

NEW BRUNSWICK FAMILY PLAN

IMPROVING ACCESS
TO PRIMARY AND ACUTE CARE

APRIL 2017



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Province of New Brunswick
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Education. Jobs. Families. Listening and getting things done.

Like the strong ties that bind families in our province together, this government has linked three major plans that – together – will improve the lives of all New Brunswickers for decades to come. Each plan is important in and of itself, but each plan also needs the others to succeed.

The **New Brunswick Family Plan** builds on the goals and achievements of our **Economic Growth Plan** and our **10-year Education Plans**. It also works in tandem with those plans to ensure that government is tackling important issues holistically and not operating in silos.

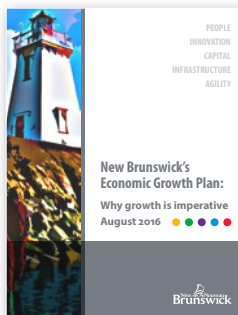
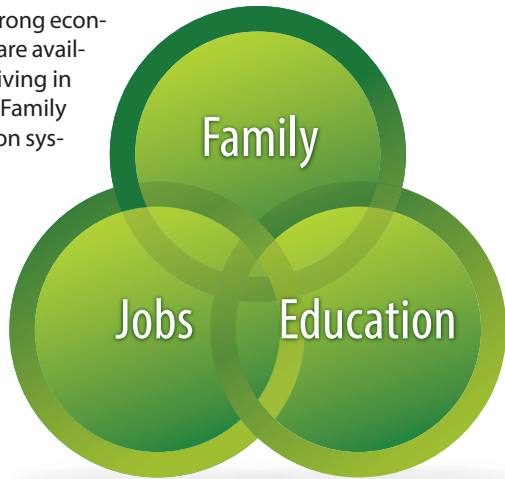
Our Economic Growth Plan must be supported by our education plans to be successful and to ensure that our workforce is well trained and innovative. Our economy also needs the social supports contained within the Family Plan to thrive fully.

Likewise, our education system needs a strong economy so that our graduates can find meaningful work here in New Brunswick. Our education system also needs the Family Plan so that the social determinants that impact a student’s ability to learn can be addressed early on.

Finally, our Family Plan needs a strong economy so that equal opportunities are available for women and for people living in poverty or with a disability. The Family Plan also needs a strong education system to act as a social equalizer.

An integrated approach such as this one is important, especially when a number of government initiatives cut across all three of these plans.

For example, literacy is crucial to our Economic Growth Plan that aims to maintain an educated workforce. Literacy is



also an important aspect of our education plans where students are expected to make a seamless transition between learning to read and reading to learn. And finally, literacy is a key component of the Family Plan, especially as it relates to our ability to lift people out of poverty.

Other initiatives tie these plans together as well. For example, improved access to quality and affordable daycare services is as relevant to the New Brunswick workforce as it is to the education system where more students will arrive better prepared for their first year of learning. Of course, the expansion of daycare services supports various initiatives in the Family Plan, such as reducing poverty in our province.

Your government has laid the foundation for these plans to work together to achieve our collective goals. We achieve the best results when we work together and create interconnected plans focused on what matters most to New Brunswickers and their families.

These three plans work in tandem to create a unified vision that will guide your government in delivering results based on the priorities that you have shared with us.

Our collective efforts will make New Brunswick the best place to live, work and raise a family.

New Brunswick Family Plan

It is clear that individuals' socio-economic circumstances have significant bearing on their health – and vice versa. The *New Brunswick Family Plan* is based on the premise that an integrated system of health and social care will help vulnerable populations lead independent, healthy and productive lives.

Integrating care can be particularly beneficial for the vulnerable segments of society that have difficulty accessing care due to social isolation or other barriers. This can include disadvantaged groups, persons with chronic conditions and persons with mental health problems.

The Family Plan also recognizes that health is much more than health care and that all partners must work together to address the social, economic and environmental determinants of health. Taking action on these factors builds communities and benefits society – good health matters to every person, family and community and is essential for economic and social development.

