

# Report Back to the Community

## 2019-2023 Central Zone

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This report highlights the activities and accomplishments of the seven Community Health Boards (CHBs) within Central Zone from the identified priorities and recommendations in the 2019 Community Health Plan. Central Zone is comprised of Halifax and West Hants Regional Municipalities.



**Community Health Boards**  
Central Zone

*Community Partnerships and a Voice for a Healthier Future*

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## INTRO

Community Health Boards (CHBs) are made up of local community members who work with partners to gather community ideas and share information about how to improve and promote health & wellness close to home. They focus on the many factors that affect health & wellness in our communities, including income, education and sense of belonging, among others. CHBs then share what they have learned about these health & wellness priorities with Nova Scotia Health (NSH), IWK Health Centre (IWK), and community groups as part of their legislated duties as outlined in the Health Authorities Act.

Although the CHBs engage regularly with community, every five years they are required under legislation to develop a Zone Community Health Plan to guide

their work and make recommendations to NSH and IWK about the health priorities highlighted by the community.

In 2016 the CHBs performed zone wide engagement to develop their Community Health Plan and in 2019 the plan was slightly refreshed for use until 2024 when the new Community Health Plan is due. The legislated timeline has since been adjusted from three to five years.

As part of our engagement process and open communication with our communities we are sharing this report to show what has been accomplished since our previous Central Zone Community Health Plan was published.

# “COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND A VOICE FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

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## LOCAL VOICE

There are over 80 volunteers that make up the 7 community health boards in the Central Zone. Our volunteers are dedicated residents that care about their communities. They are actively listening to community concerns, sharing information with others, building partnerships, leading projects, supporting community-led initiatives, bringing people together to discuss important issues, and allocating Wellness

Funds to community projects. All of this is being done to better understand the social determinants of health and their impact on the health of a community, to work on health promotion initiatives and share what they've learned with NSH, IWK, local community groups and municipalities to make our communities a healthier place to live, work, learn and play.





## 2019 - 2023

The priorities and recommendations that made up the Central Zone Community Health Plan were:

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES AND INFORMATION	
<b>Recommendation #1</b> Seek creative, innovative ways to reduce barriers and increase access to services in the community.	<b>Recommendation #2</b> Develop a more culturally competent health system.
WORKING TOGETHER UPSTREAM	
<b>Recommendation #3</b> Take the lead in working collaboratively with provincial departments, municipal governments, and community partners to address the social determinants of health.	<b>Recommendation #4</b> Work with community stakeholders, academia, municipalities, and provincial departments to support and develop strategies to ensure equitable access to safe foods.
WELLNESS AND HEALTH PROMOTION	
<b>Recommendation #5</b> Support community-based physical activity opportunities.	<b>Recommendation #6</b> Invest in local and culturally appropriate programs that support mental wellness.
SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY	
<b>Recommendation #7</b> Invest in community-led health promotion initiatives.	<b>Recommendation #8</b> Support and partner with communities, non-profit and other sectors to engage individuals to build a sense of belonging and foster inclusion.

# CENTRAL ZONE CHB HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES

Community Health Boards support community-based projects addressing issues related to the social determinants of health such as housing, poverty, food insecurity, physical activity, early childhood development and social isolation. Together we work with community partners to build a healthier community by connecting, leading, promoting and advocating.

Although much of the reporting timeframe was during COVID, the Community Health Boards were still able to work with community and partners to address key initiatives and issues.

**Each Community Health Board works within their community on initiatives that board members feel are important. Some initiatives impact more than one board therefore the CHBs work collaboratively on these initiatives. Examples of these collective initiatives are:**

**JUST FOOD HALIFAX:** CHBs supported and endorsed the work of Just Food Halifax to create the JustFOOD Action Plan, a long-range strategy for building a healthy, just, and sustainable food system in HRM.

**ELECTION PRIMER:** CHBs created and distributed an election primer highlighting food insecurity during an election calling attention to the issue. It was an opportunity to inform voters about the rates of food insecurity in NS and provide questions to ask candidates about what they would do to address the issue. Postcards with key information, stats and questions were made available electronically and in hard copy throughout community.

**NATIONAL BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE:** CHBs wrote letters of advocacy in support of Bills C223 and S233 put forward by MP Leah Gazan and Senator Kim Pate. These letters emphasized the importance of a National Basic Income Guarantee for Canadians.

**ALCOHOL WARNING LABELS:** CHBs wrote letters of support for the motion put forward in Parliament to implement federally mandated labels on all alcohol containers sold in Canada to better inform the public of the carcinogen content and its link to cancer.

**HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD:** CHBs have been working to raise awareness of the need for a Nationally funded Universal School Food Program, we've advocated and are endorsers of the NS Coalition for Healthy School Food.

**HOUSING:** CHBs have coordinated and participated in many conversations in community about housing, participated on committees, sent feedback to commissions and are actively seeking ways to collaborate with community on the issue of housing.

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS:** CHBs play a huge role in bringing together networks of organizations to learn from each other, seek opportunities to work together and make change. These partnerships are the backbone of our work in community.





**Community Health Boards** initiate and collaborate with community partners on a variety of activities. These are just a few of the many projects happening in community.

**SPORTS EQUIPMENT GIVE AWAY:** Worked with a variety of community partners such as the Boys & Girls Club, Halifax Public Library, HRM Recreation, Schools Plus, and many more to host a free Sports Equipment Give Away to reduce barriers for youth to participate in physical activity and sports. (Dartmouth CHB)

**BLANKET EXERCISE:** Hosted this interactive workshop which uses Indigenous methods to build understanding of our shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The exercise effectively educates and increases empathy about our shared 500-year history of Mi'kma'ki. (Southeastern CHB)

**VAPING REPORT CARD:** Developed in collaboration with many community partners, a Vaping Report Card was created to raise awareness about the alarming statistics of youth vaping and to highlight how accessible vaping products are in terms of price, product and availability for youth to obtain. (Cobequid CHB)

**GIVING SOUP AND TEA FOR TWO PROJECTS:** Worked with local community partners to hand out dried soup, tea, cocoa, and resources to reduce social isolation, improve mental wellness, create awareness of local community resources and access to food. The essence of the project is to build a community of people who are supporting other people. (Eastern Shore Musquodoboit CHB)

**ONE CHANCE TO BE A CHILD:** Reviewed the report "A look at how children and youth are doing in Nova Scotia, Canada, based on best available data and the input of young people" by the Healthy Populations Institute of the Dalhousie Medical School and provided advocacy support. It is important to listen to children and youth, consider their rights, and focus on their best interests when making decisions. (Chebucto West CHB and Halifax CHB)

**COMMUNITY HEALTH & WHOLENESS FAIR:** Brought local community-based groups together to host a community health fair to help our community access and understand the services and supports that are in the community. (Southeastern CHB)

**TRANSPORTATION ADVOCACY:** Supported the Community Transportation Committee to perform a Bus Connection Transportation Survey, that had over 500 responses, and report the survey findings to the West Hants Regional Municipal Council for funding consideration. (West Hants/Uniacke CHB)

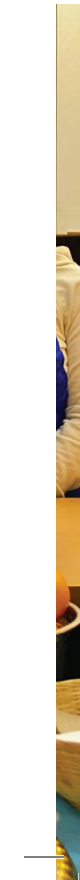
**WELL-BEING HUB:** Worked with partners to develop a network of community and health providers who work collaboratively to provide the right care and supports empowering residents to take control of their health. The network works to navigate, educate, coordinate and facilitate access to existing programs and services and create new ones to fill identified gaps. (Eastern Shore Musquodoboit CHB)

**CAUSEWAY TRAIL LIGHTING:** Collaborated with many community partners to achieve improved lighting along the Causeway Trail in Windsor making this well used recreational and utilitarian trail more accessible for all. (West Hants/Uniacke CHB)

**ACTIVE SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION IN HRM:** Participating in a working group with many partners working towards a local policy that will hopefully address traffic congestion of parents dropping off students, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make it safe for students to travel by foot or other passive means to school. (Chebucto West CHB and Halifax CHB)

**HAPPY TO CHAT BENCHES:** Partnered with the Municipality to create Happy to Chat benches to encourage people to strengthen community ties and support social connection. People can sit on the benches if they are willing to have a conversation and to build community relationships. (Dartmouth CHB)

**COBEQUID FOOD SECURITY NETWORK:** Supporting a group of local organizations to form a food network to work collaboratively on promotions, seeking opportunities for expansion of current low-cost and free food in the community and advocating for food security in the region. (Cobequid CHB).



## Wellness Funds

Community Health Boards distribute Wellness Funds (WF) each year to local non-profit groups working to improve health in their communities and address the health priorities identified by the CHBs in their current community health plan. In the 2019-2023 timeframe CHBs in Central Zone have distributed \$872,669.29 to 336 community projects.

Many of the schools in our region have received funds for a variety of projects including lunch-time wellness activities, afterschool and community cooking classes, gardens and food box programs, skill-based courses for youth, engagement activities for diverse youth and much more. Below are highlights of some of the many Wellness Funds distributed within community.

### **STEPPING INTO BETTER HEALTH – HANTS LEARNING NETWORK ASSOCIATION**

Stepping into Better Health promotes healthy habits to adult learners, focusing on foot care and walking for wellness. Participants were encouraged and enabled to be physically active through walking and this contributed to wellness both physically and mentally. Steps were tracked and reported back and learners reported being more mentally well. (West Hants/Uniacke CHB)

### **THE BRANCHING OUT PROGRAM – MACPHEE CENTRE FOR CREATIVE LEARNING**

The program invited African Nova Scotian youth to explore their roots by visiting historic monuments and heritage spaces unique to their own histories and cultures. The youth visited and explored these sites and reflected on their learning through art, music and other creative activities. (Dartmouth CHB)

### **FRESH AFFORDABLE FOOD FOR SENIORS - SPENCER HOUSE SENIOR CENTRE**

The program inspired, taught, and helped to support seniors to cook recipes that are easy, affordable, and nutritious, while taking into account the need to keep the preparation time short. The success of the program was that it expanded to the nearby universities and engaged younger members and the seniors. (Halifax CHB)

### **KIDS IN THE KITCHEN - CHEBUCTO FAMILY CENTRE**

The Kids in the Kitchen program provided parents and their children an opportunity to participate in simple cooking programs together. They were able to learn Food literacy, increase engagement and network with other families. (Chebucto West CHB)

### **INDIGENOUS CULTURAL TRAINING - SACKVILLE KINETTE CLUB**

The Kinette Club hosted a series of four educational workshops to transfer knowledge from first person voices regarding first nations customs, traditions, culture and the ongoing impact of colonialization to local community members of indigenous and non-indigenous descent. (Cobequid CHB)





### **2SLGBTQ+ PARENT DROP-IN PLAYGROUP – PARENTS & CHILDREN TOGETHER (PACT)**

A playgroup has been developed to provide an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming space for 2SLGBTQ+ families to meet other families with two moms, two dads, or transparents. (Southeastern CHB)

### **ACTIVE ARTS! PROGRAMMING - VON OF GREATER HALIFAX**

The program focused on music programming to support dependent adults with disabilities and forms of dementia – participants were stimulated both mentally and socially helping to curb the degenerative nature of their conditions. (Chebucto West CHB)

### **MUSQUODOBOIT VALLEY COMMUNITY CHOIR – MUSQUODOBOIT VALLEY BICENTENNIAL THEATRE & CULTURAL CENTRE**

This free, drop-in, all-ages community choir created a welcoming, safe, and accessible program with no financial or educational barriers for participation and potential for community-building and social-bonding. (Eastern Shore Musquodoboit CHB)

### **MOBILE FOOD MARKET PARTNERSHIP - MUSGO RIDER COOPERATIVE**

Musgo Rider was able to transport fruit and vegetables allowing Eastern Shore and Musquodoboit Valley communities to participate in the Mobile Food Market partnership program, which was previously only offered in the urban areas of Halifax. Bi-weekly deliveries to the region allow for access to fresh fruit and produce bags at a reduced grocery store rate. (Eastern Shore Musquodoboit CHB)

### **HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM FOR THE NEWCOMER WOMEN AND KIDS - ALNAAS COMMUNITY & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION**

The project brought together various newcomer families to learn about different cultures and to encourage the newcomer to be part of the community and learn different skills. (Chebucto West CHB)

### **CULTIVATING COMMUNITY: FIVE SHORT FILMS ON GROWING FOOD AND FINDING HOME - COMMON ROOTS WOODSIDE**

This urban farm uses gardening to increase community and mental health by fostering greater connection and understanding of one another and the environment. Almost half of the community garden space is gardened by people who are newcomers to Canada. This project allowed for a film premiere about the gardeners who participate and the many roles that community gardens have in peoples' lives. (Dartmouth CHB)





### **MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE – WEST HANTS WARRIORS MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION**

Participating in these workshops has increased the mental health literacy of the coaches and managers within the Association. Stigma associated with mental health has decreased by having more open conversations and knowing what resources are available to support mental health. (West Hants/ Uniacke CHB)

### **NURTURING STRONG AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN FAMILIES - EAST PRESTON DAYCARE**

This program was developed for African Nova Scotian parents and caregivers in response to the lack of culturally specific parenting programs that address the realities of African NS parents and children. The goal of this program was to support the development of partnerships with other organizations such as the Nova Scotia Brotherhood providing facilitators to offer more workshops and attend conferences, etc. (Southeastern CHB)

### **COOKING IN THE ROUGH 101 - SACKVILLE AND AREA WARMING CENTRE**

The initiative provided interactive, hands-on sessions related to food security, safety, and preparation while cooking in the rough for those in local encampments. At the same time the sessions offered the opportunity to make positive connections with others. (Cobequid CHB)



## **CONTACT**

Visit our website to connect to one of the seven Community Health Boards in the Central Zone:  
[www.communityhealthboards.ns.ca](http://www.communityhealthboards.ns.ca)  
or for general inquires email us at:  
[centralchbs@nshealth.ca](mailto:centralchbs@nshealth.ca)

