



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

MISSION

SEXUAL HEALTH NOVA SCOTIA (SHNS) IS A LEADING AND EXPERT VOICE AROUND THE ISSUES OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH. WE CHAMPION POSITIVE SEXUAL HEALTH THROUGHOUT THE LIFESPAN FOR ALL NOVA SCOTIANS THROUGH THE FOLLOWING CORE ACTIVITIES:

- ADVOCACY;
- EDUCATION;
- NAVIGATION;
- PARTNERSHIP.

VISION

WE ENVISION A PROVINCE WHERE POSITIVE SEXUAL HEALTH IS HELD IN THE SAME REGARD AS ANY OTHER AREA OF WELLNESS, AND PEOPLE CAN ENJOY THEIR SEXUALITY FREE FROM SHAME AND VIOLENCE, WITH ACCESS TO JUDGEMENT-FREE SERVICES WHEN AND WHERE THEY NEED THEM.

VALUES

SEXUAL HEALTH NOVA SCOTIA AND ITS MEMBER CENTRES ARE:

- SEX-POSITIVE, OPEN-MINDED, AND NON-SHAMING
- RESPECTFUL OF INDIVIDUALS' CONFIDENTIALITY AND AUTONOMY
- PRO-CHOICE
- TRAUMA-INFORMED
- COMMITTED TO AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH ROOTED IN BEST AND PROMISING PRACTICES
- MINDFUL OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR WORK
- WE CAN DO MORE TOGETHER THAN WE CAN ALONE.

INTRODUCTION

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

AS I WRITE THIS NOTE WE ARE JUST A FEW WEEKS INTO A BIG TRANSITION FOR SHNS. OUR INCREDIBLE PROVINCIAL COORDINATOR LEIGH HEIDE HAS TAKEN A POSITION WITH THE CBRC AND HAS LEFT, AND WE HAVE HIRED STELLA SAMUELS TO TAKE OVER THE REINS. I MUST FIRST THANK LEIGH FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND ALL THAT THEY HAVE PUT INTO THEIR WORK WITH SHNS. WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED WORD THAT OUR FUNDING LANDSCAPE WILL LOOK VERY DIFFERENT NEXT YEAR WHICH HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY LEIGH'S HARD WORK AT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING AND ADVOCACY FOR SEXUAL HEALTH IN NOVA SCOTIA. WE ARE FIGURING OUT WHAT SHNS LOOKS LIKE WITHOUT LEIGH, AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT THINGS ARE IN GOOD HANDS WITH STELLA.

LOOKING BACK OVER THE PAST YEAR, TOGETHER, WE HAVE MANAGED TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO NAVIGATE A SECOND YEAR OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, WITH THE OPENING AND CLOSING OF SERVICES. THE MEMBER-CENTRES HAVE DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB ADAPTING AND DOING WHAT THEY CAN UNDER THESE STRANGE CIRCUMSTANCES. THE SHNS BOARD HAS REMAINED COMMITTED THROUGHOUT THIS TRYING TIME.

ALTHOUGH OUR SEXCELLENCE AWARD CEREMONY WAS POSTPONED, THE SELECTION COMMITTEE CHOSE AN OUTSTANDING RECIPIENT, RACHELE MANETT, EDUCATION COORDINATOR AT VENUS ENVY. WE LOOK FORWARD TO HONOURING HER SOON.

THERE ARE MANY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR, BUT ONE I WOULD LIKE TO MENTION IS THE NEW BOARD TRAINING SERIES ORGANIZED BY COMMITTEE WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF LEIGH. WE HAVE PUT IN PLACE A SERIES OF TRAINING SESSIONS FOCUSED ON BOARD MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURROUNDING SEXUAL HEALTH AND THIS HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT ADDITION SUPPORTING OUR GROWTH AND STRENGTHENING SHNS AND THE MEMBER-CENTRES.

I WANT TO SINCERELY THANK OUR EXECUTIVE, MEMBER-CENTRE REPRESENTATIVES, AND THE BOARD MEMBERS FOR YOUR TIME AND COMMITMENT, I APPRECIATE YOUR SERVICE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION AND HARD WORK.

JENNY RAND
CHAIR, SEXUAL HEALTH NOVA SCOTIA

WHO WE ARE

MEMBER-CENTRES

CAPE BRETON CENTRE FOR SEXUAL HEALTH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - VANESSA WALKER

HALIFAX SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - ABBEY FERGUSON

SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE FOR CUMBERLAND COUNTY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - RENE ROSS

SOUTH SHORE SEXUAL HEALTH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - JULIE VEINOT

SHEET HARBOUR SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - LARA KADEN

PICTOU COUNTY SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JENNY RAND - CHAIR

MARGARET LEWIS - VICE-CHAIR + HSHC REP

SARAH RODIMON - SECRETARY

SARA BRUSHETT - TREASURER

BRYAH BOUTILIER - MEMBER-AT-LARGE

COLLETTE ROBERT - MEMBER-AT-LARGE

EMMA VAN ROOYEN - MEMBER-AT-LARGE

KATHY MCKAY - MEMBER-AT-LARGE

LORRIE BOUTILIER - SHSHC REP

JULIE VEINOT - SSSH REP

MADISON BENNETT - MEMBER-AT-LARGE

PHILLIP JOY - MEMBER-AT-LARGE

ROBERT ROBINSON - SHCCC REP

WINTER HILL - CBCSH REP

STAFF LEIGH HEIDE - PROVINCIAL COORDINATOR

2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

SEXCELLENCE AWARD 2022

THIS YEAR SHNS WAS SO EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE OUR 2022 WINNER, RACHELE MANETT, EDUCATION COORDINATOR AT VENUS ENVY IN HALIFAX. IN HER ROLE AT VENUS ENVY, MANETT COORDINATES AND DELIVERS A VARIETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS ON THEMES SUCH AS CONSENT, PLEASURE, RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL HEALTH, FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS, ALONG WITH SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH FINDING GENDER-AFFIRMING PRODUCTS AND ITEMS TO FIT THEIR SEXUAL HEALTH NEEDS. THEY HAVE ALSO DELIVERED EDUCATION ON SEXUALITY IN OTHER SETTINGS, INCLUDING AN INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COURSE AT DALHOUSIE TITLED EXPLORING DISABLED SEXUALITY.

THE INTERSECTION OF DISABILITY AND SEXUALITY IS AN AREA OF PASSION FOR MANETT, AND THEY HOLD AN MA, FOR WHICH THEY FOCUSED THEIR RESEARCH ON THE EXPERIENCES OF ADULTS WITH ACQUIRED PHYSICAL DISABILITIES AROUND SEXUALITY. SHE IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON A PROJECT WITH TETRA SOCIETY TO CREATE AND ADAPT SEX TOYS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH DISABILITIES. WE ARE THRILLED TO PRESENT RACHELE MANETT WITH THE 2022 SEXCELLENCE AWARD FOR HER EXCEPTIONAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION WORK, AND LOOK FORWARD TO CELEBRATING THEM AT AN UPCOMING VIRTUAL CEREMONY!

TEST NOW AND I'M READY - HIV SELF-TESTING PROJECTS

IN THE FALL OF 2021 SHNS PARTNERED WITH THE COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH CENTRE (CBRC) AND REACH NEXUS TO PARTICIPATE IN TWO HIV SELF-TESTING PROJECTS, AND PROVIDE SELF-TEST KITS TO PEOPLE ACROSS NOVA SCOTIA THROUGH OUR NETWORK OF SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRES. TEST NOW: COMMUNITY EDITION WAS A PILOT STUDY LED BY CBRC, WITH THE SUPPORT OF REACH NEXUS, THE PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA, AND A NETWORK OF MORE THAN 20 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. REACH NEXUS ALSO LAUNCHED THE I'M READY PROJECT, WHICH PROVIDES SELF-TESTS THROUGH THE I'M READY APP, AND SEVERAL OF OUR CENTRES SERVED AS DISTRIBUTION SITES.

2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

YOU+U=U - HIV PREVENTION RESEARCH PROJECT

IN LATE 2021 WE RECEIVED FUNDING FROM GILEAD SCIENCES INC.'S CANADA TO ZERO GRANT PROGRAM FOR A PROJECT ON HIV PREVENTION, TITLED YOU+U=U. THE PROJECT IS SET TO EXPLORE THE RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT IS THE CURRENT UNDERSTANDING IN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITIES (SPECIFICALLY 2SLGBTQIA+ INDIVIDUALS AGES 30+) OF UNDETECTABLE=UNTRANSMITTABLE AS AN EFFECTIVE PREVENTION METHOD TO REDUCE THE TRANSMISSION OF HIV, AND HOW CAN LOCALLY-INFORMED AND DEVELOPED STRATEGIES BE USED TO REACH SPECIFIC POPULATIONS AND INCREASE CONNECTION TO THE HIV CASCADE OF CARE? WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO HAVE TWO PROJECT STAFF WITH US FOR THIS INITIATIVE AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THE RESOURCES THEY DEVELOP FOR OUR COMMUNITY!

SRH WEEK AND STI TESTING ACCESS

EACH YEAR SHNS JOINS OUR PARTNERS AT ACTION CANADA FOR SEXUAL HEALTH & RIGHTS IN CELEBRATING SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH WEEK, AND THIS YEAR'S THEME WAS ADVOCACY IN ACTION. TO MARK THE WEEK WE CONTINUED OUR ONGOING ADVOCACY FOR GEOGRAPHICALLY CONSISTENT, INCLUSIVE AND TIMELY ACCESS TO STI TESTING IN NOVA SCOTIA. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS EXACERBATED ISSUES OF INACCESSIBILITY IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM, WHICH WERE ALREADY AT AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL IN NOVA SCOTIA.

NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO TRAVEL AT THEIR OWN PERSONAL COST OR WAIT WEEKS FOR AN STI TEST. WE RELEASED A STATEMENT TO HELP SPREAD AWARENESS OF THE INEQUITY WE'VE BEEN HEARING FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT SEXUAL HEALTH CARE, INCLUDING STI TESTING, IS ESSENTIAL HEALTH CARE. WE MUST CONTINUE TO BE PROACTIVE IN OUR APPROACH TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INFECTION.

SHNS & OUR NETWORK OF MEMBER-CENTRES BY THE NUMBERS

10,120

OF CONTACTS
WITH INDIVIDUAL
CLIENTS

1,373

OF CLIENTS
ENGAGED WITH
PROGRAMS

1,645

OF VOLUNTEER
HOURS
CONTRIBUTED

135

OF HOURS OF
EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAMS

20,757

OF SAFER SEX
SUPPLIES
DISTRIBUTED



2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

MEMBER-CENTRE HIGHLIGHTS

HALIFAX SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

- CLINICALLY, WE WERE BUSIER THAN EVER. WE STARTED OFFERING A NEW SERVICE, ENDOMETRIAL BIOPSIES. WE HAVE HAD 20 PHYSICIANS PRACTICE WITH US OVER THE FISCAL, AND HAVE A CURRENT TEAM OF 17.
- WE LAUNCHED THE YOUNG READERS BOOK CLUB, GIVING AWAY 170 BOOKS WITH 2SLGBTQ+ THEMES AND PRE-MADE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS. MANY FAMILIES HAVE MET US OVER ZOOM TO READ AND DISCUSS TOGETHER.
- WE HAD REALLY STRONG PARTNERSHIPS THIS YEAR. WITH CBRC, WE HAVE AWAY 100 FREE HIV SELF-TEST KITS THROUGH TESTNOW. WE ALSO COLLABORATED WITH CBRC AND PRIDEHEALTH TO CREATE FREE PHYSICIAN-ORIENTED ONLINE COURSES TO ENCOURAGE MORE PROVIDERS TO PRACTICE GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE AND STBBI TESTING AND TREATMENT.

SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE FOR CUMBERLAND COUNTY

- THE CENTRE REMAINED OPEN AND STAFF WORKED THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC AND EXPERIENCED SOME OF ITS HIGHEST CLIENT NUMBERS IN YEARS,
- WE COMPLETED THE PROJECT "CONNECTING SEXUAL HEALTH MATTERS IN NOVA SCOTIA" IN SUPPORT OF THE NOVA SCOTIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION PLAN, ALLOWING US TO DELIVER COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT TO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY IN ONLINE SPACES. THE SEXUALHEALTHMATTERS TIKTOK ACCOUNT IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE ACCOUNTS IN THE COUNTRY, AND OUR EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS RECEIVED MILLIONS OF VIEWS.
- WE PARTNERED WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO DELIVER SAFER SPACES TRAINING IN OUR COMMUNITY.

SHEET HARBOUR SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

- WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WORK WITH NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH TO ACCOMMODATE PEOPLE WHO FEEL MORE SECURE WITH A FEMALE NURSE PRACTITIONER.

2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

MEMBER-CENTRE HIGHLIGHTS

- WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THE CREATION OF OUR OWN TRANSFORMATION CLOSET, AND CAN NOW PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH GENDER AFFIRMING GEAR – FREE OF CHARGE.
- WE ARE CURRENTLY ORGANIZING THE FIRST ANNUAL PRIDE WEEKEND IN SHEET HARBOUR, HAPPENING IN THE END OF JULY.

SOUTH SHORE SEXUAL HEALTH

- WINNING THE BENTLEY AWARD FROM ACTION CANADA FOR SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION CLOSET, WHICH CAME WITH POSITIVE RECOGNITION AND A \$9,000 PRIZE.
- PUBLISHING THE EBOOK AND PRINT VERSION OF UNCENSORED: THE GENDER DIVERSE SEXUALITY HANDBOOK FOR EVERY BODY.
- OPENING A SMALL PRIDE SHOP IN OUR CENTRE TO HELP DISTRIBUTE PRIDE GEAR WHILE RAISING FUNDS FOR OUR WORK.


CAPE BRETON CENTRE FOR SEXUAL HEALTH

- WE ARE BACK TO HAVING A PHYSICAL OFFICE SPACE. IT IS A SHARED SPACE WITH THE CAPE BRETON YOUTH PROJECT IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN SYDNEY
- NSCC STUDENT KRISTEN HOWLEY DID HER WORK PLACEMENT WITH US FROM NOVEMBER 22, 2021-DECEMBER 17, 2021. KRISTEN CHOSE TO TAKE THE LEAD ON OUR MERRY MENSTRUAL CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISER. SHE SUCCESSFULLY GOT LOTS OF DONATIONS OF MENSTRUAL SUPPLIES FOR OUR CENTRE TO DISTRIBUTE TO PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY FOR FREE.
- WE ARE FINALLY ALLOWED BACK INTO THE SCHOOLS TO DO PRESENTATIONS. WE HAVE BEEN FULLY BOOKED SINCE.

FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

SEXUAL HEALTH NOVA SCOTIA GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA, IN THE FORM OF OPERATING FUNDS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELLNESS.

A BIG THANKS TO GILEAD SCIENCES LTD FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF OUR ONGOING "YOU+U=U" PROJECT.



WE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE MANY REGIONAL/LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY- BASED GRANTMAKERS THAT SUPPORT OUR MEMBER-CENTRES, AS WELL AS THE INDIVIDUAL NOVA SCOTIANS WHO HAVE MADE PRIVATE DONATIONS TO SHNS OR ITS MEMBER-CENTRES THIS YEAR.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND NETWORKS, VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBER- CENTRE STAFF. WE COULD NOT STRIVE TO MEET OUR MISSION AND VISION WITHOUT YOU.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING US!