Minister’s Message

As Minister of Health and Community Services, I am pleased to present the Department’s 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. This plan outlines the priorities we intend to focus on in the next three years as we work towards our vision of optimal health and well-being for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This Strategic Plan represents our commitment to improving outcomes in the areas of population health, access to priority services, and quality of care and efficiency. Through strategic initiatives and best practice policies and standards, the Department has already made significant progress in these areas. However, we still have work to do and the 2014-17 Strategic Plan represents a renewed focus to help us achieve our objectives.

In developing this plan, consideration was given to the strategic directions of the Provincial Government and the identified needs in our health and community services system. Significant work is already taking place across the system to align with these directions and this plan confirms our commitment to furthering progress in these areas for the benefit of our residents. Together, these directions will help guide the Department and its entities in delivering quality health and community services and making the system sustainable for future generations.

My signature below attests to my accountability for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of the specific goals and objectives identified.

Honourable Paul Davis
MHA, Topsail
Minister of Health and Community Services
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The Department of Health and Community Services works with stakeholders to develop and enhance policies, legislation, provincial standards and strategies to support individuals, families and communities to achieve optimal health and well-being. The Department also works with stakeholders to ensure high quality, cost effective and timely health services are available for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to outline the priorities of the Department of Health and Community Services for fiscal years 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17. The plan was developed in consideration of the strategic directions of the Provincial Government (as identified in Appendix A) in the area of health and community services. The associated goals, objectives, measures and indicators for each priority area are presented to assist in measuring progress in these areas. The Department’s success in achieving the priorities outlined within this plan will be measured annually through its performance reporting process which will be made available to the public by September 30 of each year.
2.0
Strategic Plan at a Glance

Issue One: Population Health

Goal One:
By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have improved its capacity to contribute to positive health outcomes for the people of the province.

Objectives:
1. By March 31, 2015, the Department of Health and Community Services will have assessed its current capacity in select areas of population health.
2. By March 31, 2016, the Department of Health and Community Services will have implemented initiatives that contribute to positive health outcomes.
3. By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have evaluated the implementation of select legislative and policy frameworks that contribute to the overall health of the population.
2.0 Strategic Plan at a Glance

**Issue Two: Access to Priority Services**

**Goal Two:**

By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have improved access to priority health and community services.

**Objectives:**

1. By March 31, 2015, the Department of Health and Community Services will have implemented initiatives aimed at improving access to priority health and community services.

2. By March 31, 2016, the Department of Health and Community Services will have continued to implement changes and enhancements towards improving access to priority health and community services.

3. By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have evaluated key priority areas of access and identified areas for performance improvements.
Issue Three: Quality of Care and Efficiency

Goal Three: By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have improved capacity to strengthen quality of care and achieved efficiencies in the provincial health and community services system.

Objectives:

1. By March 31, 2015, the Department of Health and Community Services will have initiated implementation of systems and processes towards improved quality of care and efficiency within the health and community services system.

2. By March 31, 2016, the Department of Health and Community Services will have continued monitoring and implementing systems towards improved quality and efficiency.

3. By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have evaluated changes within the health and community services system and identified areas for performance improvements.
An overview of the Department is contained below and includes the mandate, staff complement, office locations, organizational structure and corporate values. For further information relating to the Department of Health and Community Services please visit www.hcs.gov.nl.ca.

**Mandate**

The following mandate describes the responsibilities of the Department of Health and Community Services:

1. To provide leadership, coordination, monitoring and support to the regional health authorities and other entities who deliver programs and services ensuring quality, efficiency and effectiveness in the following areas:
   - Preservation and promotion of health;
   - Prevention and control of disease;
   - Public health and the enforcement of public health standards;
   - Administration of health care facilities;
   - Access and clinical efficiency;
   - Programs for seniors, persons with disabilities and persons with mental health and addictions issues;
   - Long term care and community support services;
   - Health professional education and training programs; and
   - Control, possession, handling, keeping and sale of food and drugs.
3.0 Departmental Overview

