



Accountability Report 2021–22

Seniors & Long-term Care


NOVA SCOTIA

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Accountability Report 2021–2022

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the *Department of Seniors and Long-term Care* (DSLTC) for the year ended March 31, 2022 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Seniors and the relevant sections of the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) Business Plans for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the DSLTC outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by DSLTC management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of DSLTC management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department of Seniors and the relevant sections of the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) 2021-2022 Business Plans.

Original signed by:

Honourable Barbara Adams, Minister

Original signed by:

Paul LaFleche, Deputy Minister

Message from the Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care

As Minister of the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care, I am very pleased to present the 2021-22 Accountability Report for our department.

On August 31, 2021, our department was established with a mandate of ensuring Nova Scotians live with dignity and get the care they need, as they age. As Minister, and a healthcare professional who had a long career in continuing care, I take these commitments very seriously.

The past two and half years of the global COVID pandemic have put extraordinary pressures on an already overburdened healthcare system. Because older adults are among those at greatest risk of COVID, the pandemic has had a significant impact on older Nova Scotians, the continuing care system, and organizations that support seniors.

Despite these challenges, people working in the continuing care system and organizations serving this population have gone above and beyond to deliver the care and support older Nova Scotians need. I want to recognize them for their professionalism and commitment. During this time, our department worked with our continuing care and community partners to protect, support, and care for older Nova Scotians.

Over the past year, strategic investments were made to build a world-class health system for Nova Scotians. This includes committing to projects that will create more spaces for people waiting for long-term care; hiring and training the staff needed in the sector; taking better care of the people who care for our loved ones; and ensuring older Nova Scotians have the supports they need to live in their homes and communities longer.

Some of the department's accomplishments over the past year include:

- Creating the Seniors Care Grant, which provides eligible seniors with up to \$500 to help with the cost of small household chores;
- Providing Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) with a well-deserved pay raise;
- Providing free tuition for CCA students;
- Increasing the number of nurse practitioners working in long-term care;
- Creating a team of recruiters dedicated to the province's continuing care sector;
- Making the CCA Registry mandatory;
- Investing in new equipment to support seniors and people caring for them; and
- Funding projects to help older people stay healthy and engaged in their communities.

Moving forward, we will continue this work with a focus on improving the delivery of care, supporting the people who work in the system, hiring and training more staff, and providing supports seniors need to live active, engaged lives in their communities.

Sincerely,

Honourable Barbara Adams
Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care

Financial Table and Variance Explanation

	2021-2022 Estimate	2021-2022 Actuals	2021-2022 Variance
			(\$thousands)
Programs and Services			
General Administration	780	1,266	486
Strategic Direction and Accountability			
Corporate Support and Strategic Initiatives	1,827	1,819	(8)
Continuing Care	3,846	3,534	(312)
Service Delivery and Supports			
Seniors Initiatives	2,136	1,915	(221)
Adult Protection	3,078	3,160	82
Home Care	294,368	307,439	13,071
Long-Term Care	755,745	791,399	35,654
Total: Departmental Expenses	1,061,780	1,110,532	48,752
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenue	(25,445)	(45,491)	(20,046)
Fees and Other Charges	0	0	0
Ordinary Recoveries	(50)	(37)	13
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	(25,495)	(45,528)	(20,033)
TCA Purchase Requirements	0	0	0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	89	87	(2)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Department of Seniors and Long-term Care expenses were \$48.8 million or 4.6 per cent higher than estimate primarily due to \$17.5 million in additional funding to support COVID-19 response efforts including \$11.3 million for Long-Term Care (LTC) Nurses and Assistants due to CCA shortages, \$11.1 million for Travel Nursing due to shortage of LTC nurses, \$10.1 million for Personal Protective Equipment, \$6.0 million for additional support to manage COVID-19 protocols. These COVID-19 increases are partially offset by \$13.9 million in Health System Capacity Preparedness initiatives no longer needed due to changing epidemiology, and \$10.2 million due to delays in LTC facility projects. Other non-COVID-19 increases include \$20.1 million for the Senior's Care Grant, \$9.9 million for the Work and Learn initiative, \$10.1 million for the Expanded Home First and Direct Funding Programs, and \$6.1 million in CCA wage increases. These expenses are partially offset by a decrease of \$18.3 million due to lower utilization of Home Support Services.

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Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

SLTC revenue, fees, and recoveries were \$20.0 million, or 79 per cent, higher than budgeted, primarily because the Federal Safe LTC funding received had not been estimated.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

Variance is immaterial.

Measuring our Performance

Section 1: Priority Items from the DHW 2021-22 Business Plan

In 2021/22, the province made strategic investments to increase workforce, capacity and efficiency of the continuing care system to offer safe, accessible and quality care to Nova Scotians.

Increase Workforce

To provide Nova Scotians with the level of care they need as they age, it requires a skilled workforce, and facilities and agencies with the right staffing levels. The Department is making significant investments in the Continuing Care workforce including recruitment and retention. Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) provide vital services to people who need support in their daily lives. Some of the workforce investments included:

- DSLTC and DHW continued to fund the CCAs Recognizing Prior Learning Assistance Program for people to have their skills and experience assessed to become certified to work as CCAs,
- \$2.5M to Nova Scotia Health for Nurse Practitioners,
- \$2.9M for primary care coverage,
- \$6.4M annually for Allied Health (this includes physiotherapists, physiotherapy assistants, occupational therapists and dieticians),
- \$2.0M towards the Work and Learn program,
- \$0.5M towards the Immigration Strategy, with an additional \$0.5M in relocation allowances,
- \$8.0M in over hire funding for surge capacity,
- 23% increase to CCA salaries,
- tuition rebates for current CCA students, and free tuition for students in CCA programs over the next two years.

