



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



HEALTH
ASSOCIATION
NOVA SCOTIA

Driving innovation and
embracing transformation

About The Health Association

Health Association Nova Scotia (HANS) is a membership-based association representing organizations along the full continuum of care and whose mandates positively contribute to the social determinants of health. This includes, but is not limited to, Nova Scotia Health and the IWK Health Centre, 97% of the licensed nursing homes in the province, almost 100% of the home care agencies receiving public funding, and organizations providing services in the Disability Support Program Sector, and the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Sector.

Since our creation more than sixty years ago, we have specialized in the delivery of shared services and support for Nova Scotia's health sector. Our main core shared services offerings include Group Benefits Solutions, Clinical Engineering Services, Shared Financial Services, and Labour Relations and Compensation Analysis. We are also a co-sponsor of the Nova Scotia Health Employees Pension Plan.

Additionally, we offer our members access to a range of expertise and support focusing on addressing system challenges; and we administer provincial programs for the entire Continuing Care and Disability Support Program sectors, irrespective of membership in HANS. Ultimately, as a trusted partner for health system solutions and services, we strive to work collaboratively with our members, government, and other health system stakeholders, to promote a high-performing, sustainable and integrated health system that meets the needs of Nova Scotians.

Mission

HANS advances members' interests through exceptional expertise, services and support.

Vision

The go to partner for health system solutions and services.

Strategic Directions

1

CHAMPION OUR MEMBERS' PRIORITIES



2

MAINTAIN SERVICE EXCELLENCE AND GROWTH (CURRENT & NEW SERVICES)



3

SUPPORT EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING



4

DEVELOP AND SUPPORT OUR EMPLOYEES



Leadership Message

As we reflect on the year gone by, we are delighted to present to you our annual report for 2023-2024. This report stands as a testament to the collective efforts, unwavering commitment, and shared vision that have shaped Health Association Nova Scotia's journey over the past year. It also underscores our growth, our vital role in healthcare in Nova Scotia, and our strong focus on serving our members.



Annette Elliott-Rose
Board Chair



Neale Bennet
Interim Transitional
President/CEO

2023-2024 was a year of transformation for Health Association Nova Scotia as two of our long-standing directors retired, Susan Belmore-Vermes, Director of Group Benefits Solutions, and Mary Donovan, Director of Member & Partner Engagement and our Interim President/CEO. We also had changes at the board level, in December 2023, Annette Elliott Rose was nominated as our new incoming Board Chair, and Kevin McNamara as our Vice Chair; both took office as of January 1, 2024. We would like to thank Joyce d'Entremont (who remains on the Board as Past Chair), and Jeff Densmore, for their outstanding stewardship over their term leading our Board of Directors.

Neale stepped into the role of Interim Transitional President/CEO of HANS/igility in February 2024 to lead the association's continued transition process while assisting the Board with the recruitment of a permanent CEO through a comprehensive and public search. The Board also engaged the input of our members, stakeholders, and staff in the development of a profile of the future leader of a transformed HANS. We expect to have a permanent Transformational President/CEO in place in fall 2024.

Some of our services underwent large changes as well as Nova Scotia Health (NSH), the IWK, and the Department of Health and Wellness of the Province of Nova Scotia decided to move clinical engineering, labour relations and compensation analysis services for the acute care sector from Health Association Nova Scotia (HANS) to internal services for the health authorities. Since this decision was made, HANS has been a key partner in the "Transition Project" to support the effective transition of these services for the health authorities and to ensure that HANS retains the staff we need to continue to provide excellent services to our members after the transition is completed in June 2024.

Throughout these changes we continue to be a trusted service delivery partner of government and are excited to announce that we have been engaged by the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care to take on the Continuing Care Management and Non-Union Compensation Framework Project. This project will revive and refresh the previous work completed around the Job Families Model within the Long-Term Care and Home Support sectors. We are also pleased to announce that we have partnered with the department of Education and Early Childhood Development to offer group health benefits for the Early Learning and Child Care Sector. All employees were given access to our Employee and Family Assistance Program as of January 1, 2024, 184 employers will start enrolling in group benefits in May 2024, with full enrolment by the end of 2024. Early childhood educators and employees working in licensed child-care centres will receive benefits for the first time, so this is great news.

HANS is uniquely positioned in the health system because we represent organizations throughout the full continuum of care. We work to leverage this position by bringing leaders together to address common issues with the goal of promoting a high-performing, sustainable, integrated health system that ensures Nova Scotians receive the care they need, by the right provider, at the right time. HANS supports our members to bring their voice to government and will seize every opportunity to express our members' views. Our Member Forums were created to lead and influence sectoral or cross-sectoral advocacy efforts. The Member and Partner Engagement Service supports these various member forums to advance key priorities of the sectors they represent and lead projects that can address their challenges and result in positive system change. All of our forums continue to be actively engaged in the implementation of the human rights remedy (The Remedy) report released last spring.