Mandate continued

2. To effectively administer and provide funding for the following:
   - Insured medical and hospital services;
   - Dental and pharmaceutical services for eligible individuals;
   - Grants to select community agencies in support of the Department’s mandate; and
   - Seat purchase and bursary programs for students in select professional or technical fields connected with health and community services.
### Staff Complement and Office Locations

The Department’s 224 employees are located throughout four office locations; Confederation Building (West Block) and Major’s Path in St. John’s; Grand Falls-Windsor and Stephenville. The Department is organized as follows:

<table>
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<th>Male</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population Health</td>
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<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3.0 Departmental Overview

Where Health Dollars are Spent

Budget 2014 - 2015
Total: $2,988,619,800

70% Regional Health Authorities and Related Services, $2,082,881,600

16% MCP Physician Services and Dental, $486,087,000

6% Capital, $179,092,700

5% Provincial Drug Program, $149,408,700

3% Other, $91,149,800
Departmental Structure

Department of Health and Community Services Branches and Divisions

Executive Branch
- Deputy Minister
- Associate Deputy Minister
- Assistant Deputy Ministers
- Legislative Consultant
- Communications

Regional Services Branch
- Acute Health Services, Emergency Response and Nursing Policy
- Infrastructure Management
- Long-Term Care and Community Supports

Corporate Services Branch
- Audit and Claims Integrity
- Financial Services
- Information Management

Policy and Planning Branch
- Office of Adverse Health Events
- Policy and Legislation
- Planning and Evaluation

Professional Services Branch
- Physician Services
- Dental Services
- Pharmaceutical Services
- Pathology and Laboratory Services
- Health Workforce Planning

Population Health Branch
- Public Health/Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Communicable Disease Control
- Environmental Public Health
- Healthy Living
- Aging and Seniors
- Mental Health and Addictions
Departmental Values

The Department’s values are reflected daily as employees fulfil their roles and responsibilities in serving their clients. The Department has identified the following core values and defined them using action-oriented statements that are then used by employees to guide their everyday work.

**Transparency and Accountability**

Each person carries out their responsibilities while contributing to a culture of openness in decision making.

**Collaboration**

Each person will work together in a positive manner with co-workers, partners and stakeholders, sharing knowledge and resources to identify potential solutions to priority issues.

**Innovation**

Each person actively seeks new ways to develop and implement more effective and efficient programs and services in an effort to achieve better health outcomes for the people of the province.
Privacy

Each person manages and protects information related to persons/families/organizations/communities and the Department appropriately while at the same time promoting an environment of openness with each other and our partners, including the public we serve.

Excellence

Each person demonstrates high professional standards, takes pride in performing every task with openness and integrity and willingly supports others to fulfill their roles.
4.0 Lines of Business

Policy, Planning, Program Development, Support and Monitoring

The Department provides leadership, coordination, monitoring and support to the regional health authorities (RHAs) and other entities who deliver programs and services ensuring quality, efficiency and effectiveness in the following areas:

- Health Workforce Modeling and Planning;
- Ambulance Services;
- Access and Clinical Efficiency;
- Pathology and Laboratory Services;
- Accountability and Oversight of RHAs;
- Special Assistance Program;
- Home Support;
- Disability Services;
- Provincial Blood Coordinating Program;
- Facility-based services for seniors (Personal Care Homes, Long-term Care Facilities);
- Mental Health and Addictions;
- Environmental Public Health;

(continued >)
4.0 Lines of Business

- Health Promotion and Wellness;
- Chronic Disease and Cancer Control Management and Prevention Programs (including the Provincial Kidney Program);
- Adverse Health Events (including the Clinical Safety and Reporting System);
- Disease and Infection Prevention and Control (Monitoring, Surveillance, and Immunization, Distribution and Storage of vaccines);
- Capital Facilities and Equipment;
- Health Research;
- Aboriginal Health;
- Healthy Aging and Seniors;
- Provincial Health Line;
- Provincial Telehealth; and
- Emergency Preparedness.
The Department administers and provides funding for the following:

