



*Department of
Health and Wellness*

STRATEGIC PLAN

2019-2022



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2019-2022



2019 to 2022

Department of Health and Wellness Strategic Plan

Vision

Healthy Islanders, Healthy Communities

Mission

To provide leadership, policy direction and programs

that contribute to:

- health protection and promotion for Islanders; and
- quality and sustainable health services that are accessible to Islanders

Goals

Protect the health of Islanders

Enable Islanders to achieve their optimal health

Improve effectiveness and promote sustainability of the health system

Values

Equity



We promote approaches that enable all Islanders to be healthy

Collaboration



We value engagement and commit to working in partnership with Islanders

Accountability



We build trust through transparency and the responsible use of resources

Evidence-Informed



We use evidence to inform our practice and decision making

Innovation



We encourage creativity and seek opportunities to develop, improve and transform our policies, programs and services

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Introduction

The Island health system faces significant financial and human resource pressures that influence its ability to provide exemplary care to Islanders. Recent Chief Public Health Office reports have identified that:

- the majority of PEI's health burden is caused by four chronic diseases: cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic pulmonary disease, and diabetes;
- Islanders have poor health outcomes compared to the rest of Canada for many disease conditions; and
- health inequity exists within our population, as Islanders with the lowest household income face greater health risk factors and worse health outcomes.

The health system has traditionally addressed such challenges by hiring more health care staff, building better hospitals and facilities, adopting new technologies, and providing more services. While these are important strategies, we also know that it is critical to prevent disease and injury before it occurs, and consider that health is an individual's overall physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or injury. Islanders need to be enabled to make healthy choices, not only through health education and individual behaviour change, but also by creating healthy physical and social environments that make the easy choice the healthy choice for every individual.



We know that the social determinants of health – the environment around us and the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age – are significant contributors to overall health. The improvement of a population's overall health depends greatly on addressing the social determinants of health through strong public policy and actions that aim to remove socio-economic barriers to good health.

The Department of Health and Wellness Strategic Plan 2019-2022 was developed by the Strategic Planning Working Group on behalf of senior management and in consultation with Department staff. It describes the Department of Health and Wellness' Vision, Mission, Values, Goals, Strategic Priorities and Actions for the fiscal years 2019-2020 to 2021-2022.

Vision

HEALTHY ISLANDERS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

This vision represents our highest aspiration for people living in Prince Edward Island. We envision a vibrant Island where healthy people contribute to thriving communities and have access to appropriate health services when necessary.

We must work together with Islanders, communities, organizations and partners to strengthen health services, provide programs that improve health and wellness, and maintain a sustainable and affordable health system. Citizens must be empowered to engage in this process and play a key role in helping us reach our ultimate vision of **Healthy Islanders, Healthy Communities**.

Mission

To provide leadership, policy direction and programs that contribute to:

- **health protection and promotion for Islanders; and**
- **quality and sustainable health services that are accessible to Islanders**

This statement describes our purpose. It outlines what we do, how we do it, and whom we serve. We achieve our mission through dedicated and experienced staff, and in partnership with Islanders and communities, Health PEI, health professions and allied health professionals, non-government and community organizations, the private sector, and other government departments.

Values

Equity

We promote approaches that enable all Islanders to be healthy

Collaboration

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These five values represent our core principles. They are championed by and help guide the conduct of our dedicated and diverse workforce.

We will model the five values by:

1. *Placing the values front and centre:* The five values will be featured prominently in physical work spaces and will be communicated regularly to staff from all levels of management.
2. *Working by the values:* The spirit of the values will be reflected in the strategic priorities outlined in this document and in the actions identified in divisional action plans. Staff are encouraged to appeal to the values when interacting with colleagues in daily work practice.
3. *Learning by the values:* Department events and staff functions will feature topics that can be tied to one or more of the values.



Goals

Three goals outline our long-term strategy to reaching the Vision of **Healthy Islanders, Healthy Communities**. Our commitment between 2019 and 2022 is to make significant headway in reaching these goals through a number of key strategic priorities.

