

**NORTHERN ZONE  
COMMUNITY HEALTH BOARDS  
REPORT BACK TO  
COMMUNITY**

**Reporting Period**

**2019-2023**

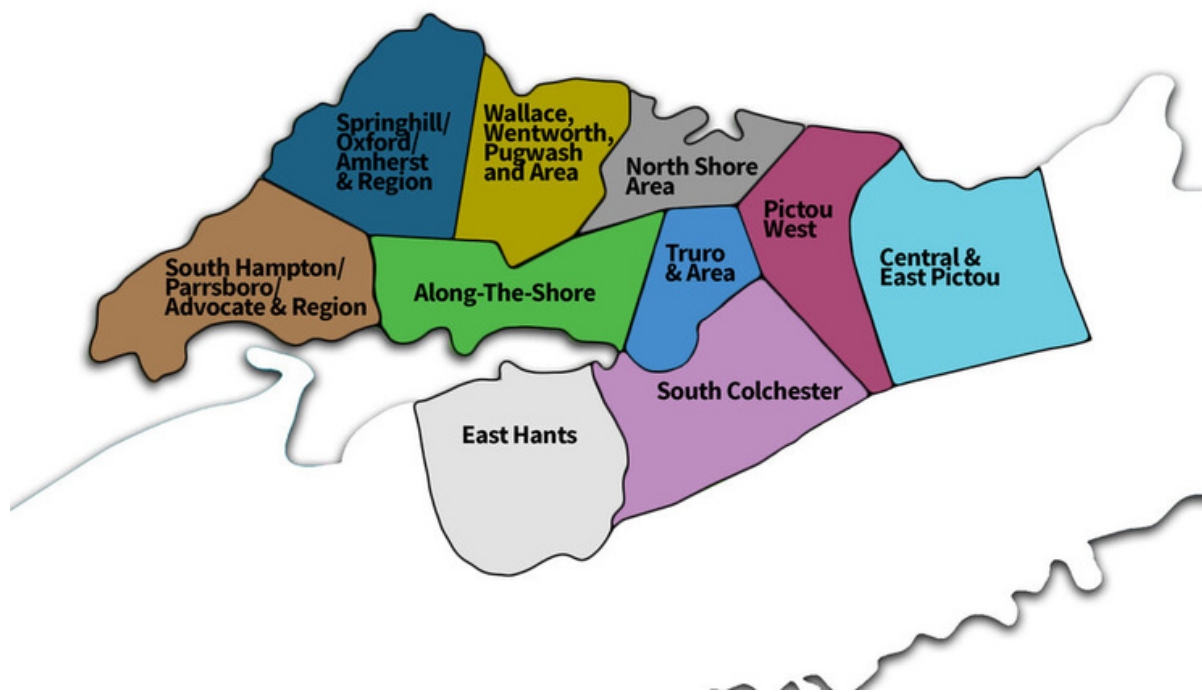
**Introduction**

This report highlights the activities and accomplishments of the ten Community Health Boards within Nova Scotia Health's Northern Zone, based on the priorities identified in the [2019 Northern Zone Community Health Plan](#). It also contains highlights of activities in Public Health, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Primary Health related to the Community Health Plan's priority areas.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH BOARDS (CHBs) IN NORTHERN ZONE**

- **Along The Shore CHB**
- **North Shore Area CHB**
- **South Colchester CHB**
- **Truro And Area CHB**
- **Springhill, Oxford, Amherst and Region (SOAR) CHB**

- **Southampton, Parrsboro, Advocate and Region (SPAR) CHB**
- **Wallace, Wentworth, Pugwash and Area (WWPA) CHB**
- **Central And East Pictou CHB**
- **Pictou West CHB**
- **East Hants CHB**



## About CHBs

Community Health Boards (CHBs) are groups of volunteers from local communities. They work together and with other community partners to improve health and wellness in the settings where people live, work, play, learn and age.

More than 60 volunteers are involved in the 10 CHBs in Northern Zone. They are actively listening to community concerns, building partnerships, leading projects, supporting community-led initiatives, bringing people together to discuss important issues, and allocating Wellness Funds to community projects.

CHBs focus their activities on the factors that affect health & wellness in our communities, often referred to as the social determinants of health. These determinants include: income, education, race/ethnicity, gender, sense of belonging, and others. CHBs share what they have learned about health and wellness in local communities with Nova Scotia Health and IWK Health Centre as part of their legislated duties as outlined in the Health Authorities Act.

Although CHBs engage regularly with community, every five years they are required under legislation to develop a zone level Community Health Plan to guide their work and make recommendations to Nova Scotia Health and IWK about health and wellness priorities highlighted by the community.