- Medical Care Plan (Fee-for-service Physicians and Salaried Physicians);
- Dental Health Plan (Children, Youth, and Adult Dental Programs);
- Surgical Dental Program;
- Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program (Foundation Plan, 65 Plus Plan, Select Needs Plan, Access Plan, and Assurance Plan);
- Newfoundland and Labrador Interchangeable Drug Products Formulary;
- Health Workforce Recruitment and Retention;
- Support to Community Agencies; and
- Medical Transportation Assistance Program.
5.0

Primary Clients

The Department of Health and Community Services is ultimately accountable to the people of the province. However, in order to respond to the needs of clients, the Department works with many stakeholders, in particular the regional health authorities and other entities funded by the Department.

The Department also works collaboratively with stakeholders such as educational institutions, research centers, community-based organizations, aboriginal organizations and governments, municipalities, regulatory bodies and agencies, boards and commissions.

As well, the Department engages in partnerships and collaborative initiatives nationally with the Federal Government, other provincial and territorial governments and a wide array of health-related organizations.
6.0 Vision and Mission

Vision

The vision of the Department of Health and Community Services is for individuals, families and communities to achieve optimal health and well being.

Mission

The mission spans two planning cycles (2011-14 and 2014-17) setting out the Department’s priorities for a six year period towards achieving improved outcomes for the people of the province. The Department recognizes the challenges affecting the people and the health care system in Newfoundland and Labrador. These challenges include an aging population, a high incidence of chronic disease, a higher rate of inherited health issues and a unique rural-based geography with changing demographics.

While there are challenges, there is also a strong foundation of skilled professionals, modern facilities and community capacity to build upon together with various partners. The Department is building, adjusting and maintaining a health care system that is ready to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. The following mission demonstrates how the Department will move forward to address these challenges, while fostering a quality and sustainable health care system.
By March 31, 2017 the Department of Health and Community Services will have provided leadership to support an enhanced health system that effectively serves the people of the province and helps them achieve optimal health and well-being.

**Measure:**

**Leadership Provided**

**Indicators:**

- Implemented evaluation framework
- Demonstrated policy and program effectiveness
- Increased use of technology related to increased access
- Achieved efficiency and effectiveness in identified areas
Measure: Leadership Provided

Indicators:

• Analyzed evidence of quality and safety improvements
• Increased policy support for health professionals
• Implemented strategies in priority areas
In consideration of the strategic directions of the Provincial Government, the Department’s mandate and existing financial resources, three key priorities have been identified for inclusion in the 2014-17 Strategic Plan of the Department of Health and Community Services:

1. Population Health  
2. Access to Priority Services  
3. Quality of Care and Efficiency

Within each of the above priority areas, the Department has identified a three-year goal and yearly objectives to guide the Department towards achieving outcomes in these areas. Indicators have been identified for each goal as well as the first year’s objectives to show how the Department will demonstrate success in achieving the goals and objectives. The second and third year’s indicators will be identified in subsequent annual reports.
7.0 **Strategic Issues**

**Issue One: Population Health**

The Department's approach to population health reflects the belief that being free from illness is only one indicator of an individual's overall health and well-being. By providing services and supports across the life course and across all areas of health care (from prevention and promotion to health protection, diagnosis, treatment and care) the Department aims to influence the social, economic, physical and environmental conditions that shape the health of the population and help individuals achieve optimal health and well-being.

A wide body of evidence reveals that individuals with positive mental health are more likely to experience not only emotional well-being, hopefulness, quality relationships, life satisfaction and a higher quality of life; but also are more likely to have improved recovery from illness, reduced mortality and better health. Improved mental well-being, high immunization rates, protection from hazards and improved capacity for healthy living across the population contributes to the sustainability of the health and community services system by reducing health disparities and creating better health outcomes.

Research has identified strategic interventions through which protective factors from conception, early childhood and through adolescence can be built and enhanced. The life course perspective links early life experiences, including prenatal, with health and well-being outcomes into adulthood. Strategic interventions will address social determinants of health such as income, education and housing and involve multiple government and community partners that extend beyond the health sector.

Over the next three years the Department is committed to building capacity within identified areas to enable government to better respond and contribute to positive health outcomes for the population where they live, work and play. The identified goal and objective are in support of the Provincial Government's strategic direction of “Strengthened Population Health and Healthy Living”, particularly in the areas of healthy living and healthy aging. As well as the strategic direction of “An Accountable, Sustainable, Quality, Health and Community Services System” with a particular focus on the evaluation of legislation, policies, and services.
**Issue One: Population Health**

**Goal 2014-17:**

By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have improved its capacity to contribute to positive health outcomes for the people of the province.

**Measure:**

Improved capacity to contribute to positive health outcomes for the people of the province

**Indicators:**

- Enhanced legislative and policy frameworks
- Improved capacity building initiatives in the population health system
- Implemented public awareness initiatives towards improving population health
- Increased collaboration and stakeholder engagement to advance and inform initiatives in key areas of population health
7.0 Strategic Issues

Issue One: Population Health

Objective 1:
By March 31, 2015, the Department of Health and Community Services will have assessed the Department’s current capacity in select areas of population health.

Measure:
Assessed the Department’s current capacity in select areas of population health

Indicators:
- Reviewed current health promotion and wellness policies, programs and services
- Identified areas to support improved development and delivery of health promotion in the province
- Identified areas for increased collaboration and stakeholder engagement to advance and inform initiatives in key areas of population health
- Initiated renewal of select policy frameworks
**Issue One: Population Health**

**Objective 2:** By March 31, 2016, the Department of Health and Community Services will have implemented initiatives that contribute to positive health outcomes.

**Objective 3:** By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have evaluated the implementation of select legislative and policy frameworks that contribute to the overall health of the population.
7.0 Strategic Issues

**Issue Two: Access to Priority Services**

Access to services is not only about increasing the number of services available but also improving existing services to ensure they are meeting the needs of patients and clients. It is about measuring existing programs, policies and services and taking action to ensure they are adequately servicing the people they were meant to serve.

In this regard, the Department is committed over the next three years to improving access in such areas as mental health and addictions, long-term care and community supports as well as exploring new and innovative ways of providing access to other essential services within the health and community services system such as emergency services. Furthermore, the Department will build upon existing efforts to enhance health promotion, prevention and treatment by expanding telehealth and the scope of services available through the Newfoundland and Labrador Healthline.

In 2012, the Department released two wait time management strategies; *Strategy to Reduce Hip and Knee Joint Replacement Surgery Wait Times in Newfoundland and Labrador 2012* and *A Strategy to Reduce Emergency Department Wait Times in Newfoundland and Labrador 2012*. The Department will continue implementing new initiatives within these strategies in order to continuously improve access in these priority areas. As a result of initiatives undertaken to address wait times in the area of hip and knee joint replacement surgery, the Department announced on February 21, 2014, that Newfoundland and Labrador has the shortest wait times in the country for this type of surgery.
The Provincial Government has demonstrated its commitment to strengthening the long term care and community support services system with the release of Close to Home: A Strategy for Long-Term Care and Community Support Services, released in 2012. The Department will implement various components of the strategy throughout this planning cycle thereby enhancing the continuum of services for persons with disabilities and improving access to long-term care and community supports. The Department is also committed to enhancing services provided to clients with mental health and addictions issues by ensuring the delivery of services is provided in more modernized facilities that are efficient and better designed.

Over the next three years the Department of Health and Community Services will be focused on making further improvements in the above noted areas, as well as others, consistent with government’s commitments to the people of the province as reflected in the strategic direction of “Improved accessibility to programs and services meeting the current and future needs of individuals, families and communities, particularly those most vulnerable”. This will be demonstrated through the achievement of the following goal and objectives that focus on areas such as mental health and addictions, wait times and e-health solutions.
7.0  Strategic Issues

**Issue Two: Access to Priority Services**

**Goal:**
By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have improved access to priority health and community services.

**Measure:**
Improved access to priority health and community services

**Indicators:**
- Enhanced long-term care and community support services
- Implemented innovative e-health solutions to improve access while enhancing efficiency within the system
- Reduced wait times in key areas such as orthopedic services, endoscopy services, emergency departments and services for children with developmental disabilities including autism
- Increased access to mental health and addictions programs and services for adults, children and youth
- Explored options to improve access to primary health care services in the community
Issue Two: Access to Priority Services

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2015, the Department of Health and Community Services will have implemented initiatives aimed at improving access to priority health and community services.

Measure:

Implemented initiatives aimed at improving access to priority health and community services.

Indicators:

- Implemented various initiatives towards enhancing long term care and community support services
- Identified initiatives to reduce wait times in services for children with developmental disabilities
- Implemented initiatives to reduce wait times in endoscopy services, orthopedic surgery and emergency departments
- Completed Phase 2 of an anti-stigma awareness campaign for mental health and addictions
7.0 Strategic Issues

Issue Two: Access to Priority Services

Objective 2: By March 31, 2016, the Department of Health and Community Services will have continued to implement changes and enhancements towards improving access to priority health and community services.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have evaluated key priority areas of access and identified areas for performance improvements.
Issue Three: Quality of Care and Efficiency

Health care accounts for approximately 40% of the provincial budget and costs continue to rise with new equipment, new treatments, and new resources. Without a change in approach, health care will continue to consume a greater proportion of the provincial budget. While residents continue to receive top quality care, the Department must work to prepare the health and community services system to ensure it is sustainable for future generations.

The Department has already initiated changes to the provincial health and community services system to maximize efficiencies and cost savings while maintaining or improving quality to ensure there is sustainable funding for years to come. These innovative approaches are evident in many areas of the sector: the Newfoundland and Labrador Healthline was established providing 24/7 access to a registered nurse from anywhere in the province; the price of generic drugs was capped at 25% of the cost of brand name drugs, giving the province one of the lowest price regimes for generic drugs in the country; and Regional Health Authorities undertook operational improvement processes to identify how to deliver services in a more efficient manner.

Quality of care and efficiency are inter-connected. Efficiency can mean more streamlined processes for improved patient care and also for cost-savings. All these actions are important measures for the Department to remain accountable to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Over the next three years the Department of Health and Community Services is committed to exploring new and improved systems and processes to ensure efficiencies are achieved within the health system of Newfoundland and Labrador. This work is consistent with the Provincial Government's strategic direction of “Improved performance and efficiency in the health and community services system to provide quality services that are affordable and sustainable.” In particular, the Department will focus work in the areas of operational improvement processes, clinical efficiency and quality and safety.
7.0 Strategic Issues

Issue Three: Quality of Care and Efficiency

Goal 2014-17

By March 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have improved capacity to strengthen quality of care and achieved efficiencies in the provincial health and community services system.

Measure:

Improved capacity to strengthen quality of care and achieved efficiencies

Indicators:

• Implemented quality improvements
• Monitored implementation of operational improvement initiatives to ensure efficiencies realized
• Explored further opportunities for operational efficiencies within the health and community services system
• Monitored implementation of clinical efficiency reviews
• Implemented initiatives towards enhancing patient safety
• Enhanced the provincial ambulance program
Issue Three: Quality of Care and Efficiency

Objective 1:
By March 31, 2015, the Department of Health and Community Services will have initiated implementation of systems and processes towards improved quality of care and efficiency within the provincial health and community services system.

Measure:
Initiated implementation of systems and processes towards improved efficiency and quality of care within the health and community services system.

Indicators:
- Implemented select recommendations from the ambulance review implementation plan
- Developed the implementation plan for the Electronic Medical Record (EMR)
- Worked with RHAs to review and identify improvements in clinical service delivery to optimize patient care and resource efficiency
- Established consistent performance indicator reporting, in select areas, from RHAs towards improved data quality
- Identified initiatives to enhance patient safety
7.0 Strategic Issues

Issue Three: Quality of Care and Efficiency

Objective 2: By March 31, 2016, the Department of Health and Community Services will have continued monitoring and implementing systems towards improved quality and efficiency.
Issue Three:
Quality of Care and Efficiency

Objective 3:
By March, 31, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services will have evaluated changes within the health and community services system and identified areas for performance improvements.
8.0

Appendix A

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social, or economic outcomes and normally require action by or involvement of, more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by the Provincial Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents and other communiqués. They summarize the outcomes desired for the health sector and are communicated to entities that plan and report in collaboration with the Department. The directions and focus areas related to the health and community services sector for the planning period 2014-17 are as follows:
8.0 Appendix A

Strategic Direction 1

Title: Population Health

Outcome: Strengthened population health and healthy living

Population health refers not just to the health “status” of the population, but to the ability of people to adapt and respond to various aspects of life. Health is affected by many factors such as social, economic, physical and environmental conditions. A population health approach encompasses a range of services and supports that can help individuals, families and communities experience the best outcomes possible.

Initiatives that focus on social and emotional well-being, the prevention of illness and injury, as well as initiatives to support people in managing and maintaining their own health and lifestyle, form a solid foundation for addressing population health. The following focus areas target the key factors impacting population health in Newfoundland and Labrador.
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Strategic Direction 2

**Title:** Access

**Outcome:** Improved accessibility to programs and services meeting the current and future needs of individuals, families and communities, particularly those most vulnerable.

Making the appropriate services available at the appropriate place and time is the defining feature of accessible health and community services. Striking the right balance between fiscal abilities and planning for equitable access is the key challenge. Together with stakeholders, the Department engages in reviews and consultations to determine how and what services should be delivered to maximize access.

The following focus areas for the health and community services sector address priority needs in the province and also target primary and community services that can reduce the need for more intensive and costly acute care interventions for individuals.
## Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction 2014-2017

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Strategic Direction 3

**Title:** An Accountable, Sustainable, Quality Health and Community Services System

**Outcome:** Improved performance and efficiency in the health and community services system to provide quality services that are affordable and sustainable.

Currently, approximately 40% of the provincial budget is spent on health care. The budget has almost doubled since 2003/04 to its current level of $3 billion. The growth in health care spending can be attributed to a number of factors including the aging of our population, geographical layout of the province, new and more expensive treatments, increased incidence in chronic disease and increased health provider costs. These demands and growth characteristics require the Department, in partnership with the Regional Health Authorities, to work together to address cost containment and sustainability through innovation and the adoption of consistent evidence informed service delivery approaches.

Through a renewed focus on collaboration, innovation and best practices, health and community services will become more efficient. Improved efficiency means sustainable costs over the long term and the delivery of quality services in a more effective manner to better meet the needs of individuals, families and communities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction 2014-2017</th>
<th>Strategic Direction #3 is Addressed by</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strategic plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Efficiency Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Legislation, Policies, Programs and Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence Informed research in Health and Other Related Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Emergency Management</td>
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<td>Health Workforce Planning</td>
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<td>Operational Improvement Plans</td>
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<td>Quality and Safety</td>
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Appendix B

Entities Reporting to the Minister

Under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, the following government entities are provided with the Strategic Directions of the Provincial Government and also prepare plans and annual reports in keeping with the Act:

1. Eastern Regional Health Authority
2. Central Regional Health Authority
3. Western Regional Health Authority
4. Labrador – Grenfell Regional Health Authority
5. Provincial Cancer Care Advisory Committee
6. Health Research Ethics Authority
7. Medical Consultants’ Committee
8. Mental Health Care and Treatment Review Board
9. Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information
10. Provincial Wellness Advisory Council
11. Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors
12. Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council