

New Brunswick Health Council

2025-2026

Business Plan



New Brunswick
Health Council | Conseil de la santé
du Nouveau-Brunswick



Our statutory mandate

New Brunswickers have a right to be aware of the decisions being made, to be part of the decision making process, and to be aware of the outcomes delivered by the health and long-term care systems as well as its cost.

The New Brunswick Health Council (NBHC) will foster this transparency, engagement, and accountability by:

- Engaging citizens in a meaningful dialogue for the purpose of improving health and long-term care service quality;
- Measuring, monitoring, and evaluating population health, as well as health and long-term care service quality;
- Informing citizens on our health and long-term care system's performance;
- Recommending improvements to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Social Development.

Effective September 1, 2023, the *New Brunswick Health Council Act* was amended and is now the *New Brunswick Health and Senior Council Act*. Our mandate was inspired by the Section 3 of the *New Brunswick Health and Senior Council Act*, which defines the objects and purposes of the Council as follows:

- (a) to promote the improvement of health and long-term care service quality in the Province;
- (b) to develop and implement mechanisms to engage the citizens of New Brunswick in meaningful dialogue for the purpose of improving health and long-term care service quality in the Province;
- (c) to measure, monitor and assess population health and health and long-term care service quality in the Province;
- (d) to identify effective practices for the improvement of health and long-term care service quality in the Province;
- (e) to evaluate strategies designed to improve health and long-term care service quality in the Province;
- (f) to assess citizen satisfaction with health and long-term care services and health and long-term care service quality in the Province;
- (g) to investigate matters respecting the health and long-term care system that are referred to it by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Social Development;

- (g. 1) to assist and support the Department of Health, the Department of Social Development, EM/ANB Inc. and the regional health authorities in the use of analytic tools and methods for health and long-term care system improvements;
- (g. 2) to produce comparable and actionable data and provide statistical analysis and information for policy and program development;
- (g. 3) to support the academic and research sector by disclosing information in accordance with sections 43 and 43.1 of the *Personal Health Information Privacy and Access Act*;
- (g. 4) to support patient-centric change and improvements in health and long-term care data governance;
- (h) to provide recommendations to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Social Development with respect to any of the activities described in paragraphs (a) to (g.4);
- (i) to take into account the particular needs of the two official linguistic communities in the exercise of the activities referred to in paragraphs (a) to (h); and
- (j) to carry out any other activities or duties as may be authorized or required by this Act or as the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may direct.

Business plan deliverables for 2025-2026

The 2024-2025 fiscal year marked a turning point for healthcare in New Brunswick. The newly elected government, guided by the principles of collaboration, transparency, and a renewed sense of possibility, outlined a vision for a transformed health system.

The government is prioritizing an approach to improving healthcare access in New Brunswick, with a strong focus on primary care. Key commitments include regionally tailored primary care models, emphasizing community engagement in healthcare planning, and leveraging technology to modernize services. The government is committed to evidence-based decision making and transparency to build public trust.

The NBHC plays a crucial role in supporting this agenda with a dual mandate to report publicly on the performance of the provincial health and long-term care system, and to engage citizens in the improvement of health and long-term care service quality.

In addition to our quarterly deliverables included in this business plan, we will also be collaborating with first nations health center leadership. Since 2017, the NBHC has been managing federal funding aimed at improving access for indigenous communities to health and health service quality data. First nations health leaders have made great progress in the development of an integrated provincial approach. Over the coming year, discussions will be aimed at defining how best the NBHC can be of continued support.

As of September 1, 2023, amendments to the NBHC Act have come into effect. In response to the aging population and related challenges, these amendments were introduced emphasizing the importance of long-term care services. Publicly reporting the results of our latest home care survey results this year will provide an opportunity to highlight key observations on citizens' experiences with these services. We will also be closely following how the new government confirms its priorities for this sector.

The NBHC will continue to fulfil its mandate by providing pertinent information pertaining to population health and health service quality. This business plan outlines the NBHC's strategic direction for the upcoming year, focusing on two key areas:

- Performance Reporting
 - measuring, monitoring, evaluating, and informing on population health and health service quality.
- Public Participation
 - Engaging citizens in a meaningful dialogue for the purpose of improving health service quality.

This plan presents timelines for key deliverables across four quarters:

- Q1 – April to June 2025
- Q2 – July to September 2025
- Q3 – October to December 2025
- Q4 – January to March 2026

Performance Reporting

Q1 – April to June 2025

Home Care Services

Building upon the valuable insights from our previous Home Care Surveys, the NBHC will report publicly about the experiences of New Brunswick residents receiving both clinical and personal support services. This will include the perspectives of individuals receiving clinical care from the Extra-Mural Program health professionals and/or non-medical care from home support workers in terms of communication, sharing of information, coordination of care, and more. This content will be developed by analysing survey data, identifying key themes, and emerging trends, and incorporating information from administrative sources to provide insights on wait times for services.