Caring our loved ones is hard, physical work and there are far too many workplace injuries in this sector. When someone is hurt on the job, the cost is significant, and it can mean residents do not get the level of care they deserve. Our solution is to make meaningful, long-term investments. That is how we will recruit and retain workers and take better care of the people who care for our loved ones. DSLTC, along with the Department of Community Services (DCS), continues to provide access to Employee and Family Assistance Programs (EFAP), and access to training such as safe handling and mobility and workplace violence.

Increase Capacity

Over the long-term, the Department will build and renovate 2,800 new single-bed rooms in the next three years. Some temporary investments have been made to help people right now, including:

- 141 Veterans Affairs beds have been licensed for nursing home level of care,
- 23 private sector beds have been licensed for nursing home level of care,
- 50 residential care facility beds licensed for nursing home level of care,

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- 34 respite beds have been converted to full time placement beds,
- \$1.8M towards behaviour unit pilots (1 per zone) to inform future planning, and
- \$1.0M towards programming for young adults in LTC.

Home and Community Care

The purpose of the Seniors Care Grant (SCG) is to provide lower income Nova Scotians aged 65+ with up to \$500 reimbursement for household services to help them stay in their home. The total budget was \$32 million for 21/22. The program had been running for almost four months since December 1, 2021. As of March 31, 2022, \$10.78M was provided to over 21,000 people.

Better Data Collection and Monitoring

DSLTC advanced the implementation of numerous data collection systems to improve client outcomes, system planning capabilities, system benchmarking, and performance management across continuing care. These include the new CCA Registry, a LTC bed management system, HC management system, and LTC resident assessment tool.

In 2021-22 these tools moved through development stages and will be deployed for data collection and monitoring, beginning in 22-23.

Section 2: Priority Items from Seniors 2021-22 Business Plan

In 2021-22 DSLTC continued to support the social and economic well-being of older adults that included investments in the following areas.

Age-Friendly Communities Grants

The Age-Friendly Communities (AFC) Grant program provides funding for projects that help older Nova Scotians stay active, healthy and engaged in their communities. It also supports initiatives that will positively impact the lives of older adults in Nova Scotia. The department issued 39 grants totalling \$605,000 in 2021-22.

Grants to Support Senior's Serving Partners

The Department has continued to engage Senior Safety Programs, Community Links, Caregivers Nova Scotia, Alzheimer's Society of Nova Scotia, Red Cross and others in delivering supports and services to older adults in communities across the province. This includes funding of \$4.67M for these organizations.

Silver Economy Summit

On May 27th and 28th 2021, the Department hosted a virtual event with the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre, with \$38,000 in funding and over 400 attendees from across Canada. It brought together members of the private sector, public sector and other organizations to address economic issues facing the aging population, along with recognizing and supporting the contributions of older adults in our economy.

Section 3: COVID Impacts

Similar to the rest of the country, COVID-19 in Nova Scotia had the greatest impact on older adults in LTC. The Department leveraged lessons learned from the first wave of COVID-19 to develop and implement a sector plan to prepare for future waves of COVID-19, incorporating the results of the Northwood outbreak reviews.

Below are some highlights on what was done to address COVID impacts to the continuing care system:

- SLTC worked with Public Health, Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) and Occupational Health and Safety (OHSW) to keep long-term care homes as safe as possible. This work includes prevention and management of active resident and staff cases.
- All Long-Term Care (LTC) facilities and home care agencies were supported through Public Health (PH), IPAC, OHSW.
- LTC and Home Care (HC) agencies previously had access to Emergency Management Operations (EMO) supports, IPPL (NSH education) as well as NSH deployment center supports under the 'good neighbor' protocol.
- Regional Care Units (RCU) were set up to accommodate COVID positive LTC residents in early COVID-19 waves.
- Most respite beds in Nova Scotia were closed and temporarily converted to nursing home beds. 13 respite beds remained open to provide emergency respite to caregivers. These emergency respite beds were strategically placed throughout the province.

Section 4: Accessibility

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to building an inclusive environment in the way we work, do business, and provide services to Nova Scotians.

Below are some department-specific actions initiated in 2021-22:

- The Space and Design Standards for new construction was updated in Feb 2022 to reflect improved accessibility requirements and resident care needs. Health care facilities like LTC are held to higher standards. Recent new builds exceed the current building code standards for barrier free access. The updated Space and Design document improves accessibility of all support spaces, including moving activity spaces from a centralized format to the resident unit to allow activities to take place closer to resident's rooms.
- Requirements were introduced for licenced funded LTC organizations to state explicitly in their funding proposals, for modifications to spaces accessed by residents, how their proposed capital or infrastructure investments are designed for accessibility of program participants or clients with disabilities.
- Facility Conditions Assessment, conducted to inform infrastructure investment, will incorporate a general Accessibility Survey.

Appendix A: Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing Please use the following format to satisfy the disclosure obligation:

The following is a summary of disclosures received by (Department / Public Service Offices/Governmental Unit including Crown Corporations and Agencies)

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
The number of disclosures received	No disclosures were received by the Department in 2021-2022.
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A