Goal 1

Protect the health of Islanders

We protect the health of Islanders primarily through the implementation and monitoring of standards, including but not limited to public health policy and legislation, health professional licensing and regulation, licensing and inspection of continuing care facilities and food premises, health emergency management, population health surveillance, and the prevention, investigation, and control of communicable diseases. We seek to enhance and improve our health protection activities through effective policy and planning leadership, collaboration with communities and organizations, and equitable legislation and regulation.

Goal 2

Enable Islanders to achieve their optimal health

Many of the factors that affect the health of Islanders lie outside of the health sector. The social determinants of health have a profound influence on the overall health of individuals and communities. We seek to address these issues by promoting healthy activities and behaviours, and through initiatives and policies that enable Islanders to take control of their own health and achieve physical, mental, and social well-being. We will also develop collaborations and partnerships that encourage communities and organizations to actively participate in the development of health policy.

Goal 3

Improve effectiveness and promote sustainability of the health system

Prince Edward Island faces critical issues that undermine and threaten the effectiveness and sustainability of the health system. Growing rates of chronic disease, an aging population, rising costs to deliver health services, increasingly specialized and expensive care options, budgetary pressures, and health human resources shortages are some of the trends that influence government's ability to provide exemplary health care. We will address these issues through effective policy and planning leadership, improved collaboration and integration internally and with Health PEI, and upstream initiatives that address the social determinants of health and ease pressure from the health care system.

Strategic Priorities

To make progress towards our Goals and Vision, we will focus on five strategic priorities. These strategic priorities will help protect the health of Islanders, enable Islanders to achieve their optimal health, and improve effectiveness and promote sustainability of the health system.

Strategic Priority 1

Demonstrate leadership in healthy public policy

Our knowledge about what makes us healthy is evolving, and it has long been recognized that our health is dependent on the conditions in which we live, work and play. Research on the determinants of health indicates that the factors that contribute to health status go beyond health systems and individual behaviours; they are conditioned by the decisions made in several sectors of society.

We will take a leadership role in the advancement of health policy in Prince Edward Island through actions that will broaden the scope of health policy and provide guidance to the health system. This requires an intersectoral approach, where the Department of Health and Wellness influences evidence-informed healthy public policy at all levels of government and within communities and partner organizations.

The actions we take under this priority will help protect the health of Islanders by identifying and mitigating potentially negative health impacts of public policy, will enable Islanders to achieve their optimal health by promoting equity, and will improve effectiveness and promote sustainability of the health system by clarifying policy direction in health and ensuring the root causes of health are considered at all levels of government.

Actions

- Review and strengthen the policy development process to ensure consistent and purposeful health policy.
- Promote the consideration of health in policy making at all levels of government and community organizations through a Health in All Policies approach.
- Implement an equity-based approach to planning and decision making in the provincial health system.
- Redevelop the Provincial Health Plan, including an accountability framework, to provide direction to Health PEI.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 2

Remove barriers to health for vulnerable populations

Vulnerable populations face barriers to health and typically experience more difficulty accessing health services, longer wait times, a lack of coordination between services, and multiple chronic health conditions. Barriers to health are strongly influenced by social determinants like income, environment, gender, culture, and education.

Key findings of the 2017 PEI Children's Report and the 2016 Chief Public Health Officer's Report indicate that health inequity exists within our Island children's population, that health risk factors are particularly high among children and adults with the highest material and social deprivation and the lowest family affluence, and that age, gender and social environment are also associated with health risk factors and health outcomes. We must understand how these factors influence vulnerable populations' interaction with the health system in PEI, determine where the most significant barriers to health and access to health care lie, and begin to execute actions that are proven to increase equitable access to health care and improve vulnerable populations' overall health.

The actions we take under this priority will protect the health of Islanders by improving access to services for diverse groups, will enable Islanders to achieve their optimal health by giving people the tools to better care for themselves, and will improve effectiveness and promote sustainability of the health system by focusing efforts and resources where they will have the most impact.

