Nova Scotia

Supporting alcohol policy development at the municipal level
The provincial role

Lisa Jacobs, Prevention Coordinator (Alcohol)
NS Dept. of Health and Wellness
Heavy drinking rates NS and Canada by gender

Source: CCHS 2010
Strategic direction: Community Capacity and Partnership Building

“Build and foster partnerships and community capacity that will enable and sustain a multi-sectoral, coordinated, culturally relevant approach to alcohol-related issues, and reflect a shared responsibility for solutions.”
What is the Nova Scotia MAP?

The **NS MAP (Municipal Alcohol Project)** is a set of activities undertaken by Nova Scotia municipalities that are designed to engage and support municipalities and their citizens in community approaches to reduce alcohol harm, with a focus on implementing evidence-based polices.
Background

- Community initiatives (Wolfville, Bridgewater, Antigonish, Halifax Regional Municipality)
- Together We Can: Mental health and addictions strategy (2012)
In our words: What alcohol use looks like in our towns

- Wolfville
- Antigonish
- Bridgewater
(2011)

- Presented at the 2011 UNSM Fall Conference with Dr. Robert Strang, NS’s Chief Medical Officer of Health
“Work with municipalities to help communities take a more active role in addressing the consequences of alcohol harms.”
Shine a light: What alcohol use in Truro looks like

- October 2012

Supported by Dr. Robin Taylor, Medical Officer of Health
Looking forward

Currently funded projects:

- 6 actively engaged municipalities/regions
- 4 in relationship development stage

(Pending future funding) support additional NS municipalities to explore how alcohol is impacting their communities and find ways to minimize harms through policy development and implementation.
Taking action at the local level: A Nova Scotia case study

Gwenyth Dwyn

Prevention and Health Promotion Team Lead
Annapolis Valley District Health Authority
Getting Started

- New to health promotion
- Alcohol an emerging population health priority
- Long term relationship with Acadia University
- History of tobacco work
- Wolfville Mayor’s Advisory for Community Living

Alcohol Action at the Local Level
Wolfville

- Population: 3,772
  7,000 with Acadia University in session
- Largest Employer: Acadia University
- Home to the Fundy Film Society and the Deep Roots Music Festival
- Median family income: $56,270
Landmarks

- 2007 – First contact with Town of Wolfville re: alcohol related concerns. Mayor’s Advisory for Community Living Issues
- 2008 – Minimum Drink Price Legislation
- 2010 – 2nd Provincial Alcohol Forum
- 2011 – Municipal Alcohol Project (Presentations to UNSM and Issues Of Substance)
- 2012 – University Best Practices Report
- 2012 – Municipal elections
- 2013 – Ongoing work

Alcohol Action at the Local Level
Accomplishments

- Partnership building (trust and respect)
- Effective communication and networking
- Community engagement
- Publication *In Our Words: What Alcohol Use Looks Like in Our Towns*
- Provincial impact
- Recommendations for action from both town and university

Alcohol Action at the Local Level
Respectful Partnerships Key

- Expecting and respecting difference and partner autonomy
- Acknowledging priorities and agendas
- Coming alongside your partners/community
- Having expertise but letting go of being an expert
- Health organizations are partners in this work – we do not have all of the answers
My role as a health partner

- Provide health evidence
- Look for opportunities to engage and/or support the work of partners
- Translate (or don’t use) health jargon
- Look for opportunities to influence evidence-based prevention / health promotion action
- Support big picture thinking – healthy and vibrant communities
Examples of municipal action

- Community dialogues
- Community alcohol strategy
- Municipal By-laws
  - outlet density, location, hours, keeping the peace
- Restrict alcohol industry sponsorship & advertising
- Non-alcoholic community celebrations
- Support provincial and federal policies
Next Steps

- New Mayor and Council
- Acadia Student Project
- Provincial networking for municipal alcohol work
- Engage other municipalities within the health district
- Community Health Board – helping communities understand how they can champion the work
Setting the stage

Respectful Partnerships

Community Action

Looking into the future

Action at the Local Level
Municipal alcohol policies:
Options Available to Nova Scotia Municipalities
Municipal Alcohol Project Policy Options Scan
Understanding Communities Unit, PHS, February 2013

Identifies a variety of options available to Nova Scotia municipalities to reduce alcohol harm:

- By-laws, zoning, etc. that will contribute to reducing harms vis-à-vis four pillars.
- Provides examples of where options are being used in NS and internationally.

