

FOCUS on Continuing Care

Care where you live

Thank You!



Continuing Care Month is a time to share our appreciation for the thousands of caring Nova Scotians who dedicate themselves to helping people in their community. We would like to thank you for the positive difference you make in the lives of Nova Scotians and their families.

The past few years have been particularly difficult, and we would like to thank you for coming together as a team to make this challenging time a bit more manageable for Nova Scotians. We understand the immense pressure and stress you have been under. Yet, day after day you have risen to the challenge and showed up ready to help.

You are the familiar friendly face many people see when they are at their worst. Because of what you do every day, we can protect some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and ensure individuals receive the highest quality care where they live.

Words cannot convey the impact your efforts have made on the many individuals and families we serve. Your work and expertise, your listening ear, your support, compassion and kind attention are invaluable.

We also want to thank you for coming together in new and different ways to support the individuals and families who rely on us all while balancing COVID risks, quality of care and quality of life. We value these relationships and partnerships. It is a time of change in health care and in continuing care. There are a lot of challenges and pressures but there are also many opportunities.

We want to thank you for everything you do everyday to help Nova Scotians live their best lives with compassion and dignity.



October is Continuing Care Month



Photo: Port Hawkesbury Continuing Care Team

Every day in Nova Scotia, the people who work and volunteer in continuing care are making a remarkable difference in the lives of people of all ages who need care and support in their homes and communities.

October is Continuing Care Month, a time to recognize the continuing care sector and the thousands of dedicated and compassionate people who have chosen this caring field of employment. We celebrate the positive difference they make in the lives of Nova Scotians they support every day.

Share your continuing care stories and show you care by using the hashtag [#sharethecare](#).

Continuing Care Month

[#sharethecare](#)

"This communication is overdue – it's purpose being to let you know how greatly impressed I was with the level and quality of services provided to my sister by Continuing Care Nova Scotia under the very capable direction of your Care Coordinator.

My sister and I considered ourselves fortunate indeed to have this Care Coordinator "at the helm". From the outset, we felt at ease about the whole process. She was always so pleasant and has a very caring and calming manner. In addition to her wonderful personal skills, she is knowledgeable, well-organized and worked so efficiently and effectively in all she did for my sister. We were kept informed

Continuing Care Month

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We would like to share a portion of a message received from a family member to an OT/PT on our team:

"I have been thinking about this a lot this morning and the people who were so kind and caring to both of us. The first people who popped to mind were you two. We couldn't have kept "D" here if it weren't for your consistent help in doing whatever you could to make this journey as easy as possible for us. You encouraged us to contact you whenever we needed your help, and you quickly responded every time. You taught me procedures to help me care for him and put us in contact with other sources we needed that we were not aware of. You helped

every step of the way and always knew what would be happening next and when. Since my sister was unable to leave the house, unless she enlisted the Non-Emergency Ambulance Service, to know that exercising, vaccines, bloodwork etc, would be taken care of at home was a huge plus. In these situations, it's comforting to know someone as dedicated as this care coordinator can come into your lives and explain what help is available and take so much of the worry away.

We cannot say enough in praise of Continuing Care Nova Scotia in general and of this care coordinator in particular. She is a wonderful ambassador for NSH CC, and we will be forever grateful for all she did for my sister from which I benefited as well. We extend our most sincere thanks."

Family member

make living with his disease bearable."

This inspiring message came from one of our care coordinators:

"So often we only hear complaints! Long wait times, missed visits etc., so when we hear positives we must pass them along. Our clients always rave about the Community Rehab Team, which us care coordination do as well. They are definitely experts in rehab in the home!"

Welcome - New Directors!

Toni Thompson

We are very pleased to announce the appointment of Toni Thompson to the position of NZ Director of Continuing Care and Provincial Placement. Toni has undergraduate degrees in English and Occupational Therapy. She is a licensed OT in NS. Toni began her career as a health advisor/occupational therapist with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq. She then went on to hold OT positions in both Eastern Zone (Antigonish) and Northern Zone (Truro, New Glasgow) working in Acute Care and Mental Health prior to joining Continuing Care.

Toni was the first Transition Facilitator/Inter-Professional & Transition unit Team Lead in the Colchester East Hants Health Centre and then became the NZ Home First Care Coordinator in Continuing Care working in both the hospital and in the community. Most recently, Toni was the first interim Access and Flow manager for Continuing Care in Northern Zone. Toni's office is located in the Continuing Care office on Prince Street in Truro.

"Continuing Care is the best place to work in health care – I am excited to be working along side an incredibly open and innovative leadership team and such dedicated and hardworking staff. I look forward to growing both personally and professionally and feel very fortunate to be provided this opportunity. Hiy Hiy (to give thanks in Cree)



Toni Thompson, NZ Director of Continuing Care
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Erin McNeil

We are happy to announce Erin McNeil has accepted the permanent position of Director of Continuing Care for Eastern Zone and our Provincial Home Care Nursing program. Erin's office is located at Health Park in Sydney.

Erin is a registered nurse with a Bachelor of Nursing from St. Francis Xavier University. She began her nursing career in 2006 at Seaview Manor in Glace Bay and the held nursing positions in the former Cape Breton District Health Authority in Acute Care and then Mental Health and Addictions. In 2014 she joined Continuing Care in a care coordinator role and in 2018 took on the new role of care coordinator team lead for Cape Breton. In 2020 she became one of four interim access and flow managers within our program and was instrumental in developing this new role.

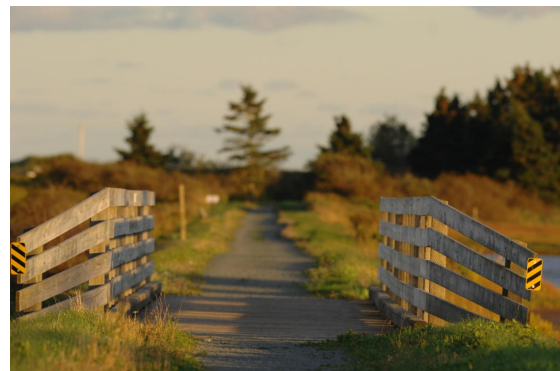
"I am excited to embark on my new journey as Director, Continuing Care EZ. This is a rewarding opportunity, for both the challenges and successes I will face along the way. I am extremely fortunate for the amazing team, zonally and provincially, I look forward to working with each and every one of you."



Erin McNeil, EZ Director of Continuing Care
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PathWays Project Underway

The PathWays system went live on Feb 28, 2022, providing Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care Placement a direct communication link with Long-Term Care (LTC) facilities. This huge undertaking involved NS Health (NSH), Seniors and Long-Term Care (SLTC), and the LTC providers. Thanks to everyone who assisted in the development and planning of PathWays, as well as all the users who have made its implementation such a success. Since go-live the system facilitated 1698 admissions. NSH continues to work with Strata Health on improvements. Stay tuned for new functionalities in the coming months.



Quality Improvement Collaborative



Nova Scotia Health is pleased to announce the initiation of three continuing care projects throughout the province as part of the Quality Improvement (QI) collaborative which supports our team members across the province in making substantial improvements to the quality of care and experience for the people accessing our programs and services.

Our goal is to become a high performing health system, where everyone from the front line to senior leaders have the knowledge, skill and confidence to identify problems, test changes and identify improvements which are embedded into practice, sustained, spread and scaled.

In the Eastern Zone, the Continuing Care Coordination and the Community Rehabilitation Teams have undertaken a Quality Collaborative Project entitled *Creating Consistency and Efficiencies for Information Transfer Between Continuing Care and Community Rehabilitation*.

This project will allow for improved communication and sharing of information between our two services related to shared clients, to improve awareness of any safety issues identified, assist in capturing informal communication between providers and foster a continued collaborative approach to care.

The Western Zone Continuing Care Coordination and Primary Health Care teams are working collaboratively with identified practices and/or primary care clinics to increase the number of referrals made to continuing care by 10% within 6 months. Access and flow issues exist across the Western Zone that impact utilization of acute care beds and timely and appropriate access to Continuing Care (CC) services. 47% of people awaiting Long Term Care (LTC) were not a current client of Continuing Care (CC) prior to admission to hospital, yet had a disposition of placement to a LTC facility. Our goal is to improve our outreach to individuals living at home so we can provide supports and services prior to hospitalization.

In Central Zone, the volume, variety, and complexity of care needs of community-dwelling clients is increasing; to help address this, the number of services and programs across Continuing Care (CC) have grown. This has resulted in unprecedented demand on NSH continuing care staff. This project is part of a multi-pronged effort to optimize processes and efficiencies in case management (CM) practices among care coordinators in Central Zone. We hope to reduce the administrative burden of care coordinators.