Leadership Message

This past year has been marked by significant accomplishments that have propelled our mission, vision, and strategic directions forward. We were honored to once again be recognized as a Top Employer in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada, an accolade we have now received for ten consecutive years. Our staff are second to none, and incredibly committed to making a difference in our communities through our support of you and your organizations.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our members, health system partners, and the entire HANS team for their unwavering dedication and support during this transformative year. We are excited about the journey ahead and look forward to continuing our collective efforts to shape a brighter future for those who support the social determinants of health in Nova Scotia. Adapting for growth means placing our members and customers at the heart of everything we do, ensuring we meet and exceed their needs.

We encourage you to explore this report to uncover more highlights of our dedicated efforts throughout the year.

Highlights of 2023-2024

We were thrilled to be recognized as a Top Employer in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada once again this year—for the tenth consecutive year. Participating in this national competition is one of the ways we measure our efforts to cultivate a healthy and productive workplace.



Welcomed the Early Childhood Care Centres into the Benefits Plan and Payroll Services

We partnered with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to offer group health benefits, extended administration services, and payroll services for the Early Learning and Child Care Sector. All employees were given access to an Employee and Family Assistance Program as of January 1, 2024, employers will start enrolling in group benefits in May 2024. A 4-wave approach will be taken to onboard the over 225 licensed operators with 3,500 employees into our plans by December 31, 2024.

Group Purchasing for Wound Care Product Supply



HEALTHPRO

As announced last year, with the support of the Department of Seniors and Long Term Care, HANS arranged a group purchasing agreement with HealthPro on behalf of department-funded long term care facilities. Under the arrangement, facilities have ongoing reliable access to the wound care supplies and the procurement of PPE they need, to care for residents and spend less time on the purchasing process. Implementation of this new purchasing system began in April 2023 and was completed in June 2023.

The Health Association welcomed one hundred and eighty eight (188) new members in 2023-2024!

- Early Learning and Childhood Care Centres (184)
- Olson's Glo Estate
- Conway Workshop Estate
- Pink Larkin
- Nova Scotia Nurses Union

Indigenous Treaty Partners Training

HANS once again collaborated with the Indigenous Treaty Partners to provide Indigenous cultural awareness training with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. This training was offered for all HANS members free of charge. Revenue generated by our subsidiary igility, is used to support indirect benefits to the membership, such as a one-time support or service such as this.



The engagement and enthusiasm shown by attendees reflect a growing awareness and commitment to addressing Indigenous health disparities.

President/CEO Search Underway

The recruitment of a permanent Transformational President/CEO through a comprehensive and public search is underway with the firm KBRS. The Board has also engaged the input of our members, stakeholders, and staff in the development of a profile of the future leader of a transformed HANS. Engagement of staff in CEO Search process has resulted in high level of participation (~70%) and positive feedback on involvement. (**Update:** The search has concluded and Catherine Butler has been appointed the next President & CEO of HANS/igility effective November 4, 2024, details can be found [here](#).)

Christmas Charity Auction

Our HANS Social Committee held a very successful Charity Auction in December that staff could participate in both in-person and virtually. Over \$3,000 dollars was donated to local charities that staff had nominated to support!



Report Of The Long Term Disability Plan



Geoff Piers
Chair

The Long Term Disability Plan provides security and peace of mind to 102 of the Association's member organizations - 24,912 health care employees and their families. Plan members have the assurance of knowing that if they are unable to work due to illness or injury and their LTD application is approved, they will be supported with a monthly benefit to help cover living expenses and programs designed to help them safely return to good health and gainful employment. They also have access to a very unique early assistance and support program, **path** (Personalized Assistance to Health). It is my pleasure to introduce highlights of LTD Plan and Trustee activities during fiscal year 2023-2024.

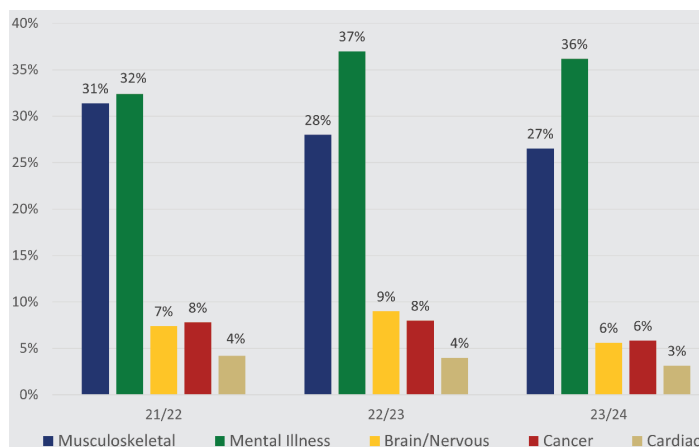
- During the fiscal year 2023-2024 one new health group joined the plan resulting in a total number of 24,912 insured lives.
- In 2023 HANS was selected as a provider of group benefits - including LTD - for operators funded by the NS Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Over the course of fiscal 2024, over 250 ECD employers with 3500 employees will be added to the LTD plan.
- The Trustees participated in a Strategic Planning Session in October. The following four strategic priorities were identified: 1. Rebranding; 2. Improved Communication & Navigation; 3. Financial Stability; and 4. Enhanced Claims Management.
- The Trustees are finalizing a new brand concept for the LTD plan. The new brand launch will be completed in fiscal 2024.
- In June 2023, the Trustees approved an alternate dispute resolution process, designed to be less complex than the existing process resulting in more timely decisions for plan members contesting their claim decision. This included recommending plan text changes to the HANS Board which were approved with an implementation date of November 1, 2023.
- Staff presented the results of an internal audit of the LTD administration process for the period April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. The results showed high adherence to the process, with an overall combined audit score of 92%. This audit will be completed on an annual basis, and periodic checks performed to ensure file documentation is appropriate.

In 2023/2024 the LTD Plan received 445 disability claims, with an 81% claims approval rate.

- In 2023/2024, the **path** program received 3317 referrals of which 754 employees participated, an increase from 738 last year.
- The overall return to work rate last year was 70.8%, exceeding the contractual key performance indicator of 40%.
- The **path** survey continues to report high satisfaction with both the program and the level of service provided by **path** consultants.
- A review of the impact of **path** participation on the duration of an LTD claim was completed by staff. Overall results show a 25% reduction in the length of a claim when **path** has been involved, especially with musculoskeletal (49%) and mental health (28%) files which are the top two claiming diagnosis.



CLAIMS RECEIVED BY TOP 5 DIAGNOSIS 2023-2024



The LTD Trustees and staff regularly monitor claims activity as part of their oversight role. These trends also provide important information to inform our claims management strategies, ensuring disability benefits remain available to health care workers at an affordable cost.

Group

Benefits Solutions (GBS)

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Growth and Opportunity**

In 2023, HANS was selected as a provider of group benefits and payroll services as part of an Education and Early Childhood Development initiative to offer group insurance, pension, and other benefits to Early Childhood Educators across the province. A huge effort involving planning, communication and mobilization of resources took place in fiscal 2023/24 to ensure GBS was positioned to go live with benefits and services for roughly 225 daycare operators with 3,500 employees - starting in May 2024. This included:

- » Reorganization, hiring and backfill for resources needed to deliver on existing commitments while planning for the future;
- » Creation of a new team focused on Extended Administration Services;
- » Significant changes to existing systems and data processes, and adoption of new technology for online member enrollment;
- » Communications and outreach through publications, web content, and online webinars; and
- » Contracts and service agreements.

- **Focus on Improving Services**

GBS invests in people, through encouraging professional development opportunities for our staff such as the Certified Employee Benefit Specialist program and HANS leadership development training - to ensure we attract and retain expert talent who in turn deliver maximum value to our clients and plan members. To ensure our people have the right tools, we made appropriate investments in technology to increase our efficiency, enhance online services, and set performance targets.

SERVING OVER 35,600 ACTIVE EMPLOYEES AND 10,000 RETIREES, WE ARE THE LARGEST, LONGEST-STANDING PROVIDER OF GROUP BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION SERVICES IN NOVASCOTIA'S HEALTH SYSTEM - SOON TO INCLUDE EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



THROUGH INNOVATION AND OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BUILT ON OVER 122 YEARS OF TRIED-AND-TRUE COMBINED EXPERIENCE.

Group Benefits Solutions provides all-inclusive third-party administration services at an extremely affordable cost and offers member organizations participating in these plans a number of advantages, such as:

- Excellent coverage as well as competitive and sustainable rates through economies of scale.
- Strong governance models are in place providing program oversight/consultation which includes equal representation by employers across the healthcare sectors and the four major health care unions.
 - HANS LTD Trust governs [path](#) and the LTD program.
 - The Provincial Group Benefits Advisory Committee, oversees the remaining benefits.
- Through ongoing training and support, we help reduce our member's exposure to the legal and financial risks associated with delivery of employee benefits.
- Access to preferred provider arrangements (i.e. preferred rates for home/auto insurance, pharmacy loyalty cards).

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, we welcomed two (2) new groups to our Group Benefits Solutions service.

Labour Relations & Compensation Analysis (LRCA)

- **Continuing our commitment to provide meaningful Labour Law education for our members:**

In May, the Labour Relations team travelled across the province to provide Regional Conferences in Membertou, Halifax, and Wolfville. We also conducted our Annual Conference in Halifax in November, where we saw record attendance levels and received excellent feedback. The move to a new electronic online booking and payment process (researched and implemented by our Administrative Staff) was very well received.

- **Connecting With Our Members:**

LRCA continued to create and lead events where our members are provided timely and relevant information and are guided through complex issues to support them in providing us their insight and direction. This includes such venues as CCEG (Continuing Care Employers Group) and HASBC (Health Authorities Strategic Bargaining Committee).

- **Leading through Change:**

LRCA hired and welcomed three (3) new lawyers during the summer of 2023. We prepared and implemented a comprehensive onboarding plan to support their development in understanding our sectors, arbitrations, and of course collective bargaining.

In the summer of 2023, HANS learned that the current Clinical Engineering, and Labour Law and Compensation Analysis services for the Health Authorities were going to end with the intention they would “transition” as in-house services. For LRCA, while this only meant a change from 95 clients to 93 clients – the two clients ending represented a reduction of 2/3rds of our revenue to support the service. A significant complex and time-consuming project through the year was the “Transition Project” with the aim of:

- » Ensuring HANS maintains the staff it needs to continue our excellent service to our member participants.
- » The sectors are set up to provide appropriate strategic connections on matters of labour relations and compensation analysis.
- » The Health Authorities build viable internal services.
- » HANS staff are treated reasonably, fairly and with respect (those who transition to the HAs and those who remain with HANS).