Just as the Family Plan is part of an integrated approach to improve the lives of New Brunswickers, each of its pillars works in tandem with the others to provide a unified vision for program development and service delivery. For example, compassionate care and home and community-based care are also important components of healthy aging and support for seniors, and wellness plays an integral role in disease management and prevention.

Similarly, food security and healthy food availability, as well as affordable housing and transportation, have a deep impact on well-being; working toward equal pay for work of equal value and promoting inclusivity in the labour market are essential for reducing barriers that prevent individuals from participating fully in their communities; and advancing gender equality is critical to all aspects of a healthy society, from reducing poverty to promoting the health and well-being of all individuals.

Each pillar is a starting point for the development and implementation of effective policies, programs and strategies. Their success will be ensured by undertaking a comprehensive approach within and across all sectors and by providing opportunities for all stakeholders to take coordinated action at various levels of influence, and in a variety of ways.

The seven pillars of the New Brunswick Family Plan:

- 1 Improving access to primary and acute care
- 2 Promoting wellness
- 3 Supporting those with addictions and mental health challenges
- 4 Fostering healthy aging and support for seniors
- 5 Advancing women's equality
- 6 Reducing poverty
- 7 Providing support for persons living with a disability

Introduction

As the Family Plan builds on the objectives and achievements of the Economic Growth Plan and the 10-year Education Plans, so too does it build on existing initiatives and strategies of government, such as the Provincial Health Plan, Primary Health Care Framework, Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Framework, Home First Strategy and the Aging Strategy for New Brunswick.

Improving Access to Primary and Acute Care is the culmination of efforts undertaken in these areas. It is based on current initiatives, ongoing commitments and stakeholder feedback, and delineates the goals and actions that will help to improve the health and well-being of New Brunswickers through sustainable and improved primary, acute and long-term care systems.

The goals and actions of this plan will help to ensure that we meet the needs of New Brunswickers by providing a more coordinated approach to health care that will help ensure a seamless continuum of programs and services from beginning to end of life. The focus will be on improving acute care services while ensuring greater access to primary health care services and more appropriate supports in the home or long-term care settings.

Improving Access to Primary and Acute Care is also supported by initiatives underway as part of the Priority Delivery Unit on Families. The priority delivery units oversee cross-departmental initiatives to significantly reduce silo thinking and improve access to quality services and programs. Three initiatives in particular have an overall impact on primary and acute care.

- Implementing a new approach to family medicine with the New Brunswick Medical Society where family physicians work in teams to help increase access to primary care. This new model is being driven by and will be managed by physicians. It will also focus on effective chronic disease management and preventive health care.
- Developing a model of integrated and coordinated health care services for more consistent and appropriate care. The intention is to eliminate silos among these services

and create additional capacity to care for persons in the community, by avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions and shortening hospital stays.

- Continuing work on the collaborative action to support individuals to receive the right level of care in the most appropriate setting, ideally in their home first. This aligns with the *Home First Strategy* and *An Aging Strategy for New Brunswick*, which aim to achieve better integration of services and reduce the impact on primary health care by exploring solutions that will reduce the length of hospital stays for patients who need an alternate level of care.

Additionally, work is ongoing with the federal government on innovative partnerships that will allow New Brunswick to respond to the growing needs of its aging population while building solutions that could be used by jurisdictions across the country and the world.

These initiatives set the stage for a robust action plan on achieving the areas of focus outlined in the following pages.

Areas of focus

To have a sustainable health care system for New Brunswick with better health outcomes, there must be a shift from a systems approach to an approach focused on patients living healthy lives in their communities. This will be achieved by focusing our efforts and undertaking concerted actions to achieve the areas of focus outlined below.

Shifting the focus from hospital-based care to preventative interventions, primary health care and access to care in the community. A system focused on preventative and primary health care in the home and the community will lead to healthier New Brunswickers, as each person's health is better managed through regular access to a primary health care provider who knows the patient's history rather than depending on episodic care in the emergency department or walk-in clinic. Prevention must include a focused approach on the determinants of health to optimize the health and well-being of all New Brunswickers.