Actions

- Identify vulnerable populations and the factors that influence their health status and relationship with the health system.
- Consolidate, prioritize and implement actions identified in provincial strategies, action plans and committees that are responsive to the needs of vulnerable populations.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 3

Engage with Islanders and communities to support and inform planning and decision making in health

Ensuring that healthy public policy and health promotion initiatives meet the needs of our diverse population means committing to meaningful engagement with Islanders and communities, as well as our partners and counterparts within the provincial government.

Islanders are better informed and more connected than ever before. It is critical that we hear, understand, and integrate the knowledge and experience of diverse stakeholders throughout the planning and decision making process, and ensure stakeholders are kept informed about outcomes and results. Meaningful and appropriate engagement confers legitimacy on decisions made that affect Islanders' health, and contributes to an enriched, informed citizenry.

The actions we take under this priority will protect the health of Islanders through increased transparency and accountability, will enable Islanders to achieve their optimal health by facilitating a more active public role in health care, and will improve effectiveness and promote sustainability of the health system by standardizing the consultation process.

Actions

- Enhance public and individual access to health information.
- Develop and implement a mechanism to guide public and community consultation.
- Take a leadership role in sustained interdepartmental collaboration.
- Enhance relationship with community engagement structures such as the Community Health Engagement Committees.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 4

Invest in and support sustained upstream initiatives to improve population health

Reaching our Vision will require a fundamental shift in how we approach health care in order to address the root causes, or upstream factors, of poor health. The 2016 Chief Public Health Officer's Report *Health for all Islanders* highlights how the unequal distribution of the social determinants of health has impacted the health of Islanders, and how health inequities make it difficult for individuals to make positive health changes on their own.

People with better access to resources, services and life chances enjoy proportionally better health for a longer period of time. Sustainable, root-cause, population level interventions through long-term investment in high-impact, upstream initiatives are required to enable individuals to increase control over and improve their health. This must be a strategic and concerted effort with interdepartmental involvement, with targeted investment and allocation of funds to proven primary prevention and health promotion initiatives. This investment, like any long-term investment, will take time to generate returns, but the time to act is now.

These actions will protect the health of Islanders by reducing health inequities, will enable Islanders to achieve their optimal health through education and promotion of healthy behaviours, and will ultimately improve effectiveness and promote sustainability of the health system through the implementation of proven, cost-effective approaches to minimizing disease and injury later in life.

Actions

- Measure and increase the percentage of the health system budget that is committed to primary prevention and health promotion.
- Develop innovative funding arrangements designated for upstream initiatives.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 5

Demonstrate leadership in health system resource allocation

One of the foremost challenges to the sustainability of the PEI health system is the scarcity of resources in combination with rising demand for services. We must ensure that health care resources are allocated efficiently, sustainably, and in the best interests of Islanders and communities.

We will take an approach to resource allocation that considers evidence, economics, and ethics. An evidence-informed approach focuses on effectiveness and appropriateness in allocating resources, ensuring that individuals receive appropriate care without unnecessary and potentially harmful interventions. An economic approach focuses on efficiency from a population health standpoint, ensuring that resources are allocated to programs and initiatives that optimize benefits to the general population. Finally, an ethical approach focuses on fair priority-setting to ensure health resources are distributed equitably among competing health needs.

The actions we take under this priority will protect the health of Islanders by ensuring the provision of the right care, by the right provider, to the right patient, at the right place and time. They will enable Islanders to achieve their optimal health through the reduction of potentially harmful interventions, and will improve effectiveness and promote sustainability of the health system through more cost-efficient use of resources and more rigorous evaluation of our programs and health status.

Actions

- Implement an appropriateness of care framework to promote evidence-informed practices and improve health outcomes.
- Enhance access to health system data and strengthen analytic capacity to better inform planning and decision making.
- Review the division of responsibilities and resources between the Department of Health and Wellness and Health PEI.
- Establish a framework to monitor and evaluate population health and health system performance, and guide resource allocation.

