

Our Work Together

It is a pleasure to present to you the third AWARE-NS Annual Report.

As the CEO and the Chair of the Board of Nova Scotia's Health and Community Services Safety Association, we would first like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the people who have supported AWARE-NS to advance the agenda of health and community services worker safety, health and well-being this past year. Leadership, teamwork and advocacy from all directions contributed to the amount of success and growth we have had this year. This report highlights the outcomes of our work together.

Our Board of Directors has continued to engage in honest and open communication about the importance of ensuring that all health and community services workers in Nova Scotia have a safe place to work, and what it takes to get us there. In these difficult times of fiscal restraint they have made some tough choices about priority targets, but always with a steady focus on our mission and system alignment. A safe environment for our workers helps ensure a safe environment for patients, clients, residents, and their families. This is crucial to the sustainability of our Health and Community Services System in Nova Scotia.

You will discover as you read through this brief overview of key highlights from the last year, that we have been making significant progress towards achieving that end. Through collaboration and cooperation with our stakeholders and partners, and continued funding from the Department of Health and Wellness, we are able to maximize existing resources, create new ones, and deliver information to those who need it most through new and innovative ways.

The real difference is being made by a recognition that we are all in this together. We must continue to work hard, to work together, and to work towards our vision of safe and healthy people; safe and healthy workplaces.

Mary-Lou MacDonald
Chief Executive Officer

Carol Ann Brennan
Chair of the Board of Directors

2011/2012 annual report

AWARE+NS
NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH +
COMMUNITY SERVICES
SAFETY ASSOCIATION

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AWARE-NS is funded by the Nova Scotia
Department of Health and Wellness

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Working to Achieve our Strategic Plan 2011-2012

Key Initiatives

AWARE-NS continues to make significant progress against the four strategic priorities established by the Board of Directors to achieve our mission:

Working with stakeholders and partners to promote and improve safety and health in health and community services workplaces.

The following highlights illustrate AWARE-NS's efforts in 2011-2012 to increase OH&S efficiency, effectiveness and alignment with our health and community services system.

1. COLLABORATION. PARTNERSHIPS. LEADERSHIP.

a. Engage leaders around a shared agenda for change.

b. Establish partnerships for service and program delivery.

Department of Labour and Advanced Education (DLAE): AWARE-NS worked with the DLAE to influence policy and operational directions through collaboration on several educational opportunities. Highlights include co-hosting a workplace violence prevention webinar as well as partnering to increase awareness around specific hazards in healthcare delivery.

Department of Health and Wellness (DHW): AWARE-NS and Northwood initiated conversations with the DHW Continuing Care Branch (Seascope), to discuss the potential of expanding on the existing protocol for care risk assessment for employee safety. We are also actively engaging with the Department of Health and Wellness to ensure alignment of initiatives and opportunities for future collaboration.

Workers' Compensation Board of NS (WCB): In partnership with the WCB, AWARE-NS established several shared awareness and policy related initiatives across the sector.

Examples include:

- Collaboration on Injury Management Summit
- Provincial Injury Management Strategy (Safe Lift and Transfer Initiative) in DHAs/IWK
- Community of Safe Practice in Home Care and Home Support
- Partnered with WCB to integrate AWARE-NS long term care OH&S training plans and consultation
- Sought funding through the WCB Nova Scotia Research Program
- Provided input into:
 - Communications Strategy/Social Marketing Campaign for WCB NS
 - WCB Program Policy Topic Identification—Informing the Policy Agenda
 - Proposed Rate Setting Model Enhancements
 - The Workplace Safety Strategy for Nova Scotia.



Health Association Nova Scotia (HANS): AWARE-NS collaborated with HANS as a member of the provincial Organizational Health Committee, and to influence OH&S integration into the CCA curriculum and Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Care Committee Program (ADODCC). The ADODCC and AWARE-NS partnered for review of our newly developed OH&S online course focused on safe dementia care. To ensure system alignment and collaboration, AWARE-NS has provided regular updates on all of our strategic initiatives to the HANS sponsored provincial Homecare-Home Support Network and the Continuing Care Council.

Provincial and National Safety Associations and OH&S Related Organizations:

AWARE-NS's initiative contributed to the establishment of a formal, regular collaboration between Nova Scotia Safety Associations, from all industries, to share expertise and resources as well as to strengthen communication with WCB. AWARE-NS also initiated the same at a national level with Healthcare Safety Associations from Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. A relationship has also been formed with Prince Edward Island around provincial OH&S initiatives in healthcare.

AWARE-NS was instrumental in the establishment and support of **provincial OH&S Community of Safe Practice (COSP) groups** to communicate, collaborate, mentor and share resources and best practices with the goal of developing consistent OH&S standards and practices.

- A strong **DHA OH&S group was formed** in early 2010. This group communicates, collaborates, and now reports to the DHA/IWK Human Resources/People Leadership Council (HRPLC).
- In 2011, AWARE-NS began a strategic partnership as a lead partner with all provincial District Health Authorities/IWK and the WCB-NS on a Provincial Injury Management Strategy (DHA/IWK Safe Lift and Transfer initiative).
- AWARE-NS also initiated the COSP approach within the homecare/home support sector.

2. AWARENESS. PROMOTION. ADVOCACY. COMMUNICATION.

Position AWARE-NS as the leading voice on Health and Community Services health and safety issues.

To enhance stakeholder communication AWARE-NS established an innovative quarterly newsletter: **@WARE-NS**. To further extend OH&S awareness, AWARE-NS upgraded the current website, began a **series of webinars**, included more service offerings and launched our **Online Learning Campus**.

AWARE-NS has advocated diligently for OH&S in the health and community services sector through an important seat on the OH&S Advisory Council to the Minister of Labour, and a seat on the Prevention Subcommittee.

In partnership with industry stakeholders, AWARE-NS has delivered extensive advocacy and awareness initiatives via national, provincial and local journal publications, conferences and other presentations, and media. Of particular note, are the "Beyond the Status Quo-Managing Risk through Occupational Health and Safety" article (Qmentum Quarterly April 2012) and the delivery of a comprehensive provincial communication campaign for homecare and home support for the second time. This campaign brought attention to the safety risks and issues faced by front line health and community workers. Feedback from stakeholders determined the advertising targets as local radio and transit in HRM and industrial Cape Breton.

3. EDUCATION. TRAINING. FACILITATING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES.

Community of Safe Practice (COSP): With our partners, AWARE-NS launched a comprehensive and progressive strategy to reduce workplace injuries and improve OH&S management and compliance in the homecare/support sector. COSP is a network of organizations that share resources, knowledge and skills. Using a safety group approach, organizations access existing resources while developing tools and resources to foster a safer work environment. Focus is on a shared provincial vision for OH&S in the sector with the establishment of a health and safety management system with audit processes.

Provincial Injury Management Strategy (DHA/IWK Safe Lift and Transfer): As a member of the executive team and project team, AWARE-NS is an active partner in developing a provincial program to reduce musculoskeletal injuries within DHA/IWK. AWARE-NS offers knowledge, skills and leadership related to evaluation, surveys, training and education materials, best practices, communications, and advocacy.

Website: The following highlights our innovative website and how it serves as an information, training and educational portal for the sector.

- Online Learning Campus with 18 core OH&S courses, and four currently in development ("Dementia: Understanding the OH&S Risks," "Bully-Free Workplaces" in partnership with NSGEU, "Infection Control & Prevention" and a program to provide consistent training for safe lifts and transfers in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Association for Safe Workplaces in Health). The online campus is a partnership with several other provincial and national organizations. It is a model of innovation and collaboration.
- OH&S best practices resources, which can be downloaded from the AWARE-NS website.
- A discussion board to encourage communication and networking province-wide with an outreach strategy to stakeholders and partners via webinar technology.
- Based on the "Staying Safe While Providing Community Based Care and Support in Nova Scotia" manual, aimed at workers in community settings, an online safety course for provision of homecare and home support was developed, peer reviewed by content experts and launched on the website.

4. SUSTAINING AWARE-NS. PROGRESS IN THE SYSTEM.

The Board of Directors of AWARE-NS continued to meet with key stakeholders and partners to determine a sustainable future for the organization. Funding is secured from the Department of Health and Wellness until March 31, 2013. However, funding beyond this date has not yet been obtained.

For more detailed information on these and other programs and services provided by AWARE-NS please visit www.awarens.ca

