

Together We Can Progress Update

October 2015

Together We Can, government's five-year mental health and addictions strategy, has made significant progress in its first three years to improve Nova Scotians' access to assessment, treatment, care and support in communities around the province.

Here are some of the highlights of progress we have made on the strategy's five key priorities.

✓ indicates that work has begun or is completed.

Intervening and treating early for better results	
<p>18 month developmental screening for all children We are working to ensure that every 18-month-old gets screened and mental or physical health issues are identified as early as possible. Currently, seven primary care practices, including one in a First Nations community, are giving us their feedback on how they connect with families and conduct the 18-month well-baby visits, and how they believe they can be improved.</p>	✓
<p>Province-wide telephone coaching for families The Strongest Families program provides telephone-based coaching for families with children between the ages of four and 12 who are experiencing anxiety and behavioural problems. This service has been expanded province-wide, up from 320 to 700 spots, and now serves twice as many families.</p>	✓
<p>Mental health clinicians in schools Placing mental health clinicians in schools allows children and youth with mental health problems to be identified, treated and if necessary, referred to the mental health system earlier. We have added about 50 new schools to the SchoolsPlus program in the past two years. Over 40,000 students in grades primary to 12 have access to this service, in all school boards in the province.</p>	✓
<p>School policies related to mental health, substance use, and gambling</p>	✓
<p>Collaborative care among primary health, mental health and addictions providers Through the Bloom Program, community pharmacists help improve the health and quality of life of people with mental health and addictions problems. They provide eligible mental health patients with enhanced monitoring and consulting services, including in-depth medication therapy management and support for navigation of the system.</p>	✓
<p>Enhanced education for EHS paramedics</p>	✓
Shorter waits, better care	
<p>Reduced mental health wait times to meet standards through new approaches Under the Choice and Partnership Approach (CAPA), people and families make an appointment with a mental health clinician to discuss their goals and develop a plan, rather than going on a wait list for a particular service. This approach means people are being seen in a more timely way and are involved in their own care. For adults who have a mental health problem but are not in a crisis, wait times have decreased from 442 days to 273 days.</p>	✓
<p>Expanded peer support for mentally ill Nine peer support specialists have been introduced in four areas of the province. They are Nova Scotians who have experienced their own mental health issues and have been trained to support others who are being discharged from the hospital and returning to the community.</p>	✓
<p>Skills training and support for families Through the Family Work program, mental health clinicians work with families directly as well as in a group format. Sixty families have been seen one on one, while about 200 people have taken part in group sessions, which are often done in partnership with the Schizophrenia Society. Families report great success.</p>	✓
<p>Expanded opioid replacement treatment</p>	✓

Province-wide toll-free crisis line The Mental Health Crisis Line has been expanded and is now accessible across the province. This service is available to anyone, any age, anywhere, at any time. Clinicians answering calls can access local mental health programs, EHS, police and emergency departments as needed to support callers.	✓
Review location of mental health and addictions beds	✓
More specialty care networks	✓
Concurrent disorder training for care providers	✓
Awareness of Problem Gambling Helpline, NSHA/IWK gambling services The new Gambling Support Network was launched in March 2015, along with an awareness campaign to promote it. The network offers a variety of online and mobile options for support.	✓
Better information system for mental health and addictions	✓
Information-sharing guidelines	✓
Aboriginal and diverse communities	
Diversity group(s) for mental health and addictions Government has worked with the Health Association of African Canadians (HAAC) to develop training for clinicians about the mental health and addictions needs of African Nova Scotians. The association has also held its second annual conference on the unique needs of African Nova Scotians. This is just one example of the work that's been done in the area of diversity.	✓
More collaborative treatment services for First Nations, cultural safety training for care providers	✓
Gay Straight Alliances for students There are now 104 gay/straight alliances in Nova Scotia schools, including four in the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial. This is an increase of 34 over the past two years.	✓
Sex, gender and diversity review of services	✓
Undertake work to increase diversity in addictions, mental health workforce	
Recruit French speaking professionals	✓
Education on seniors' mental health, addictions needs for care providers	
Working together differently	
Safe, affordable housing options Housing Nova Scotia has hired housing support workers to help people with mental health and addictions issues who are living in shelters and on the street.	✓
Funding process for community agencies, projects Over the past three years, government has provided \$2.6 million to 37 community-based organizations to improve quality of life for Nova Scotians living with mental health and addictions, and their families.	✓
Support municipalities to reduce alcohol harms	✓
Collect and monitor alcohol, drug, gambling data	
Mental health, addictions care for incarcerated adults	
Reducing Stigma	
Anti-stigma initiatives Up to 50 family doctors have been and will be (2015-2016) trained in a B.C.- developed adult mental health module, which helps them treat people with mild to moderate mental health problems and mental illnesses in a primary care setting.	✓
Share reporting guidelines with media	
Awareness of healthy, safe workplaces	✓
Employer awareness of workplace programs Nova Scotia is the first province to adopt the Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Standard. As part of this work, the Public Service Commission has added The Working Mind Program and Mental Health First Aid to its professional development programming.	✓