



Business Plan

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

2025-26

Table of Contents

Deputy Minister's Message	3
Introduction	4
Priority: Keeping our Island Healthy	5
<i>Health & Wellness for All Residents</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Chronic Disease Prevention & Management.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Mental Health & Mental Wellness</i>	<i>7</i>
Priority: A Healthy & Sustainable Workforce	8
<i>Capacity, Recruitment & Retention.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Supporting PEI's Health Workforce.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Partnerships & Collaboration.....</i>	<i>9</i>
Priority: Seamless Access to Care.....	10
<i>Seamless Access to Care</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Person-Centered Care</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Coordinated Care</i>	<i>12</i>
Priority: Equitable Access.....	13
<i>Addressing Inequity</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Geographies of Interest</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Target Age Groups.....</i>	<i>14</i>
Financial Statement	15

Deputy Minister's Message

Dear Minister McLane,

It is my pleasure to submit the 2025-26 Business Plan for the Department of Health and Wellness (the Department).

This year marks a pivotal moment in our journey to transform healthcare in Prince Edward Island. We are taking bold steps to improve access, equity, and outcomes for all Islanders. From expanding virtual care and digital health tools to strengthening our healthcare workforce and investing in community wellness, our actions are designed to meet the evolving needs of our population.

The 2025-26 annual business plan outlines the Department's path for year three of the five-year Provincial Health Plan. The initiatives outlined in this plan reflect our deep commitment to supporting Islanders in achieving optimal health. Whether it's through construction in long-term care, patient medical homes, or the Mental Health and Addictions Acute Care Facility, both larger and smaller initiatives are planned to advance our systems' capacity to manage care.

We are dedicated to delivering timely, person-centered, and inclusive care by improving access through initiatives like the launch of MyHealthPEI for the public, expanded Pharmacy Plus services, and enhanced long-term care access. These efforts are driven by our devoted staff, strong partnerships, and resilient communities. Together, we are building a more connected, compassionate, and capable healthcare system for all Islanders.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Thibeau
Deputy Minister



Introduction

As we enter the third year of the 2023–28 Provincial Health Plan, the Department of Health and Wellness (the Department) continues to lead the transformation of Prince Edward Island’s healthcare system. In 2025–26, our focus is on advancing a broad range of initiatives that promote healthier communities, a sustainable workforce, improved access to care, modernized legislation and regulations, and greater health equity for all Islanders.

This business plan outlines the Department’s key actions for the year ahead. It reflects our commitment to streamline healthcare delivery through digital innovation, expanding virtual care, and enhancing service coordination. It also highlights efforts to strengthen the healthcare workforce through targeted upskilling, training opportunities, and retention strategies—including support for internationally educated professionals and expanded tuition programs coverage to support the healthcare workforce in PEI.

The Department is managing both new initiatives, such as the AI Scribe pilot to reduce administrative burden, and ongoing priorities like the continued rollout of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR), public access to MyHealthPEI, and expanded access to Primary Care. It is also leading the development of new regulations and legislation for long-term care, community care, and public health. Additionally, the At Home Caregiver Benefit is being expanded, along with targeted wellness and prevention programs under the LIVE WELL PEI brand.

Change in healthcare is often complex and engages many partners and areas of business. These initiatives are made possible through strong partnerships with the Federal Government, Health PEI, other government departments, community organizations, and national collaborators. While each initiative in this business plan is aligned to one of the Provincial Health Plan’s four priority areas, many initiatives are cross-cutting and will contribute to broader healthcare system improvements and better health outcomes for all Islanders.

Priority: Keeping our Island Healthy

In 2025-26, the Department of Health and Wellness will continue to promote and support the health and well-being of Islanders through a wide range of prevention, education, and wellness initiatives.

We will expand our efforts to reduce chronic disease, improve mental health services, and support healthier lifestyles through healthy public policy, targeted campaigns, and community engagement. This year's work includes the launch of new digital tools, expanded access to health education, and the development of strategies that address the social and environmental factors which impact health.