Continuing Care:
In our homes and in our communities

Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy

At the heart of Continuing Care are the many programs and the staff who go into the community to bring services to those in need. Their work is appreciated by the many people they help to live each day with independence and dignity.

Nova Scotia Health's Central Zone is unique in that its Community Occupational Therapy (OT) & Physiotherapy (PT) team is part of the Continuing Care team which helps foster a community based collaborative client centered approach.

"We work really closely with each other and each discipline, often I will go with an OT to see clients, they will come with me, but we also see people individually," said Maureen McVicar.

McVicar is a physiotherapist on the Central Zone Community Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy team and has seen first-hand the positive impact she has had on the lives of people in our community.

"We are a group of about 20 people who work with individuals in the community who require home visits to help optimize function, which in turn affects their safety and independence at home," said McVicar. "Our rehab team provides follow-up on individuals with complex discharges and helps to prevent readmissions, premature admissions to long term care, and caregiver burnout."

In the past year they saw 6925 clients and completed approximately 9203 visits. The volume and complexity of referrals continues to grow. When referrals are received, they are prioritized, 65 per cent of the referrals last year were considered priority and were seen within one to two weeks.

"The majority of our clients are priority which means we get in fairly quickly, even within a week we are in contact with the client and usually in the home within that same week," said McVicar.

General referrals are placed on a waitlist and individuals receive a waitlist letter to update them that the referral has been received and provide them with an estimated wait time.

"Our referrals in the Central Zone generally come from our OT/PT colleagues in the hospital, general practitioners, clinics and often from other care coordinators," said McVicar.

The OT/PT staff visit people in their homes with varying diagnosis from palliative and acute issues to post-operative support.

"We see people who are post-operative, and some have a lot of neurological issues like MS, Parkinson's and ALS," said McVicar.

Their job involves assessments of people in regard to their function in their home.

"We do physical assessments looking at the person's home, what supports they have, and link them to supports in the community," noted McVicar.

The work occupational therapists and physiotherapists do each day helps people in our communities live fuller lives. For those who can't leave their homes these services provide them with the much-needed care they otherwise couldn't access. Not only do therapists help them with exercises and techniques, but they also suggest other supports to assist them in meeting their needs.



Photo by Crystal Jamieson

Call for Participation: Your Help is Needed!

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Do you live in Nova Scotia? Do you work in home care or in a nursing home? We want to hear from you.



You are invited to complete a voluntary, confidential survey. What you tell us in the survey will help us understand factors influencing violence and safety for those who receive and provide long-term care.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONTACT SAFEPLACES@BRANDONU.CA OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.SAFEPLACESPROJECT.COM. TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY, VISIT TINYURL.COM/SAFEPLACESSTUDY



This project has been approved by the Brandon University Research ethics committee

ROME File No. 1027431 | v. 1

COVID-19 has placed a spotlight on challenges across long-term care. It is important that we identify what is working well and implement strategies for everyone's wellbeing."

The research team has completed the first stage of the project, which involved analyzing policies related to violence prevention in long term care in both Manitoba and Nova Scotia. They found that the current policy response to violence in long-term care in both provinces is fragmented, and that provincial policies addressing violence toward health care are not long-term care specific. They also found a relative lack in provincial policy and legislation addressing violence in home care.

The team is now inviting older adults, family caregivers, and care workers to complete a short, online survey on their experiences either providing or receiving long term care for older adults.

Researchers at Brandon University, Dalhousie University, St. Francis Xavier, Carleton University, and University of Manitoba have begun collecting data for the *Safe Places for Aging and Care* project.

By integrating data on first-hand experiences into the project, the team hopes to strengthen knowledge of existing violence prevention strategies, which sometimes fall short of protecting the safety and long-term well-being of older adults,

The researchers are examining how features of care environments in both home care and nursing homes influence violence. Their aim is to improve violence prevention strategies across long-term care, promoting safety for everyone.

Project lead Dr. Herron (Department of Geography and Environment, Brandon University) said “we need to understand how policies, practices, and people can make care better for older adults.

staff and family.

This research project is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Anyone interested in the project can visit: tinyurl.com/safeplacesstudy

Please submit story ideas, photos and feedback to:
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Visit our [Continuing Care](#) page, for more information.

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