

Provincial Update on the Auditor General Recommendations
Department of Health and Wellness
November 2011

The Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) has seven Auditor General chapters between 2009-11 with a total of 78 recommendations. With 42% of these recommendations complete, DHW has made the implementation of the remaining recommendations a priority for the Department. DHW recognizes the importance of the work of the Auditor General and values its policy advice as one more contributing factor to a more efficient and effective public sector.

Recommendations assigned to Department of Health and Wellness:

Department of Health and Wellness	Complete	Work In Progress	Action no Longer Required	Do not Intend to Implement	Total Recommendations
April 2009					
Chapter 2: Government-wide: Audit Committees	-	2	-	-	2
July 2009					
Chapter 1: Pandemic Preparedness	23	6	-	-	29
February 2010					
Chapter 2: Electronic Health Records	2	6	-	-	8
June 2010					
Chapter 4: Mental Health Services	5	14	-	-	19
November 2010					
Chapter 5: Government Financial Reporting	-	1	-	-	1
May 2011					
Chapter 4: Colchester Regional Hospital Replacement	3	8	1	-	12
Chapter 5: Long Term Care – New and Replacement	-	7	-	-	7
Total	33	44	1	-	78
Percentage	42%	56%	1%	0%	100%

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Recommendations in Detail:

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Government- Wide Audit Committees				
April 2009	2	12	Work in Progress	Working group created and review of best practices of boards underway.
April 2009	2	13	Work in Progress	DHW now has a Director and Manager of Internal Audit (IA). It was agreed that DHW set up the IA function for District Health Authorities (DHAs) through the Department of Finance IA. Work is underway to develop structure and plan for this function.
Special Report of the Auditor General on Pandemic Preparedness				
July 2009	1	2	Complete	Workforce Development Framework approved. Implementation of recruitment/retention/building capacity underway including: 1) Ensuring salaries in line with national average 2) Developing a Community of Practice and 3) Developing Business Continuity Strategies. Two new Community Medicine graduates now regional Medical Officers of Health (MoH), a third has funded residency based on a return of service agreement. Surveillance Manager hired. Master of Public Health degree under development with Dalhousie University. Dedicated Human Resources (HR) consultant continues active and ongoing recruitment efforts.
July 2009	1	3	Complete	Audit tool for review developed and used by DHAs/IWK in the completion of their Pandemic/All Hazards/ Business Continuity Plans. DHW continues to monitor status of DHAs/IWK regarding pandemic planning.
July 2009	1	7	Complete	Audit tool used to assess DHAs/IWK Business Continuity Plans monthly. Former Departments of Health (DoH) and Health Promotion and Protection (HPP) submitted Business Continuity Plans to Emergency

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				Management Office (EMO) June 2009. DHW working with Departments of Agriculture and Environment to ensure trained public health inspectors regarding the <i>Health Protection Act</i> and updating Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the three departments to clarify roles regarding public health emergencies.
July 2009	1	8	Complete	Pictou County Health Authority (PHA) Business Continuity completed March 2009 and revised April 2009. DHW continues monitoring status of DHAs/IWK regarding pandemic planning.
July 2009	1	9	Work in Progress	DHW working with Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)-Atlantic to develop a comprehensive All Hazards Risk Assessment Report and work plan following recommendations from Nova Scotia and Federal Auditor Generals, PHAC, and Emergency Preparedness and Response IA Service.
July 2009	1	10	Complete	Key DHA pandemic planning issues identified via DoH/HPP/DHA collaboration. 2009-10 Pandemic Influenza Plan developed. DHAs/ IWK submitted Pandemic/All Hazards/ Business Continuity Plans. DHW will continue monitoring of DHA/IWK plans regarding pandemic planning.
July 2009	1	11	Complete	Process for approval developed that ensured subject matter expert sign-off and all parties understood their roles and responsibilities. Pandemic Leads followed by Health Services Emergency Management (HSEM) Advisory Committee sign off was completed.
July 2009	1	12	Work in Progress	Significant revision to Health System All Hazards Plan as a result of H1N1 lessons learned, is underway in consort with DHAs.