# Community Health Plan Priorities

**1. Mental Wellness & Sense of Belonging**

**2. Healthy Active Lifestyle & Supportive Environments**

**3. Thriving Communities, Prosperity & Affordability**

**4. Community Engagement, Connection & Inclusion**

A variety of activities were undertaken by the CHBs and partners in each of these priority areas. This section highlights some of these activities. Although much of the time frame for this report was during the COVID-19 pandemic, CHBs were still able to work with community and partners to address key initiatives and issues. Many health and wellness issues impact more than one CHB and CHBs often work collaboratively on these initiatives.

# Partnership Project Highlights

## Mental Wellness & Sense of Belonging

- Partner in Pictou County Mental Wellness Roundtable
- Hosted webinars on mental wellness in the workplace after COVID-19
- Partnered in production of Mental Wellness & Resilience Toolkit
- Partnered in development of SURF SMART Handbooks on social media literacy for children and young teens and their parents/guardians
- Youth & Community Wellness project
- Hosted a variety of Wellness Workshops (*Community Care & Connect, Feel Good Afternoons, etc.*)
- Partnered in Let's Walk About it (suicide prevention)
- Partnered in bringing story walks to the zone
- Hosted Mental Health First Aid workshops
- Hosted Feel Good Bingo.
- Led a social media coping campaign

## Healthy Active Lifestyle & Supportive Environments

- Promoted outdoor recreation in all seasons
- Collaborated on a School Wellness Challenge
- Hosted an outdoor walking challenge
- Hosted a variety of guided walks and hikes throughout the region
- Partnered in Tatamagouche & Area Physical Activity Strategy
- Partnered in Fundy Shore Winter Carnival
- Organized a local Great Big Crunch for schools in the Northern Zone to raise awareness and advocate for healthy school food

## Thriving Communities, Prosperity & Affordability

- Partnered on *Housing Crisis in Pictou County* report
- Advocacy for poverty reduction (Basic Income Guaranteed, Rural Internet Access, National School Food, Food Security, Housing Security, etc.)
- Hosted Lunch & Learn session on Coordinated Access to address housing insecurity
- Hosted a *Food Rescue* information session
- Supported Coats for Cumberland
- Gardening workshop in partnership with Maggie's Place and Eat Local Cumberland
- Hosted a series called *Community Talks*
- Partnered on the Affordable Housing Needs & Supply Study for Colchester
- Support for local community gardens and community meals

## Community Engagement, Connection & Inclusion

- Partners in creating Welcoming Communities
- Active partner in *Truro Colchester Welcome Network*
- Partnerships with local Y Outreach Services (e.g., Walk & Talk, connecting with local volunteer organizations)
- Hosted presentations on diversity and inclusion
- Supports for increased learning about indigenous communities and indigenous/settler history
- Hosted presentations on health and wellness issues for African Nova Scotia communities
- Partners in multicultural events (e.g., Holi Festival of Colours and Diwali Festival)
- *Mind, Body & Spirit* workshop to support senior's health in Pictou County
- Hosted presentations on municipal accessibility plans
- Support for Gender & Sexualities alliances
- Partners in Pride Celebrations
- Care packages for migrant farm workers

# Wellness Funds

Each year, the CHBs support health promotion activities in communities through the Wellness Fund. The fund is for non-profit organizations undertaking projects to improve health and wellness in their communities.

Over the four years covered by this report, 245 projects were supported by the Wellness Fund.

- 🌀 In 2020-21, 56 community-based projects were supported by the Wellness Fund
- 🌀 In 2021-22, 52 community-based projects were supported by the Wellness Fund
- 🌀 In 2022-23, 66 community-based projects were supported by the Wellness Fund
- 🌀 In 2023-24, 71 community-based projects were supported by the Wellness Fund

## HIGHLIGHTS OF WELLNESS FUND PROJECTS IN NORTHERN ZONE

### WELLNESS FUND PROJECTS (2020-21)

**Colchester East Hants Hospice Society** (communities building capacity to support people dealing with grief)

**YMCA Cumberland** (helping vulnerable people and families stay connected through technology during COVID)

**Piktukewaq Women's Association** (community garden program called From Seed to Table)

**Writing on Fire Society** (support for youth to participate in writing and share their Isolation Diaries)

**Pugwash District High School** (backpack program provided resources required by low-income families)

**Municipality of Cumberland County** (supported the Eco Adventure Program)

**East Hants Family Resource Centre** (provided free healthy weekly meal kits for 28 weeks)

**Cobequid Consolidated Elementary School** (Willow Spaces are Interesting Places provided natural play areas for young children)

### WELLNESS FUND PROJECTS (2021-22)

**Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq** (provided a safe cultural space for men to gather and support one another)

