

NEW BRUNSWICK FAMILY PLAN

FOSTERING HEALTHY AGING
AND SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

MAY 2017



NEW BRUNSWICK FAMILY PLAN
FOSTERING HEALTHY AGING AND SUPPORT FOR SENIORS
MAY 2017

Province of New Brunswick
PO Box 6000, Fredericton NB E3B 5H1 Canada

ISBN 978-1-4605-1742-0 (PDF: English)
ISBN 978-1-4605-1741-3 (PDF : française)

11161

Education. Jobs. Families. Listening and getting things done.

Like the strong ties that bind families in our province together, this government has linked three major plans that – together – will improve the lives of all New Brunswickers for decades to come. Each plan is important in and of itself, but each plan also needs the others to succeed.

The **New Brunswick Family Plan** builds on the goals and achievements of our **Economic Growth Plan** and our **10-year Education Plans**. It also works in tandem with those plans to ensure that government is tackling important issues holistically and not operating in silos.

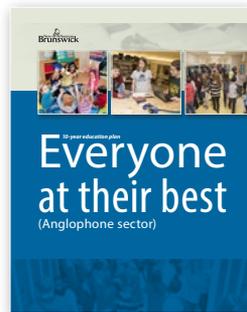
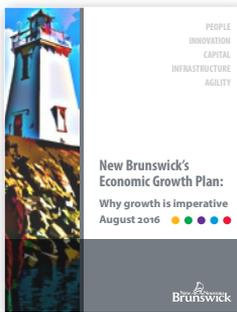
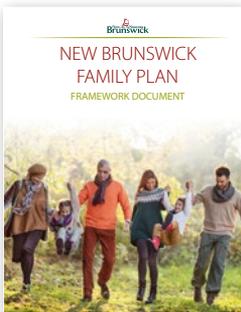
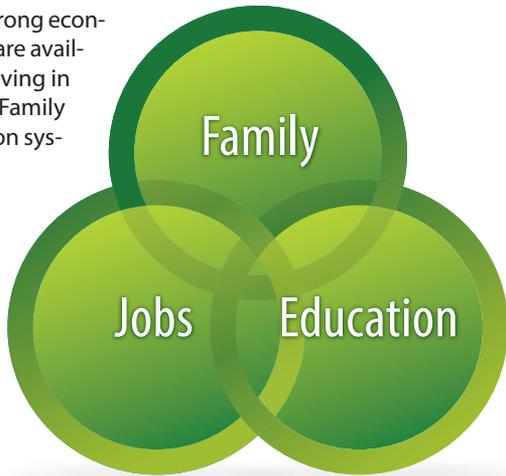
Our Economic Growth Plan must be supported by our education plans to be successful and to ensure that our workforce is well trained and innovative. Our economy also needs the social supports contained within the Family Plan in order to thrive fully.

Likewise, our education system needs a strong economy so that our graduates can find meaningful work here in New Brunswick. Our education system also needs the Family Plan so that the social determinants that impact a student’s ability to learn can be addressed early on.

Finally, our Family Plan needs a strong economy so that equal opportunities are available for women and for people living in poverty or with a disability. The Family Plan also needs a strong education system to act as a social equalizer.

An integrated approach such as this one is important, especially when a number of government initiatives cut across all three of these plans.

For example, literacy is crucial to our Economic Growth Plan that aims to maintain an educated workforce. Literacy is



also an important aspect of our education plans where students are expected to make a seamless transition between learning to read and reading to learn. And finally, literacy is a key component of the Family Plan, especially as it relates to our ability to lift people out of poverty.

Other initiatives tie these plans together as well. For example, improved access to quality and affordable daycare services is as relevant to the New Brunswick workforce as it is to the education system where more students will arrive better prepared for their first year of learning. Of course, the expansion of daycare services supports various initiatives in the Family Plan, such as reducing poverty in our province.

Your government has laid the foundation for these plans to work together to achieve our collective goals. We achieve the best results when we work together and create interconnected plans focused on what matters most to New Brunswickers and their families.

These three plans work in tandem to create a unified vision that will guide your government in delivering results based on the priorities that you have shared with us.

Our collective efforts will make New Brunswick the best place to live, work and raise a family.

New Brunswick Family Plan

It is clear that individuals' socioeconomic circumstances have significant bearing on their health – and vice versa. The *New Brunswick Family Plan* is based on the premise that an integrated system of health and social care will help vulnerable populations lead independent, healthy and productive lives.

Integrating care can be particularly beneficial for the vulnerable segments of society that have difficulty accessing care due to social isolation or other barriers. This can include disadvantaged groups, persons with chronic conditions and persons with mental health problems.

The Family Plan also recognizes that health is much more than health care and that all partners must work together to address the social, economic and environmental determinants of health. Taking action on these factors builds communities and benefits society - good health matters to every person, family and community and is essential for economic and social development.

Just as the Family Plan is part of an integrated approach to help improve the lives of New Brunswickers, each of its pillars works in tandem with the others to provide a unified vision for program development and service delivery. For example, compassionate care and home and community-based care are also important components of healthy aging and support for seniors, and wellness plays an integral role in disease management and prevention.

Similarly, food security and healthy food availability, as well as affordable housing and transportation, have a deep impact on well-being; working toward equal pay for work of equal value and promoting inclusivity in the labour market are essential for reducing barriers that prevent individuals from participating fully in their communities; and advancing gender equality is critical to all aspects of a healthy society, from reducing poverty to promoting the health and well-being of all individuals.

Each pillar is a starting point for the development and implementation of effective policies, programs and strategies. Their success will be ensured by undertaking a comprehensive approach within and across all sectors and by providing opportunities for all stakeholders to take coordinated action at various levels of influence, and in a variety of ways.

The seven pillars of the New Brunswick Family Plan:

- 1 Improving access to primary and acute care
- 2 Promoting wellness
- 3 Supporting those with addictions and mental health challenges
- 4 Fostering healthy aging and support for seniors
- 5 Advancing women's equality
- 6 Reducing poverty
- 7 Providing support for persons living with a disability

Introduction

As the Family Plan builds on the objectives and achievements of the Economic Growth Plan and the 10-year Education Plans, so too does it build on existing initiatives and strategies of government, such as the Home First Strategy, Aging Strategy, Wellness Strategy, Provincial Health Plan and the Economic and Social Inclusion Plan.

Fostering Healthy Aging and Support for Seniors is a combination of efforts undertaken in these areas. It is based on current initiatives, ongoing commitments and stakeholder feedback and delineates the goals and actions that will address the challenges of an aging population and the opportunities to make positive changes to improve seniors' quality of life. It focuses on healthy, active aging, and on home and community-based care integrated across sectors and services.

The goals and actions of this plan will help support seniors maintain their health and independence by transforming the health and social care systems into an integrated continuum of care that is more sustainable and that better meets their needs. This is achieved through initiatives that are person-centred and community-based, and which focus on prevention, wellness and long-term care within inclusive, age-friendly environments.

Fostering Healthy Aging and Support for Seniors is also supported by initiatives currently underway as part of the Priority Delivery Unit on Families. The priority delivery units oversee cross-departmental initiatives to significantly reduce silo thinking and improve access to quality services and programs. Three initiatives in particular have an overall impact on healthy aging and support for seniors.

- Implementing actions to support the Home First and Aging strategies in order to improve access to home and community-based supports, as well as better integration of health and social care services and an enhanced focus on prevention and well-being.
- Improving long term care assessments to ensure seniors are evaluated in an efficient manner and within an appropriate amount of time.

- Enhancing client assessments for residential placements to ensure placement options respond to the increasingly complex needs of seniors.

These initiatives set the stage for a robust action plan on achieving the areas of focus outlined in the following pages.

Areas of focus

New Brunswick has the largest proportion of seniors in Canada and this percentage will increase in the coming years. While this is a challenge to the system, it is also an opportunity to deliver more effective and sustainable long-term care services to improve the quality of life for all seniors in the province.

Seniors want to remain independent, preferably in their own home or community and they need the proper support to do so. Access to a range of home supports and home health services, as well as specialized care options, will help seniors be more independent and better supported in managing chronic illness.

The areas of focus outlined below will be further supported by the recommendations from the *Aging Strategy for New Brunswick* as presented by the Council on Aging.

