

**Provincial
Mental Health and Addictions
Advisory Council**

Annual Report

April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM CHAIR

In accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the 2019 – 2020 Annual Report for the Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council (the Advisory Council). The Advisory Council is a Category Three (3) government entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and plans and reports under these requirements. As interim Chair, my signature below acknowledges the Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council is accountable for the results reported.

This past year was a productive year for the Advisory Council. To date, we have provided oversight on the substantial completion of 18 short, seven medium and three long-term recommendations of the **Towards Recovery Action Plan**. This year we advised on the development of a stepped-care model, Flexible Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) teams, an integrated mental health and addictions services provincial referral form and other program materials that are transforming the mental health and addictions system in Newfoundland and Labrador. In November 2019, both the Advisory Council and the Recovery Council co-hosted the Recovery Form “Lived Voices Leading” that was attended by over 120 people.

As an Advisory Council, we are honoured to play a key role in transforming the mental health and addictions system in this province.

I wish to extend a sincere thank you to all members of the Advisory Council for their continued dedication to mental health and addictions issues in the province. On behalf of the Advisory Council, I also want to extend our appreciation for the efforts of staff within the Department of Health and Community Services for their support in making our work possible

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sheldon Pollett".

Sheldon Pollett, Interim Chair
Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council

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Overview

The Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council (the Advisory Council) reports to the Minister of Health and Community Services. The Advisory Council advises on key mental health and addictions matters to formulate effective decision making and policy development; and provides oversight to the implementation of **Towards Recovery: The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador**.

Further information about the Advisory Council is located on the Department of Health and Community Services website at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/mentalhealth-committee/mentalhealth/provincial-mental-health-and-addictions-advisory-council/>.

Membership

The Advisory Council membership includes individuals representing diverse backgrounds, skills and experiences (see Appendix A for membership list). The membership of the Advisory Council, including the chairperson, are appointed by the Minister of Health and Community Services. Council appointment recommendations are made by the Public Service Commission using a merit-based process in accordance with section 25(a) of the **Public Service Commission Act**.

The Advisory Council bring diverse backgrounds, knowledge and experience in the area of mental health and addictions. They include:

- Personal lived experience/family experience
- Regional Health Authorities
- Psychiatry and family medicine
- Education
- Health promotion and prevention
- Community organizations
- Memorial University of Newfoundland/College of the North Atlantic
- Business community
- Justice system (police/legal aid/corrections/private bar)
- National organizations
- Indigenous people

Member terms: The terms of reference state that a member shall be appointed for a term of three years and may be re-appointed to one further term of three years for a maximum of six years. Where the term of office expires and a successor has not been appointed, the member may continue to hold their position until a successor is appointed.

Funding

The work of the Advisory Council is supported by the Mental Health and Addictions Division, Department of Health and Community Services. Remuneration for Advisory Council members is not provided.

Meeting Frequency

In 2019-20, the Advisory Council met in November 2019 and regularly provided input throughout the year on the development of several key mental health and addictions program materials.

The Advisory Council does not maintain a separate office; support and secretariat services are provided by the Mental Health and Addictions Division, First Floor, West Block, Confederation Building, St. John's.

Highlights and Partnerships

The Advisory Council acknowledges our strong partnership with the Department of Health and Community Services in fulfilling our mandate. Our diverse membership also reflects the many community partnerships that support the work of the Advisory Council.

The highlights of 2019-20 include:

- Provided oversight on the implementation of Towards Recovery recommendations (medium and long term);
- Informed on the development of a stepped-care model and the implementation of Flexible Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) teams, an integrated mental health and addictions services provincial referral form and other program materials; and
- Co-developed / co-hosted the annual Recovery Forum "Lived Voices Leading" with the Recovery Council.

Report on Performance: Objectives 2017-2020

The Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council provides support to the Minister of Health and Community Services in an advisory capacity. As such, the following objective will guide the direction of the Council for the period April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020 and will be reported on in each year covered by the plan (2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20).

