

Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia

An action plan for increasing
physical activity in
Nova Scotia

Minister's Message

The benefits of physical activity and movement are well-known and understood. We know being physically active improves our overall health and well-being, helps us cope better with everyday stressors, and supports our shared goal to live long and fulfilling lives. In our busy world, however, many of us are challenged to find the time or resources to incorporate regular activity into our day.

And we are not alone. Levels of inactivity and sedentary behaviours are issues facing the entire country. Here in our province, we are taking steps to face this challenge head-on through **Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia**—a plan to encourage and support Nova Scotians to move more, and sit less, more often.

The goals and themes within this action plan were shaped by a cross-departmental committee and informed by the public, and physical activity stakeholder organizations and leaders, including:

- participants in the **Creating Active Communities Together** event and **Vibrant Active Nova Scotia Symposium**
- Mi'kmaw and municipal physical activity leaders
- key partners such as the Mi'kmaw Sport Council, the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia citizens (through survey data collected as part of the Municipal/Mi'kmaw Physical Activity Leadership Program)

Our plan builds on the federal approach released earlier this year: **A Common Vision for increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada: Let's Get Moving**. In addition, through **SHIFT: Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population**, we are supporting healthy, active living for all ages.

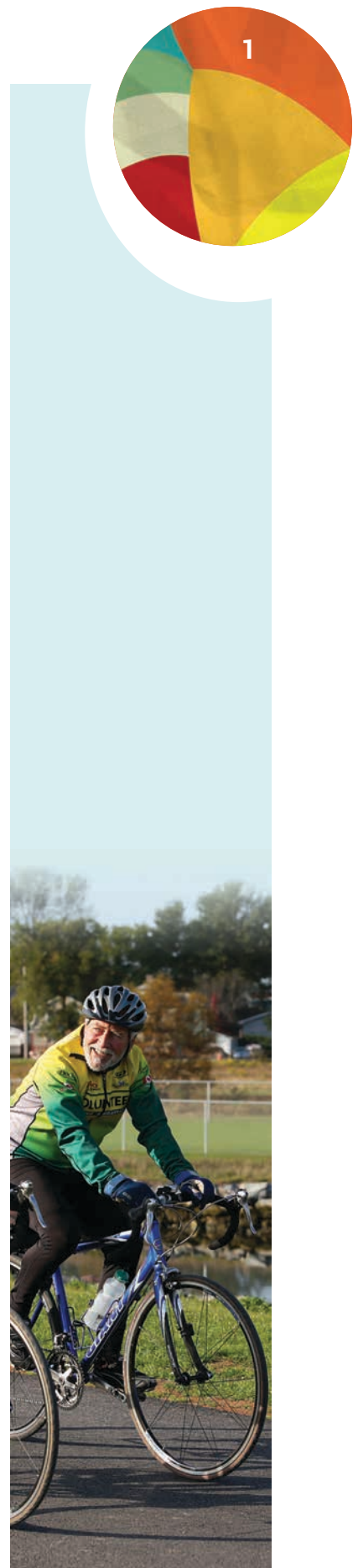
We are fortunate to have many strong and existing networks, partners, initiatives, and facilities in our province that support physical activity. **Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia** builds on those efforts and addresses gaps that will encourage us to include movement as part of our daily lives at home, in our workplaces, and at school.

Working in collaboration with our partners, we hope to create a culture where daily movement is the new normal for Nova Scotians of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Let's get moving!



Leo Glavine





What is Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia?

Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia is a plan to encourage Nova Scotians to include more movement in our daily lives.

Being physically active and moving helps us prevent and manage disease. It makes us happier and helps us do better at school and at work. It builds stronger communities and keeps the economy healthy, too.

According to the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, adults 18–64 should get 150 minutes per week (two and a half hours) of aerobic physical activity, such as walking, jogging, swimming, or cycling. This physical activity doesn't need to be done all at once; it can happen in sessions of 10 minutes or more. Adults should also do activities that strengthen their muscles and bones twice a week.

Children and youth need even more.

