

Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres (NSHSC)



Vision

Every person deserves a voice. Every voice deserves to be heard.

Mission

To provide the best Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology services to Nova Scotians.

Core Activities

- High quality identification, diagnostic, prevention-promotion, and treatment services.
- Education of clients, students, care providers, stakeholders, and communities.
- Provincial standard setting, evaluation, and improvement in concert with our partners.

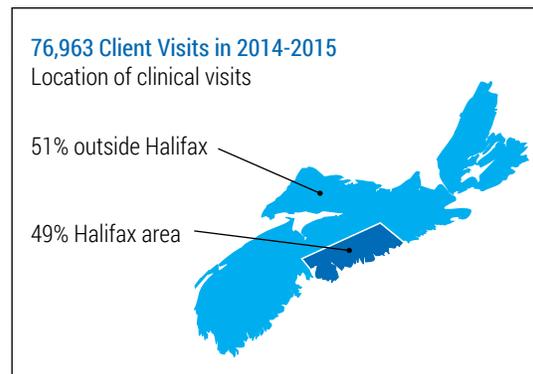
CEO

Anne Mason-Browne

www.nshsc.nshealth.ca

Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres (NSHSC) is responsible for providing audiology services to Nova Scotians of all ages, and speech-language pathology (SLP) services to preschool children, home schooled children, and adults. NSHSC delivers integrated and standardized provincial services across 33 clinic sites, located in 24 communities. Nationally certified Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists with support from Communication Disorder Technicians, provide direct care (prevention, diagnosis, and treatment), develop and monitor provincial standards of clinical practice, and collaborate with community partners to deliver special programs (e.g. Autism, Stroke, Cochlear Implant).

In 2014-2015 NSHSC staff of 150 responded to 26,000 referrals for speech-language pathology or audiology (hearing) services, and provided for approximately 77,000 clinical visits, 59% of which were for children aged 16 years or younger, and 41% provided to adults. NSHSC also collaborated with multiple community and government partners to advance objectives in **three strategic areas**.



Supporting clients' families, caregivers, and communities. NSHSC provided additional high quality community based training workshops and client centered collaborative consultation services with two special initiatives this year. The first, a collaboration with NSHSC audiology and speech-language pathology staff and health care staff at Shannex Parkland at the Gardens (Halifax), was a demonstration project providing training for seniors and their caregivers in three key areas: effective communication with seniors suffering from dementia, supporting seniors with swallowing disorders, and supporting seniors who wear

hearing aids. The second initiative was a series of projects with Early Years Centres and First Nations Communities (in Sydney Mines, Rockingstone Heights, Indian Brook, Yarmouth, and Eskasoni). These projects involved Early Childhood Educators, Early Interventionists, and health care providers to promote early identification of hearing loss and foster healthy speech-language development in young children.

Access to quality, evidence based collaborative care.

Nova Scotia is now the only province monitoring the effectiveness of preschool speech language pathology (SLP) treatment province wide through standardized implementation of an evidence based, client/family centered clinical outcome measure. The measure, Focus on the Outcomes of Communication Under Six or FOCUS[®], is an evaluation of changes in preschool children's daily communication skills following SLP treatment. Working in partnership with the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), NSHSC is developing feasible and sustainable strategies to increase families' access to preschool speech-language and hearing services.

Adult out-patient speech-language services was improved by innovations in a client directed service delivery model at 6 NSHSC sites across NS; and increased efficiencies in identification and follow up of hospitalized stroke patients with swallowing disorders was achieved through collaboration with regional stroke teams.

Innovations in resource efficiencies. Enhancing and maintaining provincial quality clinical care was supported through a number of initiatives this year. Standard referral intake protocols were modified in consultation with community stakeholders to increase efficiencies in access of NSHSC speech, language and hearing services. NSHSC Audiology staff conducted demonstrations in the expanded use of distance technology for clinicians located at different clinical sites to collaborate in 'real time' during advanced audiology assessments. Finally, NSHSC Speech-Language Pathologists established provincial protocols for using distance technology to provide clinical and caseload management strategies across communities.

Cross Provincial Program Initiatives, Highlights 2014-2015

Provincial Blood Coordinating and Rh (RCPNS) Programs

The Blood Coordinating Program facilitated development of a provincial approach to Rh testing, reporting and interpretation of results, in collaboration with transfusion services at the NSHA, IWK, and the Rh Program. Pregnant women, who are Rh negative, need to receive Rho (D) immune globulin to prevent hemolytic disease in the newborn. The Rh status for some women is only determined with additional testing. This testing is now standardized across the NS, avoiding retesting and the potential for some women to receive unnecessary prophylaxis.

Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program (NSBSP), Cancer Care Nova Scotia (CCNS), Cardiovascular Health Nova Scotia (CVHNS), Diabetes Care Program Nova Scotia (DCPNS), Reproductive Care Program Nova Scotia (RCPNS) and Nova Scotia Renal Program (NSRP) – Nova Scotia First Nations Client Registry Project

Six provincial programs from DHW's Acute & Tertiary Branch, Public Health and Mental Health, Addictions & Children's Services, BIAP and the Trauma Program are collaborating with NS's First Nations to create health indicator reports for the Mi'kmaq population and 11 participating communities. Health indicator reports will allow First Nations to compare data, track changes, see progress and identify areas for improvement. This year's focus was to identify and refine indicators for each health issue or population. The 'Strength in Numbers' project builds on the earlier success of the 'Telling our Stories' project, a partnership established in 2012 with the five Cape Breton First Nations.

CVHNS and NSRP – Cardiac Catheterization in Patients with Renal Impairment

An audit showed that impaired renal status was one of the key reasons that patients were not referred for cardiac catheterization. CVHNS and the Nova Scotia Renal Program (NSRP) developed a protocol for preparation and follow up of this population. The final protocol was disseminated in the spring of 2015 is available on both the CVHNS and NSRP websites.

DCPNS, CVHNS, and NSRP

The "Come on Nova Scotia ... Check it!" Blood Pressure Challenge has just completed its fourth successful year with over 100 awareness events and 4,200 blood pressures screened across NS in May 2014. Since 2012, over 13,500 blood pressures have been measured. This number grows every year thanks to health sector participants, community partners, businesses and education facilities across NS.

In Fall 2014, the three programs collaborated with DHW's Primary Health Care (PHC) Branch, Dalhousie University's Department of Continuing Medical Education and the Registered Nurses Professional Development Centre, Nova Scotia Health Authority to design and deliver professional development for PHC Collaborative Team Day events. Ninety participants, representing many disciplines participated in the three-hour, CME accredited program. It included an update on hypertension targets, a review of pharmacological treatment and nutrition management/counseling across multiple morbidities and introduced basic quality improvement techniques to use at the practice level.

DCPNS and RCPNS

Diabetes and RCP partnered to standardize the approach to screening for gestational diabetes and to plan and deliver Diabetes in Pregnancy sessions and symposia. Standardized materials about diabetes screening during and after pregnancy were prepared for patients and health care providers. This included preparing for the oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT).

All Provincial Programs – Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR)

All provincial programs are participating in SPOR. Led by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the focus is on integrating health research into care. There are SUPPORT (Support for People and Patient-Oriented Research and Trials) Units across Canada, including the Maritime SPOR SUPPORT Unit. Participants include patients and caregivers, researchers, health practitioners, policy makers, health authorities, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and the pharmaceutical sector. CCNS, DCPNS, Legacy of Life, and RCPNS are represented on one of the advisory committees for the Maritime SPOR SUPPORT Unit. An epidemiologist, who works across several provincial programs, co-chairs the Data Access Privacy Advisory Committee.