**Maggie's Place** (cooking program for low-income youth)

**Lismore & District Recreation** (community walking track)

**Highland Community Residential Services** (provided an Online Fun Friday with crafts and games)

**Pictou County Forest School** (outdoor clothing and scholarships)

**Creamery Square Association** (supports for a breastfeeding support station)

**Wentworth Learning Centre** (support for a Girls Empowerment Camp)

**Summer Camps Unplugged Society** (Camp Unplugged encourages kids to disconnect from their electronics)

**Brookfield Elementary Home and School** (student smoothie bar & school wide community meal)

## WELLNESS FUND PROJECTS (2022-23)

**SchoolsPlus** (Classroom Cuts program offered free haircuts for students in 7 high schools)

**Nova Scotia Community College** (circus program for community members of all ages and abilities)

**River John & Area Recreation** (supports for summer recreation day camps)

**Eat Local Cumberland** (raised bed gardening workshops)

**Municipality of East Hants** (drop-in activities for adults and seniors)

**Knox United Church** (Community Outreach & Engagement offered barrier free activities to a variety of age groups)

**Truro PRIDE** (creating circles of support for the 2SLGBTQ+ community)

**Summer Street Industries** (provided personal care kits for people who are homeless or precariously housed)

**Pictou County Trails Association** (provided hike leader training)

**Springhill Junior/High School** (Indigenous & African Canadian Youth Group learning together about their culture and traditions)

**Riverside Community Hall Association** (certification of instructors for suicide prevention workshops: SafeTalk)

**POSSE Project** (creating recreation adventures for youth)

## WELLNESS FUND PROJECTS (2023-24)

**ElevateHER Mental Health Support Services** (community fair bringing together social services agencies and community)

**Cumberland Public Libraries** (provided education in harm reduction and training in administration of naloxone)

**Northumberland Arts Council** (exploring the visual arts for youth)

**Multicultural Association of Cumberland** (supported community events that promote multiculturalism)

**Ship's Company Theatre** (Queer Youth Hang provided a safe space for queer youth to hang out and engage in social activities)

**CHArt Society, Culture Heritage and Art** (Wellness Day provided workshops on nutrition, physical, mental, and social wellness)

**Rising Tides Art society** (facilitated art sessions for children, youth and the general community)

**Black Girl Magic Society** (social engagement for young female African Nova Scotians celebrating their special talents and identities)

**Parrsboro Hub/SchoolsPlus** (provided emergency kits for students/youth who are precariously housed or unsheltered)

**Colchester Community Support Society** (Community Food Mentorship Training program on supporting local food security initiatives)

# Nova Scotia Health Contributes to Community Health

Nova Scotia Health, through Public Health, Mental Health & Addictions, and Primary Health Care, works with CHBs to identify health promotion supports and services for people in the province. Actions by Nova Scotia Health that align with CHB priorities include:

## **Mental Wellness & Sense of Belonging**

- Uplift projects in schools that promote student leadership and volunteerism.
- Youth Health Centres (and Coordinators) provide youth-friendly spaces in high schools including one-on-one supports and navigation to health promoting programs and services.
- Mental Health & Addictions offers free e-mental health tools and resources.
- The Roots of Hope project is helping communities develop suicide intervention knowledge and action.
- Mental Health & Addictions provides ASIST (suicide prevention) programs.
- Resources have been allocated to support communities in the aftermath of the Mass Casualty Commission.

## **Healthy Active Lifestyle & Supportive Environments**

- Public Health supports the Active Smarter Kids (ASK) program that encourages teachers to provide physically active lessons inside and outside the classroom.
- Public Health staff work with CHB Coordinators to support the Great Big Crunch each year (advocacy campaign for healthy school food).
- Some Uplift projects are focused on outdoor play and recreation.

## **Thriving Communities, Prosperity & Affordability**

- The Science, Systems and Performance division of Nova Scotia Health provide health data to support the work of CHBs.
- The Fresh Food Cart pilot project provides affordable, healthy food in 5 schools in Northern Zone.
- Public Health have supported affordable housing initiatives by engaging with partners in service-based homelessness counts.
- The Public Health Fluoride Varnish Program helps to improve dental health and reduce oral health inequities in the province.
- Public Health is helping to increase awareness about climate change and how vulnerable populations are especially impacted by climate change.

## **Community Engagement, Connection & Inclusion**

- Youth Health Centre Coordinators facilitate bringing youth together in GSAs (Gay Sexuality Alliances) and Social Justice groups.
- Public Health staff work with partners to understand and advocate for public policies that support inclusion and target the social determinants of health.
- Mental Health & Addictions is providing Crisis Intervention Training for local police forces.

Next Reporting Period

---

2024-2029