

# ANNUAL REPORT



2020  
-  
2021

# INTRODUCTION

## Message from the Board Chair

*I must start with a sincere message of gratitude to our dedicated Board of Directors who volunteer their time, enthusiasm, and skills to Sexual Health Nova Scotia. We are all learning what our new reality looks like and have continued to show up and contribute despite the uncertain times we find ourselves in throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. This has been a trying time for communities across the world, and the way that Sexual Health Nova Scotia has adapted, adjusted and pivoted is something we all should be proud of.*

*I especially want to thank our Provincial Coordinator, Leigh Heide, who has been leading Sexual Health Nova Scotia through these difficult times. They have now been with Sexual Health Nova Scotia for nearly three years and they continue to provide support with diligence and care to the six member-centres across the province.*

*Although 2020-21 has been an unusual year we do have several things to celebrate. A few highlights are:*

*In the Fall of 2020 we undertook a strategic planning process with the help of Max Chauvin. Out of this we have struck a new working committee, The Board Development Committee, which will focus on, among other things, equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

*This year we also were joined by a NSCC student, Sanda Burnett, from the Disability Supports Program who helped with evaluating our Doing It Better Program. This work will continue with support from the Federal Summer Student Program as we welcome Olivia Corrigan to work closely with Leigh over the Summer.*

*In January 2021 we asked for public nominations for our Sexcellence Award. Several board members deliberated and selected the winners. At our Sexcellence Award Ceremony, on May 29th, we presented Chris Cochrane and Tuma Young with awards. Both Chris and Tuma have contributed greatly to advancing 2SLGBTQIA+ and BIPOC sexual health and rights in Nova Scotia. Along with receiving these awards a donation was made on behalf of each winner to a charity of their choice, which included 902GameChangers and the Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance.*

*Finally, I want to say a huge thank you, on behalf of the board, from the bottom of our hearts, to Sally Austin who is retiring from the board as our Treasurer. Sally's service, support, and guidance has been the epitome of care and dedication. We thank you.*

*I hope that everyone can stay engaged, positive about sexual health and wellness and above all, safe and healthy.*



Jenny R. Rand, PhD

# INTRODUCTION

## Who we are

### Member-Centres

CAPE BRETON CENTRE FOR SEXUAL HEALTH

*Executive Director - Vanessa Walker*

HALIFAX SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

*Executive Director - Kate Calnan*

PICTOU COUNTY SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

*Executive Director - Vania MacMillan*

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 - Danielle Jackson*



### Board of Directors

*Jenny Rand - Chair*

*Margaret Lewis - Vice-Chair/HSHC Rep*

*Rebecca Silver-Arsenault - Secretary/PCSHC Rep*

*Sally Austin - Treasurer*

*Kathy McKay - Member-at-Large*

*Madison Bennett - Member-at-Large*

*Clare Heggie - Member-at-Large*

*Phillip Joy - Member-at-Large*

*Corey Hunter - SHCCC Rep*

*Lisa Smith-McInnis - SHSHC Rep*

*Mitch Hill - CBCSH Rep*

*Julie Veinot - SSSH Rep*

### Staff

*Provincial Coordinator*

*Leigh Heide*

# INTRODUCTION

## Who we are

### MISSION

Sexual Health Nova Scotia (SHNS) is a leading and expert voice around sexual and reproductive health issues. 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 judgment-free services when and where they need them.

### VALUES

Sexual Health Nova Scotia and its member centres are:

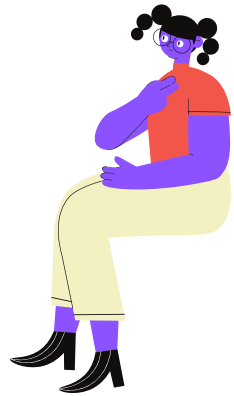
- Sex-positive, open-minded, and non-shaming
- Respectful of individuals' confidentiality and autonomy
- Pro-choice
- Trauma-informed
- Committed to an evidence-based approach rooted in best and promising practices
- Mindful of equity and inclusion in all aspects of our work
- We can do more together than we can alone.



# SHNS BY THE NUMBERS

# of contacts with individual clients

7,696



# of client engagements with programs

1,083

# of volunteer hours contributed

1,149

76

# of hours of educational programming

27,254

# of safer sex supplies distributed



# 2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS

## Provincial Highlights

### SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH WEEK

In February 2021 SHNS partnered again with Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights to bring attention to sexual and reproductive health. This year's theme was Youth Friendly Care and we created a special youth edition of our yearly Recommended Reads List. We also created and shared a new resource on youth services available at our network of sexual health centres.



### COVID-19 AND NEW RESOURCES

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged the way we provide support and resources across the province, so we shifted some of our attention to the creation of online, shareable resources to help folks navigate sexual health services. We started off the year with the creation of a resource to help guide 2SLGBTQ+ community members with what services they can access at our sexual health centres, including gender-affirming services such as individual support, affirming garments for trans and gender diverse folks, and medical services at Halifax Sexual Health Centre.

In December 2020 we launched a new resource on how to get tested for STIs in NS, which will help people understand the complicated (and often inaccessible) system of testing in our province. The research for this resource started some important conversations about provincial equity and STIs within our network of centres and with our partners. We continue to advocate for accessible STI testing across Nova Scotia.

### DOING IT BETTER

Early in 2020 we conducted some evaluation work of the Doing it Better program, which features sexual health education for folks with intellectual disabilities, and the training sessions we offered in 2017-18, with the help of a NSCC Disability Supports student. We are now looking ahead to working with a summer student to update the Doing it Better program and we can't wait to share more soon about future engagement with the project.

### SEXCELLENCE AWARD 2021

Since 2008, the Sexcellence Award has been given to individuals in Nova Scotia who support and promote outstanding work in the field of sexual health. In 2018 the award underwent a review period during which SHNS decided to adjust the process by asking for public nominations. This year, after an incredible group of nominees were received, we announced our two 2021 winners, Tuma Young, Co-Founder of the Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance, and Chris Cochrane, Vice-Chair of Halifax Pride. Tuma and Chris are both dedicated advocates for 2SLGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities' health and rights.



# 2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS

## Member-Centre Highlights

### SHEET HARBOUR SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

- Partnered with the local Rainbow Food Bank to have safer sex supplies and pregnancy tests available and made gift bags for the graduating students from local high school with literature, condoms, pads and tampons.
- Organized the first Pride walk in Sheet Harbour and gave the pride flags painted throughout the community a fresh coat of paint.
- Finished our Comfort Zone presentation, "Talking to seniors about sexuality" for our Age Friendly Communities Grant provided by the NS Seniors Department.

### HALIFAX SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

- Collaboration ongoing with CBRC and Pride Health to create a Mainpro accredited course for health providers on STBBIs, gender affirming surgery, and Two Spirit health. The training course on gender affirming hormones has already reduced the waitlist.
- Developed a social media series on the intersections between sexual health and race.
- Started providing Nexplanon insertions and removals.

### SOUTH SHORE SEXUAL HEALTH

- Received grant and donation funds to keep the Transformation Closet going, which provides free gender-affirming gear for anyone who needs it.
- Partnered with the local food banks to distribute condoms during the pandemic to vulnerable populations, and worked with Health Promoting Schools to purchase condom dispensers for local high school.
- Developed the Positive Pleasures adult toy fundraising program.

### PICTOU COUNTY SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

- Rainbow Recreation LGBTQ2+ Youth program events were well attended and received positive feedback from all participants.
- Connected with NSCC for sexual health zoom presentations.
- Executive Director trained as a Certified Abortion Doula with Abortion Support Services Atlantic.

### CAPE BRETON CENTRE FOR SEXUAL HEALTH

- Distributed menstrual supplies to help folks struggling with period poverty, a donation drive for the month of December brought in essential supplies.
- The centre was invited to join Coalition of Organizations Serving Youth, a board consisting of other organizations in Cape Breton that directly serve youth populations.
- Continued the delivery service of free safer sex supplies and pregnancy tests throughout Cape Breton during the pandemic.

### SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE FOR CUMBERLAND COUNTY

- Moved the centre to a new location in downtown Amherst, thereby increasing access to sexual health services in the community.
- Experienced significant growth on all social media, and positive responses to sexual health education online, such as Sex Ed in the Kitchen. Tik Tok account grew to 50k followers and educational videos have received more than a million views.
- Offered temporary clinics for youth in the community to address service gaps during the pandemic, in collaboration with the Amherst Teen Health Centre, local physicians and the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

# 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.*

*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!**

