 40 different service areas. This includes patient appointments, case conferencing, and patient education. Service areas that have recently integrated virtual care include: Mental Health and Addictions (various), Chronic Pain, Palliative Care, Primary Health, Gastroenterology, Multi-Organ Transplant, Neurology, Vascular Surgery, and many others.

An excellent example of the potential of Virtual Care is Nova Scotia Health's selection to participate in a Mental Health Commission of Canada demonstration project. Our mental health and addictions team will be partnering with primary health care to facilitate the delivery of eMental Health tools like TAO – Therapist Assisted Online. TAO is a low intensity, high engagement therapy which combines brief telephone/videoconference sessions with online modules. Utilizing tools like TAO, clinicians can see more clients than through traditional methods and the model supports clients who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to or prefer not to attend face-to-face appointments/services.

Beyond videoconferencing solutions, Virtual Care has the potential to expand into other technologies and services that would include home health monitoring for the management of chronic disease, using videoconferencing platforms to connect family members into patient appointments when they cannot be there in person, text messaging and e-consult platforms for minor health concerns, and exploring the possibility of partnerships with EHS, VON, schools, and long-term care facilities.

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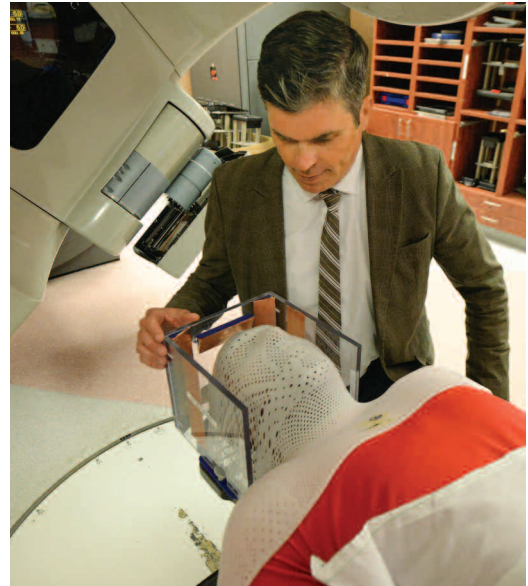
Quality & Sustainability Plan Priorities

J Research and Innovation (Cont'd.)

Leaders and scientists work closely with programs and services to build research capacity provincially and advance Nova Scotia Health's commitment to achieve national benchmarks and best practices to provide the best health services for Nova Scotians. This work involves partnerships with patients and families, universities, healthcare foundations, government partners, national funding agencies, communities, private industry and other learning groups and institutions.

Through our partnerships, we are able to advance the creation and use of evidence across many service areas and ensure this important work continues to grow and positively impact services throughout the province. Partnerships allow us to make the most of our resources while making the greatest impact on clinical practice, health service delivery and health system design. Working closely with our partners and stakeholders and understanding their goals, challenges and concerns, helps us clarify our shared priorities and align our research efforts to meet health care needs together.

Research and Innovation is vital to the improvement and modernization of health care and health care delivery. At Nova Scotia Health, we are driven to discover and implement new technologies, treatments and approaches to care. In addition to improving care for Nova Scotians, the opportunity to do groundbreaking research helps attract the very best clinicians.



Currently there are 1,200 research projects underway at Nova Scotia Health.

Research awards are trending positively with millions of dollars awarded annually to our researchers. Approximately 295 highly trained researchers and 360 staff are working on research projects.

In addition to better care, research and innovation generates spinoff companies, commercialization, patents and partnerships with local startups. Our region is experiencing a growing culture of innovation and accelerating health innovation is a key priority for Nova Scotia Health.

5

Our Financial Strategy

We know the first step in planning how our financial resources will be used is the identification of our priorities. As we focus on the strategies to deliver on improved health service access and outcomes for all Nova Scotians, we must do so in a fiscally responsible way. As such, our key priorities and the financial sustainability of the health system will always be important considerations in our planning processes.

Our 2020-21 financial plan is an extension of our strategic and priority plan and includes our multi-year goals, milestones and financial responsibilities. A summary can be seen below.

	2020-21
Revenue	\$
Regular Operating Revenue	2,211,430,000
Revenue from Rate & Uninsured Service Volume Increases	1,300,000
Funding for Utilization, Contractual and Statutory Increases	39,280,000
Funding for Strategic Priorities:	
QEII Redevelopment	9,558,000
Cape Breton Redevelopment	1,869,000
Improve Access to Primary Care	22,500,000
Improve Access to Surgical Services	9,232,000
Enhance Mental Health & Additions Services	16,208,000
OPOR Readiness	6,408,000
Total Revenue	2,317,785,000
Expenses	\$
Wages and Benefits	1,659,692,000
Medical, Clinical and Surgical Supplies	180,676,000
Drugs	127,075,000
Buildings and Grounds	82,744,000
Equipment Leases and Maintenance	72,868,000
Food Services, Housekeeping, Laundry and Contracted Services	69,717,000
Other Expenses	125,013,000
Total Expenses	2,317,785,000

