

**Provincial
Mental Health and Addictions
Advisory Council**

Annual Report

April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM CHAIR

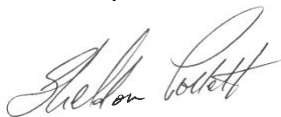
In accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the 2021–2022 Annual Report for the Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council (the Advisory Council). The Advisory Council is a Category Three (3) government entity under the **Transparency and Accountability 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.

The past year has been a challenging one with the COVID-19 global pandemic impacting the lives of members both personally and professionally, many of whom have had to turn their attention to pandemic response within their respective organizations. However, despite the many challenges, it was also a productive year for the Advisory Council. To date, we have provided oversight on the substantial completion of all 54 recommendations of the Towards Recovery Action Plan. This year we advised on the development of an Provincial Alcohol Action Plan, Life Promotion Suicide Prevention Action Plan, Gender Responsive Standards of Practice, and other program materials that are transforming the mental health and addictions system in Newfoundland and Labrador. In January 2022, both the Advisory Council and the Recovery Council were involved in a Towards Recovery Panel Discussion attended virtually by over 60 people.

On behalf of the Advisory Council, I am honoured to have played a key role this past year in the pandemic response, as we worked simultaneously to continue the work of Towards Recovery in transforming the mental health and addictions system in this province.

I offer my sincerest gratitude 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 extend appreciation for the efforts of staff within the Department of Health and Community Services for their support in making our work possible.

Sincerely,



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 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 and can be accessed [here](#).

Membership

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

The Advisory Council brings diverse backgrounds, knowledge, and experience in the area of mental health and addictions, including:

- 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: Advisory Council members shall be appointed for a term of three years and may be re-appointed for 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

Members are not remunerated for their participation on the Advisory Council. Administrative costs associated with Advisory Council meetings are covered by the Department of Health and Community Services.

The Advisory Council does not maintain a separate office, and secretariat support is provided by the Mental Health and Addictions Division, Department of Health and Community Services.

Meeting Frequency

In the 2021-22 reporting period, the Advisory Council held four virtual meetings despite the challenges with scheduling due to the pressures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. These meetings were held on July 15, 2021, September 9, 2021, October 14, 2021, and March 10, 2022. In addition to the four meetings, the Advisory Council was engaged in a Towards Recovery Panel Discussion in January 2022 and viewed mock-up rooms for the new mental health and addictions facility in March 2022. Because meetings were held virtually, no expenses have been incurred. In general, all costs incurred by the Advisory Council are administrative and covered by HCS.

Highlights and Partnerships

The Advisory Council maintains a strong partnership with the Department of HCS and the Recovery Council in providing oversight on the implementation of Towards Recovery recommendations. Its diverse membership also reflects the many community partnerships that support the work of the Advisory Council.

The highlights of 2021-22 include:

- Provided oversight on the implementation of Towards Recovery recommendations.
- Informed on the development of the following: Provincial Alcohol Action Plan; Life Promotion Suicide Prevention Action Plan; Gender Responsive Standards of Practice; Inpatient Acute-Care Standards; and the Stepped Care Model.
- Received presentations on the following: Towards Recovery; Breaking Free: Addressing Substance Use Disorders through Digital Innovation; Opioid Dependence Treatment (ODT); Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT): Assertive Community Treatment/Flexible Assertive Community Treatment Teams and Mobile Crisis Response; Inpatient Acute Care Standards; MHBASES; Integrated Service Delivery; Mental Health in Corrections; Mental Health and Addictions Dashboard; Provincial Mental Health and Addictions System Navigator; an Art Work Project; and the Naming of the New Mental Health and Addictions Facility;
- Took part in a roundtable discussion, along with the Recovery Council and Indigenous Health Team, with the Honourable Dr. Carolyn Bennett and the Honourable Dr. John Haggie in January 2022.
- Involved in a Towards Recovery Panel Discussion along with the Recovery Council that was held in January 2022.
- Toured the mock-up rooms for the new adult mental health and addictions facility in March 2022 and provided feedback on the rooms.

In addition to their role with the Advisory Council, members were invited to participate on the COVID-19 Vulnerable Populations Task Group to support pandemic planning for issues related to mental health and addictions.

There were approximately 25 Vulnerable Population Task Group meetings held in 2021-22 and the Advisory Council Chair attended most meetings, providing valuable input into the pandemic response on behalf of the Advisory Council. Furthermore, several Advisory Council members joined the Vulnerable Population Task Group representing their community agency and/or lived experience which aided the Task Group with informed planning for the pandemic and improved communication with the Advisory Council.

Report on Performance: Objectives 2020-2023

The Advisory Council provides support to the Minister of Health and Community Services in an advisory capacity. As such, the following objective will guide its direction for the period April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2023, and will be reported on yearly for the duration of this period.

Issue: Provide oversight for the implementation of recommendations in Towards Recovery. The Advisory Council is embedded into the Towards Recovery governance structure, thus providing meaningful input and oversight into the implementation of the recommendations.

Annual Objective

By March 31, 2022, 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 Towards Recovery recommendations.

Indicators:

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

Measure: Provided commentary and recommendations.

Indicator	Outcome
Provided expert and group member expertise	During 2021-22, the Advisory Council provided expertise during regularly 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.

<p>Invited community groups and other organizations to present information</p>	<p>During 2021-22, the Advisory Council continued to focus on the implementation of Towards Recovery recommendations. Presentations informed the Advisory Council’s oversight of the recommendations. Presentations included the following: updates on Towards Recovery; Opioid Dependence Therapy; Dialectical Behaviour Therapy; Inpatient Acute-Care Standards; MH-BASES; Integrated Service Delivery; Mental Health in Corrections; Mental Health and Addictions Dashboard; Breaking Free from Substance Use Online Support : Mental Health and Addictions System Navigator; and the naming of the new mental health and addictions facility. The Advisory Council was kept informed of the work of the Recovery Council through regular updates by its Chair. In January 2022, the Advisory Council and the Recovery Council were involved in a Towards Recovery Panel Discussion. The Panel Discussion included presentations by Lifewise (formerly CHANNAL), Choices for Youth, U-TURN Drop-in Centre, Stella’s Circle and CMHA-NL.</p>
<p>Provided advice to the Minister of Health and Community Services</p>	<p>Advisory Council feedback and advice was provided to the Minister on many areas related to mental health and addictions. Priority topics included: providing advice on the model of care for health in corrections; provincial expansion of opioid dependence treatment hubs; the Life Promotion Suicide Prevention Action Plan; the Alcohol Action Plan; and Gender Responsive Standards of Practice.</p>

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The appointment terms for the Advisory Council's current interim chairperson and Council members have expired. The process to identify new candidates to be considered for appointments is underway and appointments are expected to be made in the near term.

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 ensure 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 throughout 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 2021-22

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
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

Department of Health and Community Services

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