

Stream 1: Children & Youth Health in Nova Scotia: A comprehensive look at youth health to guide future action

Background and Rationale

Children & Youth health in Nova Scotia is not comprehensively captured within the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW)'s current data assets. Diverse surveys, instruments, and registries contribute useful insights. However, data set fragmentation, combined with limited regional specificity, makes it challenging to develop a cohesive and comprehensive picture of Youth Health. A routine understanding is important for evidence-informed provincial policy, service, and program development that can address emerging issues and promote healthy development.

Project Purpose

This project aims to create a clear, integrated understanding of Children & Youth Health using existing data sources in Nova Scotia, **with a focus on school aged cohorts (approximately aged 4-18)**. Work will focus on mapping current data sources across surveys, administrative datasets, and academic literature, and highlighting areas where information is missing (critical data gaps). The result will be a comprehensive and integrated data story of Children & Youth Health today. Identifying critical data gaps will support informed decision-making around strategic opportunities for future data collection.

Scope of Work

Shaped through engagement with Priority Stakeholders, the successful applicant will:

- **Review and compile** existing youth health data sources, including national and provincial surveys, datasets, and relevant academic research.
- **Conduct appropriate statistical analysis** with the range of data sources available to provide a comprehensive picture of youth health across Nova Scotia's geographies and health domains (e.g., general health, mental health, substance use, sexual health, physical activity, nutrition, technology impacts, risk/protective factors, etc.).
- **Report Findings, identify children & youth health trends and articulate gaps** in current knowledge.
- **Provide actionable recommendations** to guide the integration of emerging data dimensions into youth monitoring or reporting frameworks with the aim of better informing policies, programs, and services that support youth health.

Expected Outcomes

- A comprehensive Children & Youth Health report consolidating available data sources and insights, designed to support ongoing data refresh and longitudinal use.
- A gap analysis highlighting priority areas for further research and data collection.
- Recommendations for next steps, including options for new surveys or enhanced data-capture strategies.

Impact

This project will enable Nova Scotia to move from reliance on fragmented or national-level data toward a comprehensive, locally relevant understanding of youth health. The findings will inform evidence-based policies and programs that strengthen supports for youth across the province.

Stream 2: Aging Population Health: Characterize the health of older adults in Nova Scotia to support aging at home and in the community

Background and Rationale

Nova Scotia's population is undergoing a demographic shift toward older age groups, increasing the importance of understanding the health status of this growing cohort across the province. Current resource planning often relies on clinical comorbidities and biological age, which do not fully capture the broader health profiles within communities. This gap constrains the province's ability to differentiate communities at risk (health and function decline) from communities with appropriate protective factors that enable safe aging at home in communities.

Project Purpose

This project aims to effectively capture the health of older adults in Nova Scotia across domains such as function, cognition, activities or daily living, incidents, and frailty, to develop population health profiles that reflect how older adults are aging within different geographical communities, beyond traditional clinical measures to anticipate broader population health trajectories. A comprehensive view will further support identifying communities with high needs/risk and those with strong protective factors (geographical "hot spots"), enabling us to characterize (and eventually emulate) resilient communities. This work will lay the foundation for targeted protective service planning and prevention strategies aimed to optimize safe and effective aging in place.

Scope of Work

Shaped through engagement with Priority Stakeholders, the successful applicant will:

- **Review and compile** data related to physical mobility, activity/movement participation, function, cognitive status, activities of daily living, risks, incidents, frailty, social/material deprivation, social connections/loneliness, food security, and general health among older adults in Nova Scotia. Scope of work may include independent data collection.
- **Develop population-level health profiles** that capture variations in aging across regions and communities, including the identification of geographic patterns and potential "hot spots" of decline/vulnerability, and regions of protection/resilience.
- **Assess trends and report findings** in population health trajectories.
- **Provide recommendations of protective strategies and services** that can enable older adults to safely stay in their homes longer.

Expected Outcomes

- A clearer understanding of the prevalence and distribution of functional limitations, cognitive impairment, and frailty among older adults in Nova Scotia through community or regional population health profiles that extend beyond clinical diagnoses.
- Recommendations of services and protective factors to inform aging in place planning.

Impact

This work will strengthen Nova Scotia's ability to plan for an aging population. Early identification of at-risk and well-served communities can support targeted resource and protective service strategies, and advance aging in place across the province.