Access to Primary Care

The NBHC continues its annual survey to monitor and report on New Brunswickers' access to and experiences with primary care services. Building upon the valuable insights from our previous Primary Care Surveys, our team will analyse the data to identify key trends and challenges. Moreover, we will conduct a comprehensive review of the current primary care landscape in New Brunswick, drawing upon national and international data sources to facilitate comparisons with Canadian and peer countries. This comparative analysis will provide valuable context for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the New Brunswick primary care system and inform the development of evidence-based policy recommendations.

Q2 – July to September 2025

Health Behaviours in Youth

Building upon the successful completion of the 2024-2025 New Brunswick Student Wellness and Education Survey, the NBHC will publicly report key findings related to youth health behaviours. Our team will analyse the survey data, identifying significant trends and emerging concerns regarding the physical, mental, and social well-being of New Brunswick youth. These findings will be communicated to key stakeholders, including citizens, policymakers, educators, and youth-serving organizations, to inform evidence-based interventions and support the creation of a healthier future for young people in the province.

Q3 – October to December 2025

Resources in Primary Care

The NBHC will pursue the work initiated in 2023-2024 towards measurement of primary care human Resources. We will share the findings with stakeholders to ensure the information is validated and standardized. We will also produce reliable indicators, and measures and strategic observations on the number and distribution of family physicians in New Brunswick. This data-driven approach will provide an understanding of the current state of the primary care workforce and will be publicly available on the NBHC web site and updated moving forward.

Avoidable Mortality

Building upon previous analyses conducted in 2015 and 2020, the council will undertake an evaluation of leading causes of avoidable deaths in New Brunswick. This work will involve analysing mortality data to identify deaths before the age of 75 that could potentially have been avoided through timely prevention or treatment. The analysis will be conducted at both the provincial and health zone levels, providing valuable insights into regional variations and informing targeted interventions.

Q4 – January to March 2026

Variability in Acute Care Sector

The NBHC will examine “Health Service Quality (HSQ)” indicators for the acute care sector for variability in performance by health zone. Insights will be validated with stakeholders and citizens will be informed through a series of communication strategies. Results of the updated HSQ indicators for all sectors of care will be made available on the NBHC website.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Q1 to Q4 – April 2025 to March 2026

The NBHC is mandated to actively engage citizens in improving health service quality. This involves providing opportunities for citizens to share their experiences with healthcare services, disseminating information about health system performance and key issues, and fostering dialogue on improving the quality of healthcare services.

The NBHC recognizes several challenges in current public participation efforts. These include limited understanding of health zone-specific information regarding health service quality, ineffective use of data to inform decision making, low levels of citizen participation in health service improvement, and fragmented citizen engagement efforts across the province.

To address these challenges, the NBHC will collaborate with health system organizations, particularly the two Regional Health Authorities who have responsibilities in assessing community needs. Our aim is to start with two health zones for targeted engagement activities. The goal is to foster partnerships with community stakeholders, health professionals, citizens, health authorities, and policymakers within these selected zones.

The NBHC will share health zone specific data and insights on health service quality with stakeholders. In return, stakeholders will provide valuable local perspectives, identify data gaps, and inform the prioritization of zone level needs.

All engagement activities will be designed to be accessible to all citizens, including those with disabilities and individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The expected outcomes of these zone-level initiatives include: increased awareness of the NBHC and its work, better-informed stakeholders with a deeper understanding of health system performance, improved understanding of the unique needs and realities within each health zone, more meaningful use of data to drive health service quality improvements, and stronger, more sustained citizen engagement in healthcare decision-making.

Communications

Each year, the NBHC undertakes communications and promotional initiatives through various media platforms to raise awareness of a subject matter for a given topic. The NBHC uses different communication strategies to increase survey participation and public awareness. The following outlines promotional activities for this fiscal year:

Q1 - April to June 2025

Population Health Survey

Launch a multi-channel promotional campaign targeting all New Brunswick citizens 18 years and older. Utilize social media, local media partnerships (radio, TV, print), and targeted digital advertising to raise awareness and encourage participation.

Q2 – July to September 2025

Population Health Survey

Continued promotional campaign to boost participation of New Brunswick citizens 18 years and older, focusing specifically on increasing engagement within targeted communities and demographic groups with unreached participation quotas.

Q3 October to December 2025

Primary Care Survey

Launch a multi-channel promotional campaign targeting 70,000 citizens 18 years and older. Utilize social media, local media partnerships (radio, TV, print), and targeted digital advertising to raise awareness and encourage participation.

Student Wellness and Education Survey

Launch a multi-channel promotional campaign targeting 50,000 parents of K-grade 5 students and 85,000 students in grades 4-12. Utilize social media, local media partnerships (radio, TV, print), and targeted digital advertising to raise awareness and encourage participation.