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Our Financial Strategy

NSHA's 2020-21 Operating Budget Allocation

	2019-20 Actual Expenses	2020-21 Budget
	\$	\$
Support Services & Administration	75,931,000	79,161,000
Facilities & Operations	326,876,000	336,761,000
Inpatient Care	551,090,000	548,314,000
Surgical Services	261,348,000	258,182,000
Ambulatory Care & Emergency Services	268,242,000	272,012,000
Diagnostic & Therapeutic Services	260,746,000	260,612,000
Other Acute Care Expenditures	38,827,000	50,378,000
Research Funds	27,665,000	30,960,000
Physician Remuneration*	138,185,000	145,473,000
Public Health	41,595,000	43,174,000
Mental Health & Addictions	175,458,000	181,323,000
Primary Health Care	58,987,000	66,635,000
Continuing Care	44,434,000	44,800,000
TOTAL	2,269,384,000	2,317,785,000

*Excludes direct physician compensation which is not included in NSHA's budget allocation and is funded through a direct relationship between the Department of Health & Wellness and the province's physicians.

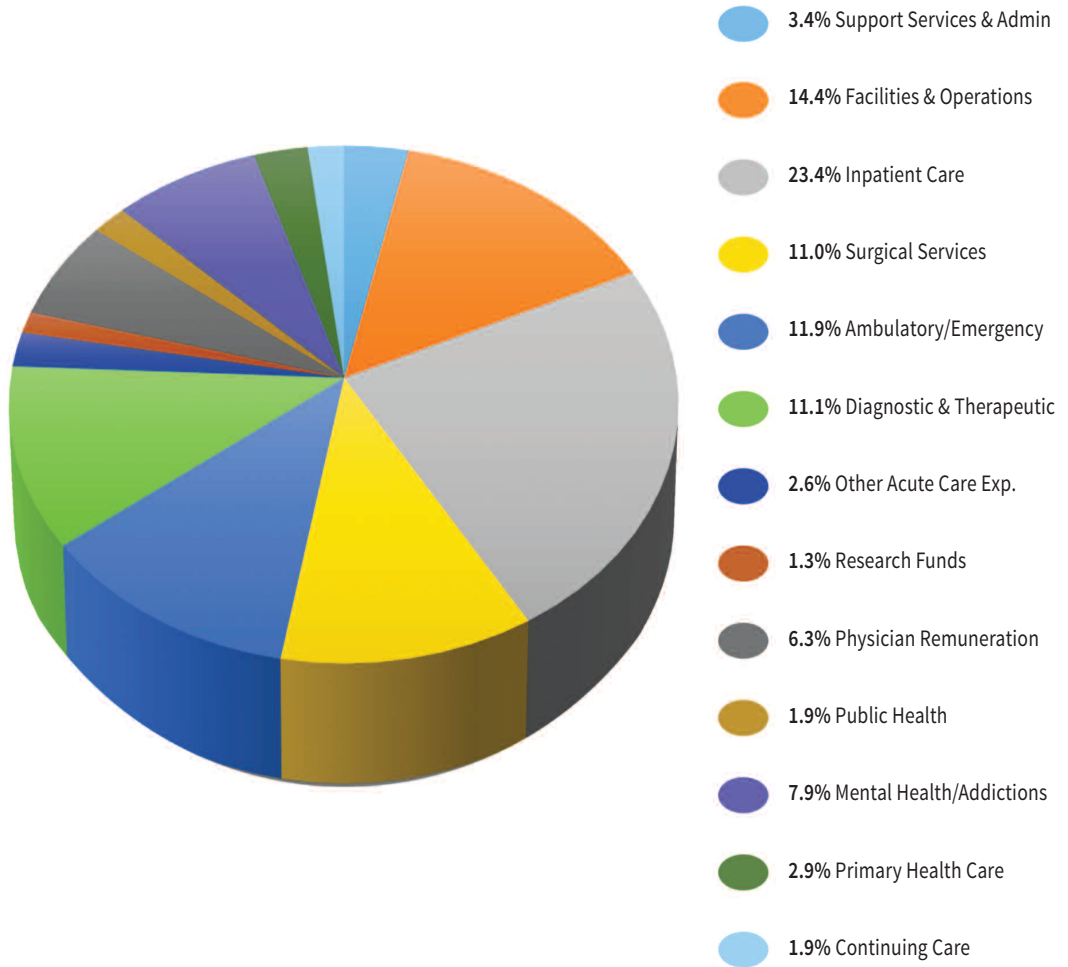
Annual Budget for Strategic Priorities (Amounts are included in above totals.)

	2019-20 Actual Expenses	2020-21 Budget
	\$	\$
QEII Redevelopment	3,714,000	9,558,000
Cape Breton Redevelopment	1,339,000	1,869,000
Improve Access to Primary Care	18,083,000	22,500,000
Improve Access to Surgical Services	10,582,000	9,232,000
Enhance Mental Health & Addictions Services	11,866,000	16,208,000
OPOR Readiness	176,000	6,408,000
TOTAL - STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	45,760,000	65,775,000

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Our Financial Strategy

2020-21 Planned Spending by Program Area





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