However, 82 per cent of Canadian adults do not currently meet these guidelines. Nova Scotia adults also fall short of meeting them. We all need to move more—and sit less—more often. That's what **Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia** is all about.

How can we get moving?

We need to start thinking about movement and physical activity in a different way.

Organized sport and recreation is great, but adding more physical activity to our day can be as simple as walking to school, around our workplace, and in the places we live, or by participating in cultural activities or even just playing in the backyard. No membership fee required!

Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia supports programs in our communities that:

- help us find more ways to join in activities that fit our lifestyles, abilities, and interests, as well as those that are an important part of our culture
- remove barriers that keep some people from participating
- consider the needs of the less active, aging, and other priority groups

Goals and Actions

Goal 1: Redefine movement

Goal 2: Reach Nova Scotians where we learn, work, and access health care

Goal 3: Advance quality community leadership

Goal 4: Enhance opportunities and address inclusion

Goal 5: Measure progress



Goal 1

Redefine movement

We want Nova Scotians to form new habits that make regular movement part of our daily lives. This goal encourages us to think about movement in a new way and motivates us to move in ways and at times that work for us.

Action

Develop and implement an engagement, education, and public awareness initiative that encourages people to include small sessions of movement into their daily routines.

Goal 2

Reach Nova Scotians where we learn, work, and access health care

Learn: Reach Nova Scotians in Early Childhood

Nova Scotia's new universal Pre-Primary Program for four-year-olds is currently available in 143 school communities and will eventually reach 250 elementary school locations by 2020. The Pre-Primary Program is inclusive, child centred, and play based. It provides age-appropriate early learning experiences for children in the year before they enter school. The Pre-Primary Program emphasizes both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.

Actions

- Support high-quality, conveniently located, affordable before and after programs that encourage movement for children attending the Pre-Primary Program.
- Create an opportunity to develop and test a shared set of delivery standards for recreation and regulated child-care providers that encourages use of both indoor and outdoor environments to increase physical activity and movement.
- Help early childhood educators (ECE) enhance their skills and knowledge about physical activity, outdoor play, and physical literacy. Physical literacy means having the motivation, confidence, physical ability, knowledge, and understanding to value and



take responsibility for being engaged in physical activities for life.

- Offer workshops (such as Tumblebugs for ECEs)
- Support research (along with the Lawson Foundation) into outdoor play environments in the Pre-Primary Program

Learn: Reach Nova Scotians at School

Most Nova Scotian children and youth spend a large part of their day at school. As children age, their social and physical environments change and there is less support to be active. As a result, older children become less active. This is particularly true for girls.

Children need more opportunities to move while at school. These could include physical education, recess and lunch breaks, school and classroom design, before/after school programs, active transportation initiatives, organized sport and recreation programs, and lessons that have movement integrated into them.

Actions

- Develop and implement a Physical Activity Framework for the education system based on the principles of Health Promoting Schools.
- Support community and school partnerships that improve physical activity opportunities for students.

- Pilot an initiative to increase physical activity among inactive adolescent girls in both the public and Mi'kmaw school systems. Based on the results of the pilot, work with curriculum experts to determine if the initiative can be included in the Physical Activity Framework for the education system.
- Pilot an initiative (Active Smarter Kids) that incorporates physical activity in the delivery of academic lessons.
- Increase opportunities for adolescent students to commute to and from school by walking and cycling.

Work: Reach Nova Scotians in the Workplace

Movement helps promote physical health, positive aging, and good mental health. Many Nova Scotians between the ages of 22 and 65 spend 35–40 hours (or more) per week in their workplace, and that often means they're spending long hours seated at a desk. That is why this plan must include actions that encourage movement in the workplace.

Actions

- Develop a toolkit for employers so they can encourage daily movement in workplaces for their teams. Partner with the Workers' Compensation Board to roll the toolkit out across the province.
- Develop a plan to encourage daily movement in provincial government workplaces. This will build upon existing initiatives like Flex



Nova Scotia, our Occupational Health and Safety Policy, and the recently announced Nova Scotia Office of Workplace Mental Health.

Health care: Reach Nova Scotians Accessing Health Care

Physical activity can help Nova Scotians dealing with disability and chronic disease manage their health issues. The plan will include opportunities to increase movement through the health-care setting.

Health-care providers are important influencers. They can provide patients with resources to help increase awareness and access to community-based programming such as Connect.ca, a web-based database of Nova Scotia physical activity opportunities.

Actions

- Support and work in partnership with the Nova Scotia Health Authority to provide physical activity counseling (such as best practice review, planning, startup, training) as part of their primary health care chronic disease management and wellness plan.
- Strengthen Connect.ca as the main hub of physical activity information and opportunities for Nova Scotians.

Goal 3 Advance quality community leadership

In order to increase physical activity levels across the province, we need focused, community-wide plans that include key settings. Currently, 51 community partners are working on local plans.

Actions

- Fund new positions for community leaders who will work to address the needs of priority populations (such as Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotians, newcomers).
- Help communities develop policies and enhance spaces that make it easier for citizens to incorporate less structured movement into their daily routine (such as walking, standing, play).
- Support community planning to emphasize key place settings like schools, workplaces, and health care for increasing physical activity.
- Help communities develop physical activity social support networks (such as community-wide networks of walking groups, and social media-supported cycling groups).
- Help communities meet the needs of aging Nova Scotians in ways that encourage walking and other preferred activities.



- Help community representatives learn about promising practices and share success stories, resources, and the benefits of active communities.
- Ensure community representatives are knowledgeable of changes they can make in their communities to create the conditions that support activities like outdoor play, walking, and other active recreation choices.

Goal 4

Enhance opportunities and address inclusion

Being physically active is important for all Nova Scotians and we know many face barriers. We need to think differently about organized sport and recreation, and encourage active transportation. Together we will work hard to ensure opportunities are more inclusive for all Nova Scotians.

Actions

- Finalize, release, and implement the provincial *Active Transportation Policy Framework*.
- Support traditional, culturally relevant, physical activity opportunities for Mi'kmaw people, such as pow wow dancing, lacrosse, canoe/kayak, and archery.
- Support facility stakeholders so they can make it easier for users to access their buildings and facilities. This could include improving physical accessibility, ensuring environments are welcoming, and performing facility audits.
- Support the delivery of quality sport in communities across Nova Scotia, with an emphasis on programming that targets children's first experiences.
- Help sport and recreation organizations, leaders, and facilities include more opportunities for movement in their facility design and programming. For example, sport



practices could be planned so that all participants are moving most of the time, including spectators.

- Work with service providers to create more welcoming and inclusive environments for under-represented groups.
- Provide training and tools for sport, recreation, and physical activity stakeholders and front-line leaders to help them develop cultural competency and improve access and inclusion for older adults, women, and under-represented populations.
- Work with sport and recreation organizations to help families overcome financial barriers that prevent or limit their participation in organized sport and recreation.
- Work with stakeholders to address barriers that may be preventing women from being active at the local and community level; identify opportunities to support women in their efforts to incorporate more physical activity into their daily lives.

Goal 5

Measure progress

Government and its partners must monitor progress and demonstrate success throughout the implementation of **Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia**. We need to understand the progress of our investments so we can successfully monitor and adjust planning and improve results.

Actions

- Track uptake in physical activity programs, grants, and community level initiatives to gauge impact of the **Let's Get Moving** action plan.
- Monitor physical activity rates.
- Invest in evaluation to monitor and assess progress of actions to increase rates of physical activity.
- Support projects that assess and communicate the impact of the community-wide plans for improving movement.

What are we trying to achieve?

We want to help Nova Scotians be more active in their everyday lives. We will do this by improving and increasing opportunities for them to be active in their communities, workplaces, and schools. We will improve understanding of movement. We will aim to improve social supports, places, and spaces, and policies that encourage movement.

In the end, we hope to create a culture where daily movement is the new normal for Nova Scotians of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.





novascotia.ca/letsgetmoving