We will also continue to build on the LIVE WELL PEI brand by implementing the Wellness Action Plan and enhancing public access to reliable, evidence-based health information. Our focus remains on empowering Islanders to make informed choices about their health and creating supportive environments that help people live well at every stage of life.

Health & Wellness for All Residents

- Establish a governance structure with broad representation across government and society to prioritize and implement the LIVE WELL PEI wellness action plan.
- Expand the Health Education Database to provide access to peer-reviewed wellness resources.
- Implement targeted public health interventions for under-immunized populations.
- Develop and implement phase 2 of the LIVE WELL PEI website with interactive features.
- Develop a Provincial Alcohol Strategy to strengthen alcohol policy in PEI.
- In partnership with Health Canada, initiate the implementation of a Heat Alert Response System in PEI and advance strategies to minimize climate change impacts.
- Continue to invest in public awareness campaigns focused on healthy eating, physical activity, reducing harms of alcohol, tobacco reduction, and mental wellness.
- Draft amendments to existing legislation and regulations to reflect updated safety, quality and operational standards, including changes to the following regulations: Milk Processing Regulations, Swimming Pool and Waterslide Regulations, Ambulance Service Regulations, and Dispensing Opticians Regulations.
- Develop online environmental health training courses for Tobacco and Volunteer Food Safety.

Chronic Disease Prevention & Management

- Finalize the Chronic Disease Framework and establish a steering committee to develop a provincial action plan to guide chronic disease prevention and management in PEI.
- In partnership with the Federal Government, add medications to the PEI Pharmacare Formulary to support better access to drugs, including coverage enhancements of diabetes medication and supplies, drugs for contraception, and drugs for rare diseases.
- In collaboration with key partners, finalize the Provincial Pain Strategy and begin public engagement to inform actions.

Mental Health & Mental Wellness

- Monitor and control of the Mental Health and Addictions Acute Care Facility and the Wellness and Transition Centre.
- Complete the roadwork for the Mental Health and Addictions Campus Phase II.
- Develop a new virtual gambling training program for Island clinicians to be hosted on the new Health PEI Learning Management System.
- Launch a grassroots community marketing campaign for the “Healthy Play All the Way” gambling service.
- Implement a Multi-Substance Surveillance System to monitor substances including alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, cannabis, opioids, and stimulants, and to support timely responses and informed policy and program decisions.
- Evaluate the addition of intranasal naloxone as part of the Take Home Naloxone Program that provides free naloxone kits in pharmacies and community sites across PEI.

Priority: A Healthy & Sustainable Workforce

In 2025–26, the Department of Health and Wellness will continue to strengthen the healthcare workforce by investing in recruitment, retention, and professional development.

This year's efforts will focus on expanding training opportunities, supporting internationally educated professionals, and expanding scopes of practice to better meet the needs of Islanders. We will also assist in improving working conditions to ensure healthcare providers feel supported through fair agreements and collaborative planning.

Through strategic partnerships and targeted funding, we aim to build a more resilient and responsive workforce. These actions will help address staffing gaps, support long-term care and community care sectors, and ensure that Islanders have access to skilled professionals across the continuum of care.

Capacity, Recruitment & Retention

- Roll out the Health Careers Guide and deliver presentations in Island schools to promote healthcare professions.
- Renew and expand the Saskatchewan Polytechnic agreement to increase the annual IEN (Internationally Educated Nurses) program capacity from 88 to 105 students.
- Establish an accelerated Medical Administrative Support Program to offer a 29-week course that will train graduates to step into high-demand roles across the system, including in patient medical homes.
- In conjunction with key players, lead the work to develop a Practice Ready Assessment Program to provide a clear path to licensure, helping qualified family doctors transition into practice on PEI.
- Implement the Manchester Triage System as a secondary triage and clinical decision support tool at the Medical Communications and Dispatch Centre to help prioritize 9-1-1 calls based on the urgency of each patient's condition and their unique care needs.

Supporting PEI's Health Workforce

- Support the transition of dispensing opticians, acupuncturists and naturopathic doctors to the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.
- Modernize the Emergency Health Services Agreement with Island EMS to improve service delivery, transparency, oversight, and accountability.
- Launch the AI Scribe Pilot Project to minimize administrative burden for primary care clinicians.
- Enhance the utilization of Community Paramedicine Response Units within the current program staffing model to improve targeted support for chronic disease management in the community and reduce demand for emergency department visits.

Partnerships & Collaboration

- Initiate negotiations with private long-term care owners for a new operating contract to ensure stable long-term care across PEI and to advance key quality and workforce initiatives.
- Advance an Atlantic virtual care licensure pathway to support cross-jurisdictional practice for allied healthcare professionals.
- In partnership with UPEI, create a new LPN to BScN pathway at UPEI. This program will create 14 new seats every second year and offer more flexibility for working professionals who want to advance their careers while staying in the workforce.
- In collaboration with our community partners, advance the implementation and evaluation of pilot programs funded by the Health Innovation Grant (a funding partnership between the Department, Health PEI and Innovation PEI).

Priority: Seamless Access to Care

In 2025–26, the Department of Health and Wellness will continue to improve how Islanders access care by expanding virtual services, enhancing digital tools, and strengthening coordination across the healthcare system.

We will focus on making care timelier and more person-centered, through our renewed Virtual Hallway agreement and other new Virtual Care models, and through the launch of the Community Allied Health Clinic.

This year's work includes the rollout of the AI Scribe pilot, upgrades to diagnostic imaging systems, and the continued expansion of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR). We will also support the expansion of new medical homes, and community-based care models, and ensure that Islanders can access the right care, in the right place, at the right time.



Seamless Access
to Care



Person-Centered
Care



Coordinated
Care

Seamless Access to Care

- Support access expansion to Virtual Care through the development of a new model that serves the entire population, including those with and without a regular provider.
- Implement a standard policy for community grant funding by the Department, including process and documentation requirements.
- Oversee the coordination of the Canadian Dental Care Plan with the Provincial Dental Care Program to ensure seamless service delivery.
- Implement upgrades to the PACS diagnostic imaging system and expand the Clinical Data Repository to modernize diagnostic imaging and improve clinical decision-making.
- Implement Phase 2b of PrescribeIT to support electronic prescribing across primary care and to reduce administrative burden.
- Initiate Pharmacy Plus Phase 3 to develop a pathway for pharmacists to assess, diagnose and treat additional common ailments.
- Collaborate with optometrists to amend legislation and establish a pathway for an expanded scope of practice.
- Finalize long-term agreements for out-of-province services to ensure Islanders can access specialized care not available in the province.
- Implement new database software (GoodSAM) to modernize the Provincial Automated External Defibrillation (AED) Registry with a simplified public interface (including mapping) and improved operability for emergency medical dispatchers to guide 911 callers to the nearest AED during a sudden cardiac arrest.
- Expand the Ambulance Services Inspection Program, including the recruitment of a casual pool of inspectors, to enhance public safety, ensure regulatory compliance, and improve the quality of pre-hospital care.
- Expand the implementation of Mobile X-ray services across public and private long-term care facilities.
- Implement video call software (GoodSAM) at the Medical Communications and Dispatch Centre to enable the Clinical Support Desk Paramedic to initiate a video consultation with 911 callers to enhance virtual clinical assessment, triage, and decision-making.
- Add a new 24/7 emergency ambulance to the Charlottetown/Stratford area to enhance emergency response capacity within the Emergency Health Services system.

Person-Centered Care

- Launch the public-facing MyHealthPEI portal to enable residents to view components of their health information and provide features that support health management.
- Launch a Digital Health Literacy Campaign to empower Islanders with the knowledge and skills needed to confidently navigate digital health tools.
- Amend the Health Information Act and supporting regulations to enhance how Islanders and healthcare providers access and share information.
- Expand the At Home Caregiver Benefit to support Islanders receiving palliative and long-term maintenance care at home.

