

Background on the Healthy Communities Teams in Public Health

We connect with municipalities on various topics to help strengthen community conditions that foster health and wellbeing. See details [here](#).

On the topic of alcohol, Healthy Communities staff contribute to the establishment of healthy public policies through partnership, advocacy, research and more (see *Environments Supporting the Reduction of Harmful Impacts of Alcohol* section on [page 3](#)).

The Nova Scotia Municipal Alcohol Project (MAP) is an example of collaboration between municipalities, Public Health and Mental Health & Addictions. A summary of this project can be [found here](#).

Many Healthy Communities team members are working on re-establishing connections with their local municipalities and community partners as they step back into their regular work after being immersed in the COVID-19 response.

NS Health local teams are split up into four zones. Below is a list of the Public Policy and Social Action Consultants for each zone as key contacts for any municipal officials who are not already connected to a local Health Promoter.

Western Zone	Julie	> julie.mceachern@nshealth.ca
Northern Zone	Angie	> angie.macintyre@nshealth.ca
Central Zone	Nora	> nora.dickson@nshealth.ca
Eastern Zone	Peggy	> margaret.vassallo@nshealth.ca

memorandum

To: Municipal Officials and Community Partners

Message: New alcohol guidance highlights harms and risks of alcohol use for Nova Scotians

As you may know, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) released the updated [Canadian Guidance on Alcohol and Health](#). The report provides accurate and current information about the risks and harms associated with drinking alcohol. It presents a [continuum of risk](#) to help people make informed decisions.

In coordination with other health system partners, including IWK and Department of Health and Wellness, Nova Scotia Health Public Health, Cancer Care and Mental Health & Addictions developed an FAQ with information specific to alcohol use in Nova Scotia, [available here](#). A general FAQ by CCSA on the new Guidance can be found [here](#).

Nova Scotia Health is committed to improving knowledge of the risks and harms associated with alcohol use, and working with our partners to reinforce the following points:

1. Alcohol is one of the leading preventable causes of death, disease and disability worldwide. Alcohol use is a contributing cause of more than 200 diseases and health conditions, including seven types of cancer.
 - a. Alcohol causes nearly 7,000 cancer deaths each year in Canada.
 - b. In 2020, 4.1% of all new cases of cancer globally were attributable to alcohol consumption.
2. Nova Scotia has a culture of alcohol consumption that sees residents drinking more alcohol, and more heavily, than most Canadians.
3. Nova Scotians have a right to know the health risks associated with drinking alcohol. By supporting people to make informed decisions, governments and health system leaders can improve long-term population health.
4. Evidence shows that drinking alcohol always has some risk. How much and how often a person drinks alcohol has impacts on health, and the health risks increase with each additional drink and with frequency of consumption.
5. The risk for alcohol-related harms is strongly influenced by factors in our social, economic, and physical environments. These factors can include the accessibility and affordability of alcohol, exposure to alcohol marketing, social and cultural norms around drinking, coping with loss of cultural identity, racism, stigma, discrimination, and economic resources. Understanding and taking steps to address social determinants of alcohol-related harms requires our combined efforts.
 - a. Learn more: [Statement from the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health \(CCMOH\) on Alcohol Consumption - Canada.ca](#)