

Nova Scotia Department of Health appoints members to Nova Scotia's Mental Health Strategy Advisory Committee

People struggling with mental health and addiction issues are another step closer to getting the care they need in every region of the province.

Health experts, researchers, mental health clinicians and people living with or affected by mental illness are among the 12 members appointed today, Sept. 29, to Nova Scotia's Mental Health Strategy Advisory Committee. They will join co-chairs Michael Unger and Joyce MacDonald who were announced in June. "This diverse group of people bring a wealth of professional, clinical and personal experience to this opportunity to create a mental health strategy for Nova Scotia," said Health Minister Maureen MacDonald. "Their work will help us ensure better health care for you and your family."

The mental health strategy was announced in the March Throne Speech and helps fulfill a commitment by government to revamp mental health and addiction services across the province. The advisory committee will develop a consultation process and recommendations for a Mental Health Strategy. Ms. MacDonald also announced the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation will work closely with the advisory committee on the development of the strategy. It will gather evidence and support extensive consultation to ensure informed development of the strategy. "Given its scientific expertise and methodology, the foundation is well-equipped to help the advisory committee ensure the strategy includes the best evidence available," said Ms. MacDonald.

"We are pleased to contribute our knowledge and expertise to the development of the strategy," said Krista Connell, chief executive officer of the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation.

"The combination of our consultative approach and our expertise in gathering the best knowledge available will help the advisory committee develop a strategy that addresses Nova Scotia's needs." The foundation will also provide administrative and logistical support, offer project management and help oversee the development of the strategy.

The advisory committee is expected to meet with Ms. MacDonald and the foundation in October to review the terms of reference and to develop a meeting schedule. Ms. MacDonald anticipates receiving the advisory committee's recommendations by the summer.

The members of the advisory committee are:

–Frank Beazley, Halifax, Chief of Police, Halifax Regional Police

–Dr. Simon Brooks, Bridgewater, chief of psychiatry, South Shore District Health Authority

–Andy Cox, Halifax, mental health advocate, IWK Health Centre

–Paul d'Entremont, West Pubnico, Yarmouth Co., founding member and executive director of R?seau Sant? - Nouvelle-?cosse

- Daphne Hutt-MacLeod, Eskasoni, Cape Breton, director of Eskasoni Mental Health Services
- Jessica Inkpen, a young woman from Halifax who has struggled with anorexia for many years
- Lana MacLean, Halifax, a social work clinician who works extensively with the African Nova Scotian community
- Cecilia McRae, Merigomish, Pictou Co., president of the Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia
- Patti Melanson, Halifax, co-ordinator of the North End Clinic’s Mobile Outreach Street Health Program
- Dr. Paige Moorhouse, Halifax, principal investigator for several provincial and national grants on geriatric mental health
- Kathleen Thompson, Halifax, mother of a young woman who is battling an eating disorder, Halifax
- Catherine Thurston, Tidnish Bridge, Cumberland Co.,former director of Mental Health Services for the Cumberland Health Authority.