WE DO WHAT WE DO BEST,
SO OUR MEMBERS CAN DO
WHAT THEY DO BEST.

**THE HANS LR TEAM ARE INDUSTRY LEADS
AS NEGOTIATORS ON BEHALF OF OUR
MEMBERS. THE HANS LR BRAND INCLUDES
THE COMPLEX BALANCE OF VIGOROUSLY
REPRESENTING OUR EMPLOYER MEMBER
WHILE UNDERSTANDING THE MANDATE
OF GOVERNMENT AND RESPECTING
AND SUPPORTING THE CONTINUED
RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR UNION
PARTNERS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES.**

- **Excellence in Collective Bargaining:**

As usual, Collective Bargaining and Essential Services preparations is the area where most service hours were dedicated. While there were many rounds of bargaining during this year, of particular note:

- » Tracy McPhee provided leadership and representation through the Health Authorities Council of Nursing Unions bargaining which was an innovative Interest Based Bargaining approach. In addition to adapting to the alternate form of bargaining, HANS Compensation Team developed and managed an innovative online shared hub to provide all necessary research and information to support the process.
- » Government’s expectations of employers increased in terms of the evidence they required before approving mandates. HANS lawyers worked closely with our participating members to address those expectations.
- » HANS led education sessions and supported our members through new steps with required by government in the Essential Services processes.

Labour Relations & Compensation Analysis (LRCA)

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Labour lawyers Pat Saulnier and Michelle McCann continued to represent NSH in a legal dispute with the NSGEU over CCRA pay, which could impact all unionized employers. Initially, the union and NSH agreed to adjust pay for LPNs, but not CCRAs. The union later argued that this agreement should apply to CCRAs as well, and the arbitrator ruled in their favor. HANS, on behalf of NSH, filed a judicial review and successfully overturned the decision. The union appealed, but HANS again secured a win for NSH. This advocacy ensured that agreements between employers and unions cannot be unilaterally expanded by arbitrators.
- HANS Compensation Team prepared analysis regarding:
 - » LPN Supervisor pay across the LTC sector
 - » The impact of the recently negotiated Health Authorities Nursing Collective Agreement on Health Authorities management pay.
 - » Components considered by government in their spring decision making and, potentially initial, revisions to pay for management and non-union.



Corporate Solutions

Corporate Solutions is a team of specialized skilled resources supporting the information technology, finance, and building operations for HANS and igility. The Corporate Solutions team also provides shared services of finance & payroll for member organizations.

NEW: Shared Payroll Services for the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Sector

With the support of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, HANS is implementing a shared payroll service in 2024/2025 for 200 plus ELCC organizations with an estimated 2,500 plus employees. The new payroll team is in place and implementation is expected to be complete by end of calendar year.

Shared Financial Services

Corporate Solutions with our partners Xero, HubDoc, & Approval Max continue to implement a leading financial cloud-based solution for our members. The team has implemented this solution in nursing homes, disability support program organizations, and regulatory licensing college /school organizations. There continues to be a heightened interest in this valued solution set from our members.



WE DO WHAT WE DO BEST,
SO OUR MEMBERS CAN
DO WHAT THEY DO BEST.

**YOU MAINTAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR
FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT WHILE HAVING THE
ABILITY TO REALLOCATE YOUR VALUABLE
RESOURCES TO BETTER MEET THE NEEDS
OF YOUR ORGANIZATION.**

FACTS & FIGURES 2023/24:

- Average number of people entering the building daily - 85
- Active SharePoint / Team sites - 250 plus
- HANS is mortgage free & owns its building, which is valued at \$5,000,000 (CBRE)
- Our building was fully renovated in 2022/2023
- Total investment funds \$260,000,000 plus (LTD & Waiver Funds)



Clinical Engineering Services (CES)

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Contract renewals with existing customers have begun with a focus on expanding services to meet their needs. New contracts were issued in early March.
- The announcement in the summer of 2023 of the end of CES - IWK and NSH contracts has been a challenging time for the whole team. The CES team will endeavor to make this transition as seamless as possible. Creating a team that will continue to support LTC is a top priority.
- In June 2024, the HANS Clinical Engineering (CES) department will transition to HANS subsidiary igility and rebrand as Technical Services. This change will better position the department for future growth and success by leveraging igility's robust sales and marketing capabilities to reach new, previously unserved sectors.

We will continue to serve a diverse clientele, including continuing care facilities, physiotherapy and medical clinics, universities, and correctional institutions. With experienced technicians stationed across Nova Scotia, our team provides comprehensive maintenance services—such as inspections, calibrations, and repairs—for a wide range of equipment including lift load systems, autoclaves, patient scales, beds, microscopes, x-ray machines, and more.

We will continue to deliver prompt and effective support tailored to our clients' needs and offer a preferred pricing structure exclusive to all HANS members. Additionally, we provide free site assessments and consultations to ensure equipment is maintained to its highest standards.