Issue: Provide oversight for the implementation of recommendations in Towards Recovery

The Advisory Council is embedded into the **Towards Recovery** governance structure ensuring an opportunity to provide meaningful oversight into the implementation of the recommendations.

Several Advisory Council members also serve as members on **Towards Recovery** project teams and/or working groups.

Annual Objective

By March 31, 2020, the Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council will have provided advice and oversight to the Minister of Health and Community Services regarding implementation of the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan.

Indicators:

- Obtained expert and group member expertise
- Invited community groups and other organizations to present information
- Prioritized advice provided to the Minister
- Made recommendations to government-led mental health and addictions initiatives

Measure: Provided commentary and recommendations.

Indicator	Outcome
Obtained expert and group member expertise	During 2019-20, the Advisory Council provided expertise during scheduled meetings and by email or teleconference, outside of regularly scheduled meetings. The Advisory Council continued to utilize the combined expertise of its members by reviewing and providing feedback on Towards Recovery documents, and other emerging priorities. The Advisory Council has also provided oversight on the implementation of several Towards Recovery recommendations.
Invited community groups and other organizations to present information	During 2019-20, the Advisory Council continued to focus on the implementation of Towards Recovery recommendations. In November 2019, both the Advisory Council and the Recovery Council co-developed and co-hosted the Recovery Forum “Lived Voices Leading” in which the agenda was developed and speakers chosen by both Councils. Over 120 people including people with lived experience, policy makers, community groups, regional health authorities, and government attended this event that received positive feedback from attendees.
Prioritized advice provided to the Minister	Advisory Council feedback and advice was provided to the Minister on many areas related to mental health and addictions. Priority topics included: health in corrections; opioid dependence treatment; stepped-care; promotion, prevention and early intervention; improved access; the recovery approach; integrated service delivery; and quality and measuring progress.
Made recommendations to government-led mental health and addictions initiatives	Made recommendations to government-led mental health and addictions initiatives including the development of a stepped-care model, Flexible FACT teams, an integrated mental health and addictions services provincial referral form and other program materials that are transforming the mental health and addictions system in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The Advisory Council recognizes opportunities and challenges as we move into 2020-21.

The Advisory Council's current interim chairperson and council members have expired. New membership appointments are presently in the process of being finalized through the independent appointments process and appointments are expected to be made soon.

There are concerns by experts in mental health and addictions that social isolation, unemployment, domestic violence and disrupted grief processes, among other factors, will cause a surge in mental health and addictions challenges in the weeks, months and years ahead due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Advisory Council will continue to provide guidance and oversight to the **Towards Recovery Action Plan** to ensure that the mental health and addictions system meets the needs of the population.

The Advisory Council will also continue to provide guidance on the development of person-centered, community-based mental health and addictions programs as they are implemented the province. Together with multiple partners, and with leadership from the Department of Health and Community Services, we look forward to playing a key role in this challenging and transformative work.

Appendix A: Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Membership 2019-20

Name	Current Experience
Sheldon Pollett	Interim Chair, Community Service Provider - Youth
Angela Crockwell	Community Service Provider - Youth
Angie Wilmott	Schools Guidance Counsellor/Psychologist
Des Coombs	Psychologist
Dr. Greg Radu	Psychiatrist, Eastern Health
Dr. Ted Callanan	Professor, Psychiatrist, Eastern Health
George Skinner	Social worker, Community Advocate
Lisa Browne	Community Service Provider
Mark Gruchy	Lived Experience, Community Coalition
Michelle Kinney	Nunatsiavut Government; Northern Region
Paula Corcoran-Jacobs	Lived Experience, Community Service Provider
Peter Cornish	University Professor/Researcher
Rita Notarandrea	National Organization, Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction
Thelma Whelan	Education Consultant; Western Region

Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council

Secretariat Support and General Inquiries: Mental Health and Addictions Division

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