Coordinated Care

- Expand the Patient Medical Neighbourhood model and community resource mapping.
- Support the rollout of community allied health clinics and integrated care models.
- Establish community action networks to prioritize the LIVE WELL PEI Wellness Action Plan and support community-driven wellness initiatives.
- Draft a new Care Facilities Act and initiate engagement with key interest holders and partners.
- Starting with pharmacists, launch the provider portal for community partners to access the health information required to support their scope of practice.
- Expand Clinical Support Desk staffing capacity at the Medical Communications and Dispatch Centre to assist with connecting 9-1-1 callers to the most appropriate care pathway and provide medical advice based on their unique care needs.
- Establish a Quality, Safety, and Performance Committee to provide oversight of service delivery and performance under the new Emergency Health Services Agreement.

Priority: Equitable Access

In 2025–26, the Department of Health and Wellness will continue to advance equity in healthcare by addressing barriers to care, this includes improving cultural safety, expanding services for underserved populations, and ensuring that care environments are welcoming and inclusive. We will also focus on improving data collection to better understand health disparities and inform future planning.

Efforts this year will also support seniors, caregivers, and youth through targeted programs and infrastructure investments. By working with communities, healthcare providers, and other government partners, we aim to ensure that all Islanders regardless of age, location, or background, can access safe, high-quality care.

Addressing Inequity

- Identify opportunities with supporting organizations to advance health equity across the healthcare system.
- Advance race and ethnicity data collection to support more informed, health decisions to address inequities and improve outcomes.
- Increase awareness about sexual violence prevention and response for residential care settings and continue to build awareness of Women's and Gender Diverse Health Hub website.
- Launch the Welcoming Spaces Toolkit, to assist staff in learning more about accessibility, diversity, equity, inclusion, trauma-informed practices and cultural safety in healthcare settings.
- Continue engagement with Indigenous communities to enhance access to culturally safe primary care.
- Launch the Health Equity Supplement to support health staff in applying equity considerations when conducting Gender and Diversity Analysis policy lens.

Geographies of Interest

- Provide funding for renovations and equipment through the Capital Infrastructure Program to expand long-term care capacity across the province.
- The Department will promote healthier choices through targeted grant funding to community organizations to offer services like rural physiotherapy, vision rehabilitation, and after-stroke care to reduce the burden of chronic disease.
- Continue to support efforts for the Atlantic Umbrella Services Agreement, to leverage recent federal-provincial health funding frameworks and regional collaboration models.

Target Age Groups

- Continue a phased approach to review and modernize the Community Care Facilities Regulations and introduce Nursing Homes Regulations to better support care delivery for residents.
- In collaboration with Holland College, oversee the development of a youth-focused gambling education campaign to deliver school-based presentations on gambling awareness for Grades 7-12.
- Complete the design phase and award the construction tender for the Child and Youth Inpatient Unit at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
- Expand infectious disease prevention and control training in long-term care homes.
- Finalize the Healthy Living Guidelines for Early Years Centers in PEI, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Early Years.
- Evaluate the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) program, with a focus on assessing the role of new vaccine products in preventing RSV disease in both infants and older adults.
- Begin implementation of Phase 2 of the long-term care information management system and continue to work on staffing ratio improvements.
- Continue to implement the COMPASS Survey with schools and students in Grades 7 to 12.
- Establish a Long-term Care Sector Council to increase collaboration and engagement on priorities impacting public and private long-term care.
- Expand the Intent to Donate Registry to permit parents and legal guardians to register a child under the age of 16 on their behalf as organ or tissue donors.

Financial Statement

Operating Expenditures	Budget FY 2025-2026
Minister's / Deputy Minister's Office	639,700
Community Health & Policy	54,826,500
Pharmacy Services	76,196,100
Health Workforce Planning	3,823,500
Chief Public Health Office	14,312,900
Mental Health and Addictions Office	13,229,300
Health Innovation	3,342,600
Health and Wellness Operating Expenses	\$166,370,600
Revenue	
Health and Wellness	79,372,400
Total Revenue	\$79,372,400

Capital Expenditures	Budget FY 2025-2026
Capital Improvements – Buildings	75,222,300
Equipment and Other Capital Assets	5,519,800
Health and Wellness Capital Expenses	\$80,742,100