

November 4, 2019

The Honourable Dr. John Haggie
Minister of Health and Community Services

Dear Minister Haggie:

I look forward to continuing to work with you in your role as Minister of Health and Community Services. As you move forward in your work, I am confident that you will support better health services and outcomes for the people of this province, including modernization of our mental health and addictions system and expansion of primary health care. Your department is vital in ensuring the health and wellbeing of all residents.

We received a mandate from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to continue on the course we have set out, in collaboration and cooperation with all members of our House of Assembly. We are committed to working together to make Newfoundland and Labrador a better place to live, to work, and to raise a family. We are building on the work advanced as part of our plan for sustainability and growth, The Way Forward. Moving into the next four years, we remain focused on growing the economy while ensuring fiscal sustainability in a balanced and thoughtful manner. We envision a better economy, healthier people, better living and a bright future. To deliver on this plan, below are some of the activities I am asking you to lead:

Health in All Policies

- Continuing to invest in a Health in All Policies approach to ensure all sectors are mindful of the influence that their activities have on the health and wellbeing of our province and its citizens. This will involve supporting government decision-making by ensuring that the full impact of a decision on the health and wellbeing of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is understood by our government before we make changes to legislation, programs, or services.

Mental Health and Addictions

- Continuing to implement our multi-year action plan, Towards Recovery: A Vision for a Renewed Mental Health and Addictions System for Newfoundland and Labrador, including ensuring that the voice of lived experience is heard in all our work through the support of our Recovery Council, composed solely of individuals with lived experience and family members.

Midwifery

- Establishing the first location for midwifery in the province, in Gander; and
- Discussing the future expansion of midwifery services with regional health authorities.

Community Services

- Enhancing home-based supports for people with complex care needs, such as individuals living with dementia or needing palliative care.

Health Services

- Creating a Navigation Network in the regional health authorities to help clients navigate the health system better, including the creation of at least three navigation roles to complement existing navigators: Kidney and Transplant Systems Navigator, Disability Systems Navigator, and Community Support Systems Navigator;
- Continuing to work with Community Advisory Councils and Community Coalitions for Mental Health and Addictions to break down silos in the regional health authorities and improve communication between communities and the health authorities, the Department of Health and Community Services, and members of the Boards of Trustees;
- Implementing a Patient Safety and Quality Advisory Committee under the new **Patient Safety Act** to ensure mechanisms are in place to address quality concerns in our health facilities;
- Continuing to improve access to primary health care services by building on the success of primary health care teams already in place;
- Working with community partners to provide funding for a proposed end-of-life care centre in central Newfoundland;
- Launching a new program that will provide children starting in Kindergarten with access to a free, comprehensive eye exam from an optometrist;
- Enhancing the provincial drug program to cover 15 more drug therapies, including oncology treatments;
- Increasing services and supports for people across the autism spectrum and their families through implementation of our Autism Action Plan; and
- Working with the Federal Government to implement a National Pharmacare Strategy that enhances drug coverage for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Health Workforce Development and Scope of Practice

- Providing funding to improve the scope of practice for health care providers, such as allowing pharmacists to give flu vaccinations to all residents in pharmacies for free and to provide travel vaccinations in pharmacies;
- Increasing the number of nurse practitioners providing care in our communities;
- Filling vacant positions in the regional health authorities, including areas where recruitment issues exist such as licensed practical nurses and personal care attendants;
- Improving access to Practical Nursing and Personal Care Attendant programs and continuing to provide bursaries to students actively enrolled in these programs in exchange for a two-year service commitment in selected, difficult-to-fill positions; and,

- Enhancing the use of paramedics and advanced care paramedics, including implementing an Advanced Care Paramedic Training program.

Health Innovation

- Strengthening the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information to drive innovation, efficiency, and patient care by moving towards a digitized health care system, including making advancements in eHealth;
- Continuing to focus on building our highly-integrated Electronic Health Record so that all patient health information is available to providers in one place; and,
- Expanding virtual care services so people can access their health care providers without having to leave their community.

Health Infrastructure

- Partnering with the private sector to design, build, finance and maintain new health care facilities in an effort to increase access to critical health care services while maximizing value for taxpayers, in partnership with the Minister of Transportation and Works by:
 - Replacing the Waterford Hospital with a new 102-bed facility,
 - Constructing a new acute care regional hospital in Corner Brook,
 - Continuing to build the new Corner Brook long-term care home, and,
 - Constructing two new 60 bed long-term care homes in Grand Falls-Windsor and Gander; and,
- Establishing a six-bed mental health unit in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and eight new restorative care beds at the Dr. Charles S. Curtis Memorial Hospital in St. Anthony and undertaking a 20-bed expansion of the protective care unit at the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Centre in Botwood.

Tremendous progress has been made in Newfoundland and Labrador because of the work we have undertaken with our industry, cultural and community partners. These partnerships have enabled us to strengthen our resource industries and knowledge-based sectors, modernize health and social supports, and focus on improving educational outcomes for our youngest residents. However, our work does not stop there; we still have much work ahead of us to create a better economy, improve the health outcomes of residents, strengthen living conditions, and ultimately give Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a brighter future.

In addition to the items outlined above, our Cabinet is also collectively responsible for delivering on all of the commitments and targets set out in The Way Forward. Achieving these actions is critical to attaining inclusive growth, improving employment levels and creating the conditions necessary for job creation, reducing poverty, improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in our province, and realizing financial sustainability. It is essential that we work together to consider the health impacts of all our decisions as part of our Health in All Policies commitment.

I expect you to continue to be collaborative, open, accountable and transparent as you implement your duties. We will continue to use evidence, research, gender-based analysis plus, and engage with the public, stakeholders and our Indigenous partners, to inform our decisions. We are focused on service excellence and will continue to respond to the needs of the people of this great province.

In fulfilling your responsibility as Minister, I expect you to continue to show collaboration in a positive and constructive manner with your Cabinet colleagues and our peers in the House of Assembly.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are counting on us to make progress. We will continue to report publicly on our activities on our Way Forward website. Together, we will improve health, social and economic outcomes, and deliver high quality services for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our future is bright and together we can make our beautiful, rich and diverse province an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,



DWIGHT BALL
Premier