SERVICES ARE HIGH IN CALIBRE, COMPETITIVELY PRICED AND CONSISTENTLY DELIVERED.

- CES manages 118 contracts valued at \$4.7 million.
- CES manages 25,100 assets valued at approximately \$118,283,736.
- The preventative maintenance completion rate in 2023-2024 was 91.2%, exceeding the target of 90%.



Member & Partner Engagement (MPE)

The Member and Partner Engagement (MPE) Service is comprised of a team of professionals that provide HANS members with access to a range of expertise focused on individualized member support and assisting members, collectively, to develop solutions to system challenges through collaborative approaches. This includes policy analysis; quantitative and qualitative research; survey design and data analysis; public relations and branding; best practice workplace safety culture/ climate; workplace culture/employee engagement; project management; government relations; stakeholder engagement; and strategic planning.

Key elements of MPE's broad mandate includes supporting established membership forums (i.e. Continuing Care Council, Long Term Care Nova Scotia, the Home Care Network and Diverse Abilities NS), to advance their strategic priorities; the role HANS plays in administering the CCA Program, Recognition of Prior Learning Program, the CCA Registry, Dementia Understanding the Journey, as lead agency for HSPnet; and overseeing HANS' core internal and external strategic marketing and communications functions. Corporate marketing and communications also support members through public awareness aimed at elevating the profile of the sector and supporting recruitment and retention efforts.

- We are continuing to work with our members to find creative ways to meet their needs. This includes development of shared services opportunities and collaborative initiatives among continuing care and DSP members. We also launched targeted social media campaign to market our shared services to other sectors within the social determinants of health.
- Health human resource strategies for the Continuing Care and Disability Support Program Sectors continues to be a top priority for MPE with current efforts focused on supporting the Continuing Care Workforce Advisory Committee (formally referred to as the Service Delivery Structure in Long Term Care Project), increasing social media support for members, and launching the Continuing Care Month and CCA Week public awareness campaigns.
- All of our member forums have begun meeting more frequently and we continue to support them all. The new Continuing Care Council structure is in place and all committees have met and work continues to evolve. HANS is very focused on the implication of the Human Rights Review and Remedy For the Findings Of Systemic Discrimination Against Nova Scotians With Disabilities (The Remedy).
- We supported the Canadian Association for Long Term Care's efforts to advocate for amendments to Bill C-295. This private member's bill seeks to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to create a specific offence for long term care owners and managers for failing to provide the "necessaries of life" for vulnerable adults.

Virtual Reality Safety Training Pilot

The DSP sector, SLTC and WCB have come together to initiate a pilot program aimed to evaluate whether Virtual Reality is a feasible training modality for safety-based training in LTC facilities and DSP work environments. HANS in collaboration with Davis Pier has been working since April to execute this initiative. A custom safety training module is currently being built by a third-party software developer.

HSPnet



HSPnet-NS recently received a \$1,200,000 grant from the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment and the Health Transformation Office for the ongoing use and expansion of HSPnet for the next 5 years. HANS as Lead Agency for HSPnet is currently working with key stakeholders (DSLTC, NSH, DHW, LAE etc.) on the development of expansion plans.

At the same time, the HSPnet Continuing Care Pilot was successfully completed in March and all three pilot sites have signed on to continue using HSPnet to coordinate health learner placements in their organizations. We continue to work on initiatives aimed at standardizing the placement coordination process, as well as working with the HSPnet National Alliance on setting the strategic direction for software upgrades.

Member & Partner Engagement (MPE)

Continuing Care Assistant Program

The CCA Competency Framework was revised this year by the CCA Program and DSLTC with employer



CONTINUING CARE
ASSISTANT

and staff involvement. Modifications included the addition of two new sections: Philosophy of Care and Soft Skills/Attributes. The revised CCA Competency Framework displays the integration of the holistic philosophy of care, core & functional competencies, job functions, and the technical skills and tasks of a CCA. The Framework identifies the CCA's area of expertise and how they contribute to the care of Nova Scotian's.

This year saw the CCA Free Tuition continue as well as the RPL Assistance Funding, these funding initiatives positively impacted enrollments and certifications this year.

The program has experienced record high numbers for this year:

- 1202 new student enrollments: up 9% over last year
- 902 new certifications: up 51% over last year

Dementia: Understanding the Journey

Over 23,000 participants have completed this foundational education on dementia care in the last 32 years. To keep up with current research and best practices, we are currently working with the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging to undergo our 8th revision to DUTJ Curriculum. This will include updates to the Learner Manual, Facilitator Manual, administrative processes and a logo-refresh. Stay tuned for these exciting updates!



Course numbers for the 2023-2024 fiscal year:

- 45 organizations delivered 106 courses which resulted in a total of 1680 certificates – a record high for DUTJ!

CCA Registry

The CCA Registry is a list of Certified CCAs/counterparts, and those working in the role of a CCA here in Nova Scotia. The CCA Registry Act mandates registration for all CCAs in Nova Scotia for the purposes of collecting workforce planning data such as the name of the CCA, where they work, and whether they work full-time, part-time, or casual. This fiscal year recorded over 9000 active members, which is higher than any previous year.