Focusing on healthy, active aging with particular attention to prevention and wellness within an inclusive, age-friendly community environment. Well-being is the key to healthy aging. This includes physical activity, good nutrition and a mindset that embraces mental health, spiritual health, social interaction, volunteerism and community engagement. Taking ownership of well-being can only be achieved with the support of all partners in the promotion of healthy living and initiatives that encourage seniors to age actively and maintain independence for as long as possible. Age-friendly communities play a critical role in helping seniors enjoy a good quality of life within a physical and social environment that respects diversity and is designed to help seniors live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved.



Actions

- Continue to support *Wellness Strategy* initiatives that prioritize lifelong wellness, with an emphasis on seniors, to improve their health and quality of life.
- Implement the *New Brunswick Age-friendly Communities Recognition* initiative to encourage communities and municipalities to take sustainable actions towards becoming age-friendly, including the establishment of policies, services, and structures that promote healthy aging and wellness.
- Promote the *Wellness Movement* social marketing campaign to promote healthy living and foster community-driven efforts to create supportive environments for wellness.

Improving access to home and community-based supports from the perspective of the individual and based on a coordinated model of care. To better meet the needs of seniors, enhanced home support services and options for care in the community are needed. Access to these types of supports helps seniors maintain their health and independence through an integrated continuum of care that is more sustainable and targeted, and one that considers various values, cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, social circumstances and lifestyle choices. When all service providers adopt a person-centered approach to care, seniors and their families are more engaged in determining their service needs.

Actions

- Implement the *Seniors' Health, Well-Being and Home Safety Review* initiative to deliver home consultations to seniors and their caregivers to provide information on wellness, health and social services that will help to create safe and healthy home environments.
- Promote the use of technology to allow caregivers and families to monitor the health of the senior and take preventive action to prevent many unnecessary complications that could lead to deteriorating health and hospitalization.
- Implement a community based dementia care initiative to deliver essential dementia care services in the community by collaborating with community partners such as geriatricians, allied health-care professionals, the Alzheimer's Society and other service providers.

Providing a responsive and integrated system that is accessible, identifies and bridges gaps between health and social services and is centred on rehabilitation and reablement. Filling gaps between home-based and residential care will broaden the range of services available, make better use of existing community resources and respond to varying needs, enabling seniors to better navigate between health and social services. Effective integration of service delivery integrates primary, acute and long-term care, as well as access to enhanced, timely rehabilitation and reablement services either at home or in the community. Introducing more health-care services in communities will support seniors and their families in their health-care choices.

Actions

- Establish clear and consistent expectations for senior care in nursing homes and special care homes, and those receiving home care by evaluating current policies and legislation.
- Help seniors receive care in their homes rather than in hospitals and nursing homes by creating pilot projects for collaborative senior care.

- Promote the *Rapid Rehabilitation and Reablement* initiative to increase the number of persons receiving intensive rehabilitation services that will help them recover from illness and injury and return home faster following, or in the prevention of, a hospital stay.
- Develop and implement a new Nursing Home Renovation and Replacement Plan that will address aging infrastructure and the need for additional beds.

Facilitating access to appropriate supports and care to enable healthy aging. To help seniors experience enhanced quality of life, it is important to ensure that they are able to easily access and navigate the services available to them. Communities also play an important role in helping seniors meet their aging needs and can help influence their social environment by promoting connections that positively affect their physical and mental well-being. Equally important is effective support for caregivers as they deliver care to their loved ones. Caregivers need to know where to turn when they require information related to seniors' needs.

Actions

- Explore options to help seniors retain their independence and incentives for individuals who support a family member.
- Implement resources to assist seniors in accessing and disseminating the supports and services available to them.
- Improve the long term care assessment process so it is more timely and easier to use.
- Continue to work with partners to establish more adult day centres.

Conclusion

Seniors want to be recognized as valuable, contributing members of society. They want opportunities to share their knowledge, skills and wisdom and live in age-friendly communities that consider their needs. Achieving the goals and actions we have outlined in this plan will work toward *Fostering Healthy Aging and Support for Seniors* and every other pillar of the Family Plan, as they work in tandem to maximize our results and opportunities.

Fostering Healthy Aging and Support for Seniors strives to ensure seniors can live independently for as long as possible in accessible physical environments, with access to community-based services. It also espouses a culture of person-centred support to ensure seniors have what they need, when and where they need it. And it works to improve the way in which seniors receive care and support to ensure a positive aging experience.