It is the start
Advertising

Evidence: Exposure to alcohol advertising is associated with drinking more and increasing age of first drink among children and youth.

Policy options: Create policies that restrict or prohibit alcohol advertising on municipal owned land, facilities and/or events.

Examples: Los Angeles, Boston – cities that have banned alcohol advertising in significant venues such as public transportation.
Restricting Access

Evidence: Hours of operation, density & location of licensed establishments can impact alcohol related harms in the community.

Policy options:
- Development agreements that set hours of operation.
- By-laws that establish zones where no licensed establishments can locate.
- Restrict location through separation distance requirements.

Examples: Alberta: Land use by-law that states alcohol establishment must be at least 500m apart.

City of Spruce Grove, Alberta: Use zoning to determine where liquor stores can operate, separation distances between liquor stores and other uses (schools, parks), or regulate maximum size of stores in certain areas.
Enforcement of policies
Use of by-law officers, increased enforcement and collaboration between police and other community stakeholders.

Liability
Reducing community harms by addressing landlord tenant problems. Combined use of by-laws and enforcement to hold landlords accountable and increasing enforcement (in addition to standard noise disturbance by-laws, etc.)
Institutions, Ideas and Interests: The policy milieu in Nova Scotia since the launch of the Provincial Strategy
Public health works with others to understand the health of our communities, and acts together to improve health.

Nova Scotian citizens

Growing number of municipalities across Nova Scotia

Provincial NGOs such as Injury Free Nova Scotia

**Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness**
- Together We Can; Addictions & Mental Health Strategy
- Public Health
- Addictions Services

**District Health Authorities** supporting municipal leaders (elected officials and staff)
- Public Health
- Addictions Prevention and Treatment Services

**Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities**
Competing Ideas:

Privatization versus Government Monopoly
Democracy versus Autocracy
Personal versus Societal Responsibility

Competing Interests:

Department of Health and Wellness versus NSLC
CDHA versus Breweries
Public Health versus Restaurant and Bar Owners
Public Health/CDHA versus the Oval!

Public Health Interest # 1 = Health and wellbeing of citizens
THE CULTURE of ALCOHOL in HRM ... a conversation...

WHAT ARE YOU NOTICING ABOUT ALCOHOL IN YOUR WORLD?

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CHANGED?

A COMPLEX ISSUE 
NOT AN EASY SOLUTION

WE CAN CHANGE THE CULTURE

LOTS OF GOODWILL

DIVERSITY 
COLLABORATION

BUYER FEE 
CHANGE

NS SPENDS $44 MILLION/YEAR ON ALCOHOL-RELATED ISSUES

WE CAN ENVISION A DOWNTOWN THAT IS SAFE FOR ALL -- LIKE EUROPE

EVERYONE MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

WE ARE CHANGING THE CULTURE IN HRM

CAPITAL HEALTH

THREE LAYERS:
1. OUTCOMES IMPACTS PEOPLE'S HEALTH
2. RISK FACTORS
3. CONDITIONS IN COMMUNITIES

ANNUALLY < 3000
- HOSPITALIZATIONS DIRECTLY RELATED TO ALCOHOL
- OVER 200 DEATHS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO ALCOHOL PER YEAR

WHAT IS IT ABOUT OUR COMMUNITIES THAT IS Creating THESE RISK FACTORS?

ALL CITIZENS CAN CONTRIBUTE

KIDS TARGET OF ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

CREATE CULTURAL SHIFTS AT SCHOOL, HOME, COMMUNITY

M.A.D.D. -- THINGS HAVE TO CHANGE

ALCOHOL DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THE GOAL

GOOD TO BE CHALLENGED

NO ONE PERSON HAS THE ANSWERS

LOOK AT WHAT WE CHANGED THE CULTURE AROUND SNOOKER IN PUBLIC! IT'S WORKING

SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2012
What’s next for us?

Written Report – Launch February 2013!

Population Health Status Report  - Alcohol, Obesity, Mental Health
Public health works with others to understand the health of our communities, and acts together to improve health.

Thank You

Questions? Feedback?
Public health works with others to understand the health of our communities, and acts together to improve health.

Thank You

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