Recognizing Prior Learning (RPL)

The RPL Program contributes to the recruitment and retention of a qualified CCA work force by supporting eligible individuals with valuable experience/education to gain CCA Certification.

Since its inception in 2005, the CCA RPL Program has produced approximately 21% of all certified CCAs in NS. With funding support, RPL certification rates have risen by 7%, and the time required to complete the program has significantly decreased. Additionally, the time taken by participants to write the Certification Exam after finishing the program has decreased by 147% over the last few years.

Record High Registrations:

- Registrations remain at an all-time high, reaching over 400 enrollments again this year, and similar numbers anticipated for the upcoming year.

Supporting our Member Forums



Over the last year the new Mission, Vision and strategic directions of the Home Care Network have laid the groundwork for several initiatives that continue to move the sector forward. This year the Home Care Network has collaborated to provide support for following within each of its strategic directions.

Continuous Improvement and Capacity Building:

- Agencies began the Accreditation Primer preparation process which the MPE team is supporting.
- Network members worked to support disaster recovery plans and the Business Continuity Planning initiative (undertaken by igility) which has since been completed.
- Provided support for the CCA Program curriculum revision.

Sector Efficiency:

- Agencies engaged and participated in various sessions providing feedback on the gradual onset stress legislation and related WCB policy implementation. The Network continues to participate in education sessions provided by WCB and most recently engaged with Dr. Arla Day from the CN Centre of Occupational Health and Safety to understand research trends surrounding workplace stress and health.

Influencing Change:

- Participated in consultation sessions and provided survey feedback for Aware-NS's revised strategic directions.
- Continues to maintain collaborative relationships with MSVU, SMU and other academic institutions who are conducting research in the field of continuing care, workplace wellness, OHS and so forth.
- Provided support for a Michelin Tire Rebate program aimed to provide home support employees with a 19% discount for a set of tires.

Innovation & Expertise:

- A Professional Development Day was held wherein speakers from MSVU Centre on Aging, SMU, Alzheimer's Society, Caregivers Nova Scotia, CARP. This was a successful event of learning and knowledge sharing such that another event is planned for the fall of 2024.
- Engaged with Build Nova Scotia to provide insight into the cellular telephone needs for home care service providers and employees.



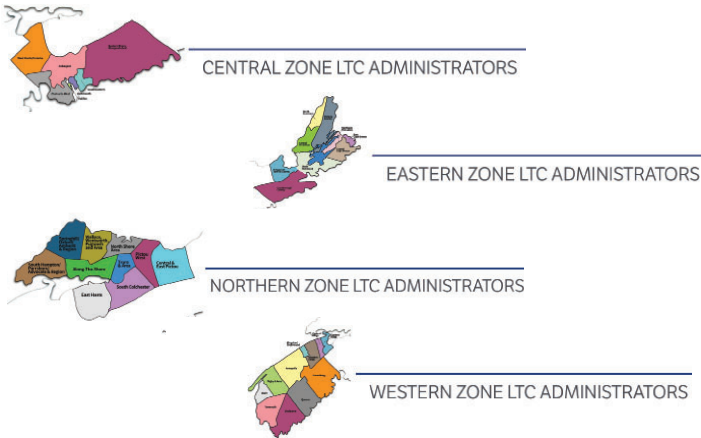
DANS has a mission to utilize its collective leadership, knowledge, and expertise to develop evidence-informed solutions and work collaboratively to enhance quality of life and foster community inclusion for persons with diverse abilities.

In April 2023, a human rights remedy report was released outlining a process to transition participants from facility-based care to care provided in the community. Since then, DANS member organizations have been very active in advocating for their programs and participants. Each member is acutely aware of the significant and profound transformation that is about to occur in the disability support sector. The provincial government has released a program closure plan for each facility and member organizations will support each other through the process. DANS will continue to strongly represent the sector to help with a successful transition.



The Continuing Care Council is comprised of the Chairs and Co-Chairs of Long Term Care Nova Scotia, the Home Care Network, and Diverse Abilities NS. Part of its mandate is to address cross-sectoral issues affecting the provision of continuing care and disability support services in Nova Scotia. In 2023, the Continuing Care Council implemented a social media strategy to introduce itself and promote recognition of the sectors as critical components of the health care system. It also supported Diverse Abilities NS in its efforts related to the Human Rights Remedy. The Continuing Care Council met with various government officials to get a better understanding of how the transformation will affect not only the disability support sector, but also the continuing care sector as participants move to community-based care.

Supporting our Member Forums



Long Term Care Nova Scotia was formed in 2022 as part of the restructuring of the Continuing Care Council and is an advisory body focused on representing the collective views of the Health Association Nova Scotia's long term care membership. In early 2023, Long Term Care Nova Scotia engaged long-term care members and that feedback was used to develop a strategic approach that focused on three priorities: funding, leadership development and succession planning, and employee attraction to the sector.

Increasing challenges with staffing, notably CCAs and licensed staff, remain a topic of discussion. Representatives from the igility/HANS Recruitment & Retention (R&R) program have been regularly joining meetings to provide updates on recruitment data and information about the Innovation Fund and Professional Development Fund.