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				Changes to include addressing clinical components to communicable disease pandemic.
July 2009	1	13	Complete	Legal support playing integral role to project participating at Pandemic Leads meetings and all plans will be legally reviewed as part of approval process.
July 2009	1	14	Complete	During H1N1 pandemic supply procurement authority was granted, however, future supplies will depend on government approval.
July 2009	1	15	Work in Progress	During H1N1 pandemic supply procurement authority was granted and a more than adequate amount of supplies were procured in that this supply level met the provincial needs. However, future supplies will depend on government approval.
July 2009	1	16	Complete	Supply information required to complete analysis was provided as per direction from the then Deputy Minister of Health.
July 2009	1	17	Work in Progress	During H1N1 pandemic supply procurement authority was granted, however, future supplies will depend on government approval.
July 2009	1	18	Complete	Materials Managers updated a complete list of provincial reserves. Process developed including a DHA request form to access reserves. 2009-10 Pandemic Influenza Plan includes process to access provincial and federal reserve supplies. DHA Emergency Managers updated biweekly and CEOs engaged in bi-weekly conference calls regarding strategic reserves.
July 2009	1	19	Work in Progress	Related to the provincial public health surveillance system, the influenza surveillance system has been enhanced, a Surveillance Manager hired and work begun on developing a process to assess this system.

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July 2009	1	20	Work in Progress	Surveillance Manager has begun work on developing a process to assess the capacity to conduct public health epidemiological investigations during a pandemic.
July 2009	1	21	Complete	The provincial public health laboratory completed a capacity assessment for diagnosing pandemic influenza. Ten recommendations were made which forms the basis of a plan to address the identified gaps.
July 2009	1	22	Complete	The Good Neighbour Protocol was signed by all parties allowing for a framework to deal with human resource issues during a pandemic.
July 2009	1	23	Complete	A set of Questions and Answers were issued as a result of joint meetings between unions and employers to prevent duplication of efforts regarding union issues in pandemic planning.
July 2009	1	24	Complete	Meetings of several government departments, DHAs, EMO and Nova Scotia Health Organizations Protective Association determined that the <i>Volunteer Services Act</i> and the <i>Volunteer Protection Act</i> are sufficient protection for volunteers. Existing health system process covers volunteers, including during a pandemic, however, volunteers outside the health care system are the responsibility of their organizations.
July 2009	1	25	Complete	A process for temporary licensing was established. Health HR guidelines distributed to all parties as required.
July 2009	1	26	Complete	Specific to the H1N1 pandemic, Health Information Technology Services (HITS) developed the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) bed tracking system now tested and complete. Subsequent to the HITS initiative the Bed

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				Utilization and Management Initiative was developed, approved, and now underway to help DHAs manage bed resources.
July 2009	1	27	Complete	Audit tool to assess plans and protocols for standards for primary and secondary assessment centres developed. During the H1N1 pandemic 15 primary assessment centres were established all over Nova Scotia.
July 2009	1	28	Complete	Communications consultant hired to review and update pandemic communications guidelines. Guidelines further refined and completed by DHW Communications to include lessons learned from H1N1 and reflect the merger of HPP and DoH.
July 2009	1	29	Complete	Three contact lists have been developed: a consolidated list of health system stakeholders to receive DHW pandemic-related documents. Other government departments distribute DHW H1N1 information to their stakeholders; a list of communications staff at stakeholder organizations who receive updates twice daily in times of increased H1N1 activity; the Situation Room list of stakeholders who directly manage the H1N1 immunization program in order to get timely information to front-line staff.
July 2009	1	30	Complete	Priority groups to receive information identified including doctors, nurses, etc. and other government departments willing to distribute information to their stakeholders. Meetings held with other stakeholders including DHAs, universities, school boards, First Nations Chiefs, etc.. DHW also asked communications staff at stakeholder organizations to distribute information to further establish a broad distribution network.

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July 2009	1	31	Complete	A lessons learned process is in place designed to address all emergencies from all hazards approach. A formal lessons learned process implemented as a result of the provincial H1N1 response.
July 2009	1	32	Complete	Process for finalizing lessons learned from previous outbreaks has been analyzed and incorporated into H1N1 workplans for working groups.
July 2009	1	33	Complete	Process for lessons learned complete and incorporated into H1N1 workplans. Issues identified, prioritized and addressed.
Electronic Health Records				
Feb 2010	2	1	Work in Progress	Development of a strategic plan for the Health Information Office (HIO) is underway and will include the strategic plan for electronic health records (EHR). The HIO strategic plan follows the Government Chief Information Office (GCIO) framework adopted by the GCIO and IT community. Four sections of HIO have completed draft strategic plans and consultations to consider scope and content of the HIO strategic plan is planned. The EHR Strategic Plan will be a component of the next level of strategic planning for HIO.
Feb 2010	2	2	Work in Progress	All program areas within the continuum of health care that will be candidates for future inclusion in the EHR have been identified. The EHR Strategic Plan will be a component of the next level of strategic planning for HIO.
Feb 2010	2	3	Work in Progress	DHW is participating in Atlantic iEHR Benefits Evaluation Project with Atlantic provinces (excluding PEI) funded/sponsored by Canada Health Infoway. This project will develