



Fiscal Year 2024-25
**Quality and
Sustainability Plan**



This Nova Scotia Health Quality and Sustainability Plan is the “Health Services Business Plan” as required by Section 40 of the *Health Authorities Act*.

Table of Contents

Message from the Interim President and CEO	3
Our commitment to Operational Excellence	4
Action for Health	5
Our Mandate	6
Our 2024-25 Quality and Sustainability Plan Priorities.....	7
A. Access and Flow	7
B. Integrated Digital Health Strategy and Digital Enablement	8
C. Operational Priorities	8
D. Primary Health Care	9
E. Specialized Care and Health Services	9
F. Surgical Access and Quality Improvement	11
G. Infrastructure and Priority Projects	12
H. Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	12
I. System Workforce	13
J. Research, Innovation and Discovery	13
Our Financial Strategy.....	14



Message from the Interim President and CEO



Nova Scotia Health is transforming the healthcare system to ensure that Nova Scotians get the care that they need and deserve. Nova Scotia Health's 2024-25 *Quality and Sustainability Plan* aligns with our journey to seek operational excellence. This is our approach to creating an environment that enables focus, alignment and continuous improvement at all levels of the organization.

Operational excellence is about how we get things done, and how we deliver our priorities and advance [Action for Health](#)—the government's plan to improve healthcare in Nova Scotia.

The Quality and Sustainability plan outlines our investments, both short and long term. It reflects our priorities, including creating and sustaining access to care, supporting our workplace and teams, ensuring quality and safety, and focusing on sustainability.

Many of the investments in this plan build upon the progress we've made. We are continuing to invest in multi-year, long-term projects like One Person, One Record (OPOR) and the Care Coordination Centre (C3), to improve care to patients. However, we are also investing in new, exciting projects and operational areas.

In the fiscal year 2024-25, we're advancing these key areas:

- **Access and Flow**
- **Integrated Digital Health Strategy**
- **Primary Health Care**

- **Specialized Care, Surgical Access and Health Services**
- **Infrastructure and System Workforce**
- **Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**
- **Research, Innovation and Discovery**

With these areas at the forefront, we are focused on enhancing the overall experience for our patients and their families within the healthcare system.

I'm impressed by the commitment, compassion and innovation coming from our team of more than 30,000 individuals, including employees, physicians, volunteers, researchers and learners.

Thank you for being a part of this important work. Together, we are building a healthier, more resilient Nova Scotia.

Karen Oldfield
Interim President and CEO

Our commitment to Operational Excellence

As part of our transformation journey, we understand and appreciate the need to change how we work and how we support our teams to meet the evolving healthcare needs of Nova Scotians.

Operational Excellence is our approach to creating a culture and environment that enables continuous improvement at all levels of the organization. Building on learning from leading organizations globally, we have tailored an approach to develop an organization of more than 30,000 problem solvers.

Our approach for Operational Excellence is characterized by:

- **Creating organizational focus and alignment** that sets clear priorities in alignment with [Action for Health](#) and cascading those across the organization.
- **Having a daily management system** consisting of a set of behaviours, tools and techniques that empower all team members to make and sustain improvements.
- **Building the capabilities of our people** to support them in the new ways of working.
- **Using a consistent set of improvement methods** and supports so our teams have the appropriate tools to be successful.
- **Committing to a common set of leadership behaviours** that grow our teams and support a culture of improvement and empowerment.

Operational Excellence will set the conditions and structures to cultivate the behaviours that foster an improvement culture, empowering the organization to consistently deliver and enhance performance across the organization. It will provide consistent ways for the organization to manage its operations, build incremental improvement into our daily work and maintain focus on what is most important.

This will be a journey. Transforming the culture of an organization as large as Nova Scotia Health takes time and requires dedication. We will maintain a bias toward action. We are confident this is a path that will lead to a more resilient Nova Scotia Health that will get things done in a more focused, collaborative and efficient way, improving how we deliver services to Nova Scotians.

Action for Health

[Action for Health](#) is the provincial government's strategic plan to improve the healthcare system in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia Health's priorities are closely aligned with *Action for Health* ensuring we are all working toward the same thing—a better healthcare system for Nova Scotians.

To learn more about the progress we are making, visit [Action for Health progress updates](#) and the [interactive data dashboard](#).



Solution One

Become a magnet for health providers



Solution Two

Provide the care Nova Scotians need and deserve



Solution Three

Cultivate excellence on the frontlines



Solution Four

Build accountability at every level



Solution Five

Be responsive and resilient



Solution Six

Address the factors affecting health and well-being

Our Mandate

Healthcare in Nova Scotia is the collective responsibility of Nova Scotia Health, the Izaak Walton Killam Health Centre (IWK Health), Tajikeyimik (Mi'kmaw Health and Wellness) and the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW). These partners work with a number of government and community-based organizations and service providers to address prevention of disease and injury, promotion of health and wellness and delivery of health services, including emergency care, primary health care, mental health and addictions, acute care, continuing care and end of life care.

The *Health Authorities Act* establishes the roles and responsibilities for DHW and Nova Scotia Health.

DHW is responsible for:

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

Nova Scotia Health is responsible for:

- **Governing, managing and delivering health services across the province.**
- **Implementing the strategic direction and policy set by DHW.**
- **Engaging with the communities they serve.**

Nova Scotia Health is the largest health organization in Atlantic Canada — and the largest employer in Nova Scotia. We serve a population of more than one million Nova Scotians and provide a wide array of specialized services to other Atlantic Canadians, within our \$3+ billion budget. Nova Scotia Health operates from one specialty hospital, the QEII Health Sciences Centre, nine regional hospitals, and more than 30 community hospitals and health centres. Our team includes employees, physicians, researchers, learners and volunteers. We work in partnership with community groups, schools, governments, foundations and auxiliaries, and community health boards.

Within the organization, there are about:

- **27,140 employees**
- **1,466 volunteers**
- **6,602 learners**
- **2,976 physicians and 585 medical residents**
- **37 community health boards**
- **41 hospital foundations and 33 auxiliaries**

(Fiscal 2022-23)

Our 2024-25 Quality and Sustainability Plan Priorities

From birth to end-of-life, Nova Scotia Health, and its partners at IWK Health and TajiKeimik, provide people-centred services and quality care to patients and their families across the province.

The health system is large and complex. Our health system partners include the Departments of Health and Wellness and Seniors and Long-term Care, the Offices of Addictions and Mental Health and Healthcare Professionals Recruitment, and Emergency Health Services.

Community Health Boards (CHBs) work together to gather public input on how to improve health and wellness where Nova Scotians live, work, play and learn. CHBs are engaged in a continuous cycle of planning and reporting back to community on how to improve health and wellness close to home. A few examples include equitable access to health services, sense of community belonging, and wellness and health promotion activities that align with organizational priorities. To learn more about the CHB's Community Health Plans, visit <https://www.communityhealthboards.ns.ca/community-health-plans-intro>

Together with these partners we strive to advance the solutions laid out in the province's *Action for Health* plan. Through the priorities outlined, we are transforming the healthcare system for current and future Nova Scotians.

A. Access and Flow

Care Coordination Centre (C3)

The Care Coordination Centre (C3) is improving how we coordinate the movement of patients throughout their health care journey. We will continue to build upon this approach by using real-time data to support decision-making that

provides faster access to the best care possible. Investing in C3 will translate into:

- **Improved patient access and flow.**
- **Efficient bed management and discharge planning.**
- **Better scheduling of staff.**
- **More collaboration between health zones across the province.**



New Beds

Many Nova Scotians who require care in a hospital will need some time and support to recover and gain the skills and confidence they need to return home or, in the case of the unhoused, time to secure housing and social and health supports. Investing in new beds at Community Transitional Care Centres will translate into:

- **Less time in an acute care setting.**
- **Targeted care planning and enhanced quality of life.**
- **Most appropriate care provider and setting for the patient's needs.**

Implementation Teams

Teams have been established to support the implementation of transformation initiatives in zones through roles in planning, coordinating, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating of the established health transformation priorities. Working with clinical partners, these teams will assist with the execution of activities that aid in the successful implementation of the Action for Health initiatives.

Primary goals are to:

- **Work to support continued organizational operation with minimal disruption.**
- **Alleviate barriers/mitigate risks.**
- **Support benefit realization planning and ongoing monitoring and reporting.**

B. Integrated Digital Health Strategy and Digital Enablement

Together with our health system partners, an integrated digital health strategy will be our roadmap to advance the modernization of technology and infrastructure. The strategy will enable us to develop multi-year digital solutions that will serve as a cornerstone for digitization transformation, including:

- **One Person One Record (OPOR): Provincial implementation of an integrated provincial electronic care record.**
- **YourHealthNS: An app to help Nova Scotians better navigate the healthcare system – it is a one-stop shop to book services, discover care options, view online health records and find information easier and faster.**
- **Oncology Transformation Project: A single access point for cancer patient referrals, triage and treatment, which in turn, will lead to streamlined care, reduced wait times, and provide better outcomes for patients.**

- **Expansion of virtual care: Continuing to look at new areas to expand virtual care options to more Nova Scotians.**

C. Operational Priorities

Operational funding is important to sustain the healthcare system as we continue to build upon and transform healthcare. To sustain, manage and deliver health services across the province, operational investments are required to:

- **Provide for expected increases in volume of service delivery based on increasing population, advances in technology and treatments, disease trends and demographics.**
- **Enable access at point of care through technology-enabled solutions and focused applications.**
- **Provide fair and competitive wages to ensure we have health providers who deliver care.**
- **Address gaps in service, invest in education and training for healthcare providers and provide tools and resources to implement best practices and meet the health needs of the community.**
- **Meet increased costs of inflation for supplies and services.**



D. Primary Health Care

Primary Health Care

Strong Primary Health Care is the foundation of the health system and will be integral in achieving health system priorities. Working with our partners, we will continue to build upon and strengthen our foundation by investing in areas that will:

- Enhance access and patient attachment to a “health home” where patients receive comprehensive care from a team made up of doctors or nurse practitioners working with other healthcare professionals like pharmacists, dietitians and social workers.
- Support people and communities to live well and manage their chronic conditions.
- Ensure enablers are in place to support a modernized primary health care system, including supporting our teams.
- Support high-performing workforce by recruiting and retaining health professionals to an attractive workplace environment.
- Strengthen partnerships to achieve integration and coordination across the health system.

- More cancer health professionals and support in community oncology sites and more cancer specialists and providers at cancer centres to meet increasingly complex patient needs.
- New models of care and tools to enable all cancer health providers to work to their full scope of practice.
- Well defined roles and responsibilities, supported by an education framework tailored to individual professions’ needs to keep pace with ever-changing and advancing protocols and technologies.
- Development of a phased approach to eventually deliver chemotherapy outside a clinical environment, and
- Integration of data analytics and evaluation science to adapt and advance cancer care as a learning organization.



E. Specialized Care and Health Services

Cancer Care

The Cancer Care Program is committed to recruiting the right mix and number of cancer health providers and specialists in community oncology sites and specialty cancer centres. This will ensure patients receive timely, high-quality cancer care as close to where they live as is safely possible.

As we continue to enhance and improve cancer care for Nova Scotians, our investments will support:

Emergency Care

Improving emergency care in Nova Scotia is a priority. There are many initiatives, both immediate and long-term, to improve emergency care for patients and healthcare staff. These initiatives will ensure all Nova Scotians receive timely care when needed.

Investing in emergency care will support:

- **The improvement of processes and resources used within emergency departments to ensure patients with the most urgent needs receive care faster and are seen in a timely manner.**
- **The creation of care teams that include physician assistants and nurse practitioners who support providing patient care that matches the level of care patients need.**
- **Adding more care providers and patient advocates to support patients in waiting rooms.**
- **Making virtual emergency care and virtual urgent care available to more patients.**
- **Expansion of Mobile Respiratory Clinics.**
- **Improvement of ambulance flow through an ambulance response strategy in partnership with Emergency Health Services (EHS).**

Continuing Care

Continuing Care clients' health needs vary. Nova Scotia Health continues to work with health system partners to ensure that these clients receive timely and quality services that meet their unique needs at home, in their community or in long-term care.

Building on the work underway, investment will support:

- **Expanding supports to help seniors live in their homes longer.**
- **Training and hiring more staff.**
- **Supporting staff who work in continuing care.**

Public Health

Improving the overall health and wellbeing of Nova Scotians in an equitable way is the focus of public health. Addressing long-standing barriers to health, including inequities and social determinants like food security, housing, racism and discrimination, can improve a Nova Scotian's health and well-being. Over time it will help lessen the demand on our healthcare system and improve the province's health status.

Investing in public health services will:

- **Build a public health system that is structured and resourced to meet the needs of all Nova Scotians.**
- **Enhance Early Years support to priority populations, focusing on services, initiatives, and policies to create healthy environments for infants, children and families.**
- **Work with our partners in education and community to implement our Health Promoting Schools Standards, including expansion of youth health centres, and work to improve healthy school environments.**
- **Apply an equity approach to all aspects of public health work.**



Mental Health and Addictions

Nova Scotia Health Mental Health and Addictions program is investing in communities so that Nova Scotians will have easy, compassionate and timely access to the right supports and services designed around your mental health and well-being. Our initiatives are focused on improving mental health and addictions care in ways that make supports and services more accessible, integrated, proactive, compassionate and measurable. These investments will include:

- Investing in acute Mental Health Day hospital models.
- Enhancing our outpatient community-based teams to improve access to evidenced based services.
- Advancing addiction medicine services including our recovery support centres and addiction consult services.
- Continuing investment in our crisis teams to expand hours and availability.
- Partnering with community-based organizations to augment services for mental wellness, mild and moderate mental health and addictions concerns (Mass Casualty Commission related).
- Augmenting services for forensic psychiatry.
- Ensuring persons in custody have good access to primary care, dental care and mental health and addictions services.

F. Surgical Access and Quality Improvement

We recognize that many Nova Scotians are impacted by wait times for surgery and we have been advancing multiple initiatives to supporting timely, equitable and high-quality perioperative care. These include:

- Investing to complete additional surgeries.
- Transforming how referrals are received to allow better coordination, support timely access, improve patient experiences and provide information to support planning.
- Standardizing surgical booking processes to support timely surgeries and make the most appropriate use of operating room resources and health human resources.
- Investing in local initiatives to improve surgical access and identifying new ways to increase capacity.
- Developing future-focused surgical and health human resources strategies.



G. Infrastructure and Priority Projects



As healthcare needs in Nova Scotia change and infrastructure shows signs of aging, we are adapting to meet current and future needs. By investing in new infrastructure, including technology, we are building:

- **Modern infrastructure to support the health system for generations to come, including projects like the QEII New Generation and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) Health Care Redevelopment Projects, as well as redevelopment projects in South Shore Regional Hospital Redevelopment, North Cumberland Regional Hospital Redevelopment and others.**
- **An improved experience for patients, staff and families.**

H. Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Nova Scotia Health strives to create a safe, inclusive, and accessible health system for Nova Scotians, regardless of their identity. Along with our health system partners are working together to advance health equity in Nova Scotia using the [Health Equity Framework](#) as a guide.

While applying the equity lens to education, policy, talent and leadership development, we will continue to build on existing strategies to:

- **Create system-level guiding principles and frameworks to advance health equity in Nova Scotia.**
- **Establish performance benchmarks and indicators, improved data collection and other evidence-based approaches that support a more accountable system.**
- **Nova Scotia Health and IWK Health's 2023–26 Accessibility Plan is complete. The plan will guide our thinking and actions to remove barriers for those with disabilities working, learning or volunteering within our organizations.**



I. System Workforce

Health Human Resources

Our people are our greatest asset, which is why we are aligned with the provincial health human resources initiative to recruit, retain, redesign and plan for Nova Scotia Health's talented workforce of today and tomorrow. With a steadily growing population and an increasing shortage of health workers, Nova Scotia Health is working collaboratively to bolster Nova Scotia's health workforce.

We need to invest to ensure that we have the necessary workforce to meet both immediate and future population needs. This will be done using the following collaborative approach:

- **Supporting the development of a provincial health workforce strategic action plan.**
- **Advancing equity in the healthcare workforce by acting on objectives laid out in the provincial equity framework to transform our health system to be more inclusive of all.**
- **Adopting new innovative health technologies to benefit both the health workforce and those seeking healthcare services across the province.**
- **Developing a world-class integrated workforce planning team to focus on team-based models and optimized roles.**
- **Investing in a wellness strategy for our people.**

J. Research, Innovation and Discovery



Nova Scotia Health Innovation Hub's Research, Innovation and Discovery practice is dedicated to transforming healthcare for Nova Scotians and finding innovative solutions to pressing healthcare challenges that are critical to improving health outcomes in the province. Through our strong local, national and global partnerships with clinicians, industry leaders, health care foundations, governments, and academic leaders, we are leading health care innovation to deliver new and better solutions for Nova Scotians.

We continue to build upon these new solutions by investing in:

- **Wound Care: Through Nova Scotia Health's Wound Innovation Collaborative (WIC), we are committed to innovation and excellence in wound care, to provide the best possible care for Nova Scotians.**
- **Cutting-edge Therapy: We are committed to supporting the implementation of cutting-edge therapies to transform health care for Nova Scotians.**

Our Financial Strategy

2024-25 Financial Plan

Our 2024-25 financial plan is an extension of our strategic and priority plans and includes multi-year goals, milestones and financial responsibility. A summary can be seen below.

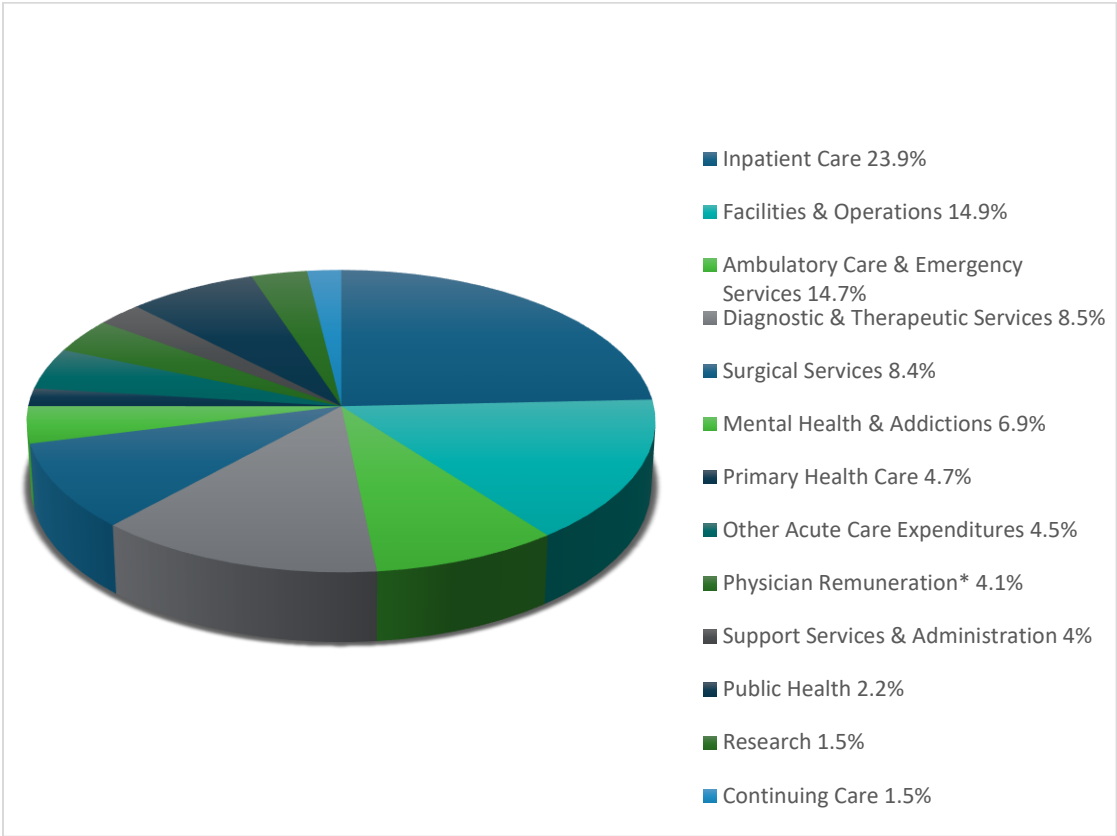
	2024-25
REVENUE	\$
Regular Operating Revenue	2,882,432,000
Funding for Utilization, Contractual and Statutory Increases	335,116,000
Funding for Strategic Priorities:	
OPOR	58,768,000
Redevelopment	46,748,000
Funding for Action for Health Priorities:	
Primary Care	79,918,000
Workforce Strategy	66,996,000
Surgical Access	51,606,000
Access & Flow	49,815,000
Cancer Care- (Specialized Care)	26,030,000
Mental Health	15,795,000
Digital & Innovation	14,810,000
Emergency Care	17,792,000
Public Health	10,974,000
Research & Innovation	4,491,000
Health Equity	1,504,000
Other	9,010,000
Total Revenue	3,671,805,000
EXPENSES	\$
Wages and Benefits	2,524,496,000
Medical, Clinical and Surgical Supplies	264,580,000
Drugs	204,888,000
Buildings and Grounds	123,089,000
Equipment Leases and Maintenance	79,410,000
Food Services, Housekeeping, Laundry and Contracted Services	219,903,000
Other Expenses	255,439,000
Total Expenses	3,671,805,000
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ -

Nova Scotia Health's 2024-25 Operating Budget Allocation

	2023-24 Actual Expenses	2024-25 Budget
	\$	\$
Inpatient Care	859,301,787	878,223,120
Facilities & Operations	472,201,515	547,529,715
Ambulatory Care & Emergency Services	477,772,042	540,397,729
Diagnostic & Therapeutic Services	317,184,356	313,376,802
Surgical Services	322,717,652	309,790,031
Mental Health & Addictions	226,692,842	254,303,964
Primary Health Care	126,499,380	173,937,929
Other Acute Care Expenditures	143,772,395	163,598,526
Physician Remuneration*	155,087,942	149,149,439
Support Services & Administration	151,418,772	147,507,439
Public Health	68,255,645	81,647,768
Research	52,497,485	56,213,773
Continuing Care	81,189,923	56,128,366
Retention Bonus	59,036,370	-
TOTAL	3,513,628,000	3,671,805,000

*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.

2024-25 Planned Spending by Program Area



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