Darren Steeves, CEO – JackHabbitt, attended several meetings this fall to discuss a new pilot project as it relates to the retention and resiliency of LTC employees. The pilot project will focus on improving employees' quality of life through re-imagining and investing in the future of talent and elevating the human experience to ensure staff is empowered, motivated, and physically and mentally well.

Earlier this year, NZ invited the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia to their zonal meeting to discuss pharmacy services available to LTC residents. Representatives subsequently met with LTC NS to discuss a few changes which are now available to LTC residents including senior medication reviews, prescription renewals, assessments and prescribing for Herpes Zoster (Shingles), and the community pharmacy anti-coagulation program. A one-pager with additional details has been developed and was circulated to all zonal groups in the fall.

The LTC Administrators Mentorship Program reached its one-year mark this fall and has now successfully entered year 2 with many members from across the zonal groups participating as Mentors and Mentees.

Long Term Care Nova Scotia advocated to the provincial government on a number of issues to improve the sector and ensure residents receive the best care possible. In 2023, Long Term Care Nova Scotia submitted a letter to the Nova Scotia Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care and the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, endorsing the Canadian Association of Long Term Care's opposition to Bill C-295.

Long Term Care Nova Scotia also represented the sector as part of the budget consultation process, meeting with government officials and providing a submission for consideration. Long Term Care Nova Scotia was pleased to see an increase in the food budget announced in the last provincial budget, an initiative for which it had advocated for during the budget process.

Health Association

Governance

The governance of the Health Association is vested in a competency-based group of volunteers who provide stewardship and strategic leadership, ensuring the Association fulfills its mandate in a manner reflecting our values. Included among these key governance responsibilities are strategic direction, enterprise risk management, quality and board effectiveness and efficiency.

OUR 2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Annette Elliott Rose - Chair
Independent Director (2024)
IWK Health Centre (2023)
- Kevin McNamara, Vice Chair
Independent Director
- Steven Gaetz, Treasurer
Independent Director
- Joyce d'Entremont, Past Chair
Continuing Care Council (2023)
- Harman Singh
Diverse Abilities NS
- Deborah Nickerson
Nova Scotia Health
- Jen Feron
IWK Health Centre
- Oluwafunmilayo (Funmi) Ayebiwo
Independent Director
- Jeff Densmore - Vice-Chair (2023)
Home Care Network (2023)
- Sasha Raz
Independent Director in Training

Board Committees

As set out in the Health Association's Bylaws, there are three standing committees of the Board.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Annette Elliott Rose Kevin McNamara Steven Gaetz Joyce d'Entremont Jeff Densmore	GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE Annette Elliott Rose Kevin McNamara Harman Singh Joyce d'Entremont Jeff Densmore	FINANCE & AUDIT RISK COMMITTEE Steven Gaetz Annette Elliott Rose Kevin McNamara Oluwafunmilayo (Funmi) Ayebiwo Joyce d'Entremont
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Financial Highlights

The following are excerpts from our financial statements. An audit has been conducted for all four funds managed by Health Association Nova Scotia and in each case the auditor's report is unqualified. Full audited financial statements are available by visiting www.healthassociation.ns.ca.

ASSOCIATION FUND

		2024	2023
Statement of Financial Position - March 31, 2024, with comparative figures for 2023.	Assets	\$10,277,795	\$9,966,259
	Liabilities	\$5,434,770	\$5,165,088
	Net Assets	\$4,843,025	\$4,801,171

LONG TERM DISABILITY PLAN FUND

		2024	2023
Statement of Financial Position - March 31, 2024, with comparative figures for March 31, 2023.	Assets	\$260,589,672	\$231,871,256
	Liabilities	\$2,353,507	\$1,865,003
	Net Assets available for benefits	\$258,236,165	\$230,006,253

		2024	2023
Funding Policy: In accordance with the Plan, members are required to contribute a certain percentage of insured salary, with employers matching the contributions of the members.	Net Assets available for benefits	\$258,236,165	\$230,006,053
	Actual present value of accrued benefits	\$253,375,000	\$230,957,000
	Funding Surplus/Deficit	<\$4,861,165>	<\$950,747>

HEALTH AND OTHER BENEFITS FUND

		2024	2023
Statement of Financial Position - March 31, 2024, with comparative figures for 2023.	Assets	\$37,103,825	\$35,237,909
	Liabilities	\$27,150,107	\$20,381,684
	Net Assets	\$9,953,718	\$14,856,225

WAIVER OF LIFE PREMIUMS FUND

		2024	2023
Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits - March 31, 2024, with comparative figures for 2023.	Assets	\$28,920,228	\$25,285,717
	Liabilities	\$227,916	\$150,665
	Net Assets available for benefits	\$28,692,312	\$25,135,052

igility Year in Review

Safe Patient Handling

Our Safe Patient Handling department prioritizes patient safety and aims to enhance care quality in long-term care, home care and acute care facilities. Since 2019, as the exclusive distributor of Guldman solutions in Atlantic Canada, we have provided innovative, ergonomic equipment such as ceiling lifts, floor lifts, and patient slings, designed to reduce staff injuries and improve patient outcomes. We offer expert-led training and customized solutions tailored to each facility's needs. Additionally, we provide free site assessments and consultations to help clients choose the best options for their facilities. With a commitment to injury prevention and a proven track record of advancing safety, igility stands out as a reliable partner for safe patient handling needs.



What have we been doing?

Over the past year, we have traveled extensively across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, working on both new and existing lift track systems and supplying hundreds of patient lift slings. Our efforts have also included replacing outdated tracks, conducting sling inspections, and providing comprehensive training sessions. We are also proud to have installed over 200 lifts across the sector. We have recently opened a new showroom at our Head Office, located at 2 Dartmouth Road in Bedford. Additionally, we have successfully trained and certified a new group of technicians for lift installations. This enhancement enables us to provide in-house installation services, allowing us to offer faster turnaround times and reduced costs for installations, servicing, and repairs.



Continuing Care Recruitment and Retention Program

Our Recruitment & Retention Program is a free service funded by DSLTC and is available to all employers in the continuing care sector offering a range of services to support employers with their recruitment and retention needs. The team serves to source domestic and international LTC employee candidates through direct sourcing, social media, general job posts, and relationships with schools. They have Immigration Consultants who work with international candidates and support facilities to be immigration ready. To date, the program has helped support numerous employers across the sector and has successfully matched over 309 candidates through both domestic and international events.

The Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund was established to provide financial support to attract new employees to the Continuing Care Sector.

In the third year of this program, the sector has used \$397,487.15 from the Innovation fund for marketing campaigns, extensive orientation programs, pilot programs, and much more.

The Professional Development Fund

The PD Fund was established to provide financial support to employees in the Continuing Care Sector for professional development.

Recently, the PD Fund was topped up and to date the sector has used \$403,783.89 from the fund to support tuition costs, wellness programs, and Leadership programs.

The Relocation Fund

The Relocation Fund is established to help in the recruitment of net new workers in the sector. This fund requires the employer to nominate the employee for the fund and then it is employee based submission from there.

To date the Relocation Fund has supported approximately 120 new healthcare workers in their relocation to Nova Scotia.

igility Year in Review

Provincial Wound Program



The Wound Care Program, now in its third year, is making significant strides in improving wound care outcomes across the Continuing Care sector. By standardizing wound prevention and management, the program aims to enhance knowledge transfer, support evidence-based practices, and foster a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach. It also emphasizes responsible utilization of wound care products, ensuring better control and accountability in their use and funding.

Key highlights from the past year include:

- Visits with VON have increased from 384 to 718.
- Interactions with First Nations and NSH home care services have grown.
- DSLTC released a CCIR allowing HANS Wound Care Consultants to recommend wound dressings, eliminating the need for prescriber orders.
- Two third-year Dalhousie medical students completed a one-week clinical orientation with a consultant.
- Two fourth-year CBU nursing students completed a 120-hour clinical rotation with a consultant.
- Four consultants are enrolled in the MSc Clinical Skin Integrity and Wound Management program at the University of Hertfordshire, set to complete in September 2024.
- Two consultants are pursuing the International Interprofessional Wound Care Course (IIWCC) accredited by Toronto/Queen's University, with completion expected in June 2024.

Specialty Government Projects

Over the past year, we have made significant contributions to the continuing care sector through several key initiatives. We enhanced emergency preparedness in home care by supporting the development of Business Continuity Plans (BCP) and procured essential equipment to ensure health workers can effectively handle public health emergencies while maintaining routine services. We also oversaw the evaluation of Behavioral Support Units (BSU) to gauge their effectiveness in managing complex behaviors in long-term care settings and improve integration with other health services. Additionally, we advanced the Negative Pressure Wound Device Program to improve wound care through the use of cutting-edge technology. These initiatives aim to elevate the quality and effectiveness of care for those in need.

Clinical Practice Unit

The Clinical Practice Support Program is an extension of the existing Provincial Wound Care Program, designed to enhance support and education within the Continuing Care sector. It will include a dedicated Clinical Practice Support team responsible for developing evidence-based clinical standards and guidelines. This team will offer resources and direct assistance to long-term care (LTC) providers, helping them improve educational programs, integrate theory with practice, and promote continuous learning. By collaborating with LTC providers, the team will plan, implement, and evaluate clinical programs, establish strong partnerships, and advance high-quality, ethical care. Additionally, an experienced hospice nurse will help create standardized guidelines for end-of-life care and pain management, providing essential resources for education and enhancing competencies in these critical areas. The first initiative, set for early fall, will pilot IV Therapy at several locations across the province.

Group Purchasing Program

The Group Purchasing Program is entering its second year and utilizes collective buying power to help HANS members reduce costs and improve service quality. Through partnerships with national GPO organizations, the program offers competitive pricing on essential products and services, including a provincial bed and mattress replacement program, wound care supplies, and personal protective equipment (PPE) for the continuing care sector.

The program delivers substantial cost savings, enhances service quality, and provides comprehensive support throughout the procurement process for all HANS members. With a proven track record of cost reduction, a commitment to high standards, and dedicated personalized support, we streamline and optimize purchasing needs effectively.



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