And home/community care support must be strengthened to respond to increasing need in rural and urban areas. Initiatives such as community health needs assessments help provide a better understanding of health needs and are a step forward in ensuring better and more responsive access to care in the community.

Goals/actions

- Increasing the focus of the health care system on home and community-based care to help avoid unnecessary hospital admissions or premature placement in long-term care facilities.
- Decreasing wait times for surgical procedures through improved access to specialists and surgical programs.
- Developing and implementing a palliative care strategy to help all New Brunswickers, including seniors.

Better access to patient-focused care through interdisciplinary teams as part of an integrated treatment framework. Coordinated support and treatment from teams of health care professionals can lead to better outcomes for individuals combatting chronic disease and reduce unnecessary strain on the acute care system. Successful outcomes for all New Brunswickers, including Aboriginal people, are dependent on a number of variables such as access to relevant and timely services, as well as equitable care relevant to the patient's needs. Consideration will be given to other segments of the population who could benefit from an access model similar to Integrated Service Delivery to help navigate the health care system.

Goals/actions

- Leveraging the Integrated Service Delivery model to collaborate on improving patient outcomes.
- Reporting on progress in closing gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities on a number of health indicators such as chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence and the availability of appropriate health services.

Prevention and management of chronic diseases and providing better access to prescription drugs. Targeted and evidence-informed initiatives, such as those implemented for diabetes, can help prevent and manage chronic disease. Additionally, New Brunswickers need access to the medication essential to maintain good health and quality of life. Government and health care providers recognize the need to change the conversation and increase focus in primary and preventative care initiatives, in particular to prevent and manage chronic disease. Communication and education initiatives are an important component of this exercise.

Goals/actions

- Providing better access to the necessary medications New Brunswickers need to keep them healthy.
- Working with health and wellness professionals on initiatives aimed at preventing and managing chronic disease (such as diabetes, COPD, heart disease and dementia) to help individuals maintain their independence and stay healthy as long as possible.

Leveraging expertise and resources to increase capacity in the health care system. Each aspect of the health care system must be examined as part of a whole picture to understand the effect any given service has on the rest of the system. Additionally, there are health care professionals with extensive knowledge and expertise. Leveraging both this knowledge and existing resources will help ensure the sustainability of health care in New Brunswick. Maximizing the use and impact of health care professionals will create new opportunities to realize fully patient- and family-centric care.

Goals/actions

- Maximizing the use of primary health care professionals, such as nurse practitioners, advanced-care paramedics, midwives, pharmacists and others to help patients and their families better manage their health conditions in the community, thereby reducing pressure on resource-intensive acute care services.

Facilitating access to programs and services in the health care system. A healthy population is one that is supported by an effective and efficient system. This can be achieved by facilitating processes that help patients and families navigate the range of programs and services available, as well as obtain the right care or service, at the right place and the right time. Consideration will be given to adopting community-based technology to support interdisciplinary care and remove barriers to collaboration. The principles of patient-directed care will also be considered when developing and implementing new care models.

Goals/actions

- Establishing a cancer patient navigation system to help patients and families navigate the health care system as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- Implementing a strategy that will lead to a community-based electronic record to help coordinate care effectively.
- Exploring options to further reduce financial barriers to care for vulnerable New Brunswickers.

Conclusion

As we prepare to meet the needs of an aging population, creating a shift from the acute-care setting to improved primary health care services and more appropriate supports in the home or long-term care setting is critical. Achieving the goals and actions we have outlined in this plan will benefit work undertaken in the first pillar of the Family Plan (*Improving Access to Primary and Acute Care*) and each consecutive pillar as they work in tandem to maximize our results and opportunities.

We want New Brunswick to be a place where all residents, regardless of ability, can lead healthy and productive lives; where wellness is valued; and where families can thrive.

Improving Access to Primary and Acute Care is the next step in these efforts.