Evaluation and Reporting

Monitoring progress towards the priorities and goals in the strategic plan is essential if we are committed to our vision of **Healthy Islanders, Healthy Communities**. Evaluation and monitoring will be conducted to ensure that our activities are consistent with the priorities and goals set out in the strategic plan. Key outputs and deliverables will be reported internally through biannual status updates to senior management, and publicly through our annual reporting process.

It is also important to recognize that the rapidly changing health system landscape will require periodic review of the priorities and actions set out in the plan, and that the actions in particular may change and evolve in response. A review of the strategic priorities and actions will occur prior to and during each biannual status update to senior management to ensure that our activities remain relevant.



About the Department of Health and Wellness

The Department of Health and Wellness reports to the Minister and is accountable to the Provincial Government Executive Council.

The Department of Health and Wellness supports a healthy workplace culture where employees feel recognized for the work they do, enjoy appropriate work-life balance, feel safe at work both physically and psychologically, are able to use their talents to the fullest, and have opportunities for personal and professional growth.

The work of the Department is carried out by a diverse and dedicated workforce in three divisions:

Health Policy and Programs

This division provides policy and planning direction in various aspects of health care delivery that, in turn, assist the Minister in providing leadership, strategic direction, and oversight of the health system. The division is also responsible for health workforce planning through the Recruitment and Retention section.

Chief Public Health Office (CPHO)

This division is responsible for promoting and protecting the health of all Islanders through leadership, partnership and excellence in public health. The CPHO has four sections: communicable disease control, environmental health, health promotion, and population health assessment and surveillance.

Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity

This division provides support to sport, recreation, and health promotion activities that strengthen the community fabric of PEI. These activities impact the wellness and quality of life of Islanders and provide opportunities for community engagement and individual participation and excellence.

Coordination with Health PEI

Health PEI was established in 2009 as an arm's length organization that provides health services across the province. The Department of Health and Wellness provides leadership and policy guidance to the health system, which guides the actions of Health PEI in the provision of operational health services. The graphic below shows how the strategic directions of the Department and Health PEI align with and support each other, presenting a common vision for health in Prince Edward Island.

Department of Health and Wellness
2019-2022

Health PEI
2017-2020

Vision



Protect the health of Islanders

Enable Islanders to achieve their optimal health

Improve effectiveness and promote sustainability of the health

Quality and safety

Access and coordination

Innovation and efficiency

Goals



Key Terms

Equity and equitable access

Equity means each individual receives what they need to reach their optimal potential. Where differences in health outcomes exist, levels of support should match with an individual's or population's need. Equitable access in health care refers to the opportunity of individuals to obtain appropriate health services based on their need for care. All Islanders should have a fair opportunity at good health.

Health

This document uses a broad notion of health, as defined by the World Health Organization, that includes physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or illness. Optimal health refers to the most realistically achievable state of physical, mental, and social well-being for an individual.

Health promotion

Health promotion initiatives seek to decrease the risk of disease or illness and improve health by promoting healthy behaviours and choices. Health promotion policies are designed to improve the physical, social, economic and environmental conditions in which people live, learn, work and play, and enable people to increase control over and improve their health.

Health protection

Health protection activities seek to decrease the risk of disease or illness and improve health by protecting individuals, communities and populations from hazards over which they have little personal control. Health protection activities often involve the establishment of standards, and can include ensuring the safety and quality of food, water, and environment, preventing the transmission of communicable diseases, and managing outbreaks.



Key Terms

Social determinants of health

The social determinants of health are the behavioural, economic, and environmental factors that shape the health of people and communities. Some of the essential determinants of health include:

- Income and social status
- Employment and working conditions
- Education and literacy
- Childhood experiences
- Physical environments
- Social supports and coping skills
- Healthy behaviours
- Access to health services
- Biology and genetic endowment
- Gender
- Culture
- Discrimination and historical trauma



