



PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

# 2012-13 Year at a Glance

[www.cdha.nshealth.ca/public-health](http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/public-health)

## CORE FUNCTIONS

- Population health assessment
- Surveillance
- Health protection
- Health promotion
- Disease and injury prevention

## Overview

In Nova Scotia, Public Health works with others to understand the health of communities and takes action – together with partners and community members – to protect and improve the health of the population.

The results of public health action are all around us: from safe drinking water and smoke-free places to laws that prohibit unsafe activities (like downhill skiing without a helmet) and schools that promote health through policy, education and access to support. We strive to protect and promote health, and equally importantly, to identify and address the many factors that affect health.

We carry out our work across the Capital Health district with a budget of \$10.5 million and approximately 120 staff members. We are proud to invest in the development of both students and staff and to contribute our knowledge to the broader scientific and health communities locally, nationally and internationally.

## What We Do

We aim, first and foremost, to generate knowledge through surveillance efforts, evaluation and research. We use this knowledge to inform all of our work, including:

### Protecting the health of communities

- Monitoring, investigating and preventing further spread of disease outbreaks and potential threats in the air, water, food and environment around us.
- Preventing disease through vaccination clinics for school-aged youth, and educating and supporting community partners.
- Providing vaccines to physicians and other vaccine providers.
- Providing travel health counseling and vaccination through the International Travel Clinic.

### Supporting moms and babies

- Identifying and assessing the needs of new parents and families and matching public health and community resources to appropriately meet those needs.
- Providing education and support to pregnant women, new moms and their families to prepare for birth and promoting healthy child development.
- Working with Family Resource Centres and other partners to provide longer-term support to families facing additional challenges.

### Promoting the health of children and youth

- Supporting the health and well-being of children and youth through partnerships, policy development and resources.
- Engaging youth and community partners through high school-based Youth Health Centres to promote positive outcomes including school completion, safer sexual behaviours and healthy relationships, and to reduce risks associated with substance use and other risk-taking behaviours.



## HOW TO CONTACT US

### Main office Dartmouth

7 Mellor Avenue, Unit #5  
Tel: (902) 481-5800  
Fax: (902) 481-5803  
Email: [PublicHealthServices@cdha.nshealth.ca](mailto:PublicHealthServices@cdha.nshealth.ca)

### Windsor

80 Water Street  
Windsor Mall  
Tel: (902) 798-2264  
Fax: (902) 798-5922

### Middle Musquodoboit

492 Archibald Brook Road  
Musquodoboit Valley  
Memorial Hospital  
Tel: (902) 384-2370  
Fax: (902) 384-2029

### Musquodoboit Harbour

7907 Highway 7  
Tel: (902) 889-2143  
Fax: (902) 889-3013

### Co-Leads for Public Health

Linda Young, Director  
Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed,  
Medical Officer of Health

### Online:

[www.cdha.nshealth.ca/  
public-health](http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/public-health)

## What We Do

### Partner for community-wide supportive environments

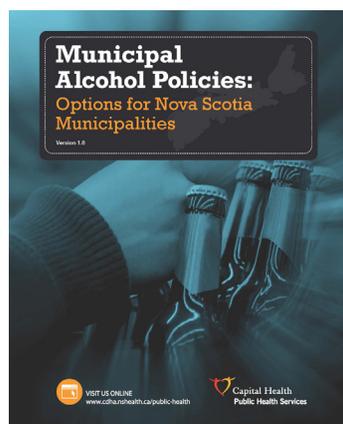
- Working with academic and community partners to conduct research, promote healthy public policy and reduce health risks.
- Participating in local initiatives to “level the playing field” so that health disparities are reduced, including work on food security, housing and other economic and social policies.
- Keeping communities informed of key public health issues.

## Learning and Responding

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND OUTBREAKS:** When a norovirus outbreak took over a popular Halifax restaurant, Public Health learned about the positive – and negative – sides of social media in connecting people, information and action. Information – and misinformation – about the outbreak spread rapidly, creating a flurry of media and public attention not previously seen with norovirus. People who had eaten at the restaurant, or who knew of someone who had, were tweeting about it even before the Public Health investigation got underway. The restaurant responded through use of social media, but the voice of Public Health and the Department of Agriculture – the two key local departments involved in the outbreak’s response – weren’t as visible. Lessons learned will inform future outbreak responses and influence how we use social media in the future.

**SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS:** Breastfeeding is promoted around the world as the best food for babies, but most western countries report small numbers of women starting – and continuing – to breastfeed. Through our partnership in the Breastfeeding Community of Practice, Public Health worked with students from the Applied Media and Communication Arts Program at Nova Scotia Community College to create a video aimed at shifting the culture of breastfeeding in public. Their creative result went viral, and caught the attention of local media: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMKI915qgNQ>

**CHANGING THE CULTURE OF ALCOHOL:** In Nova Scotia, 3,100 hospital admissions, or 42,000 hospital days and 230 deaths are attributable to alcohol each year. In our community – and in communities across the province – employers, universities, businesspeople, student councils, health workers and others concerned about negative impacts of alcohol are creating pockets of change. Through their efforts, and the support of Public Health and Addictions staff, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities passed a motion in November 2012 to support the development of municipal alcohol initiatives across the province. A municipal alcohol policy report we released in February 2013 assisted Halifax Regional Municipality to pass a motion to create a municipal alcohol policy for the city within one year.



To learn more about alcohol in Nova Scotia, and to read our municipal alcohol policy report, visit our website: <http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/public-health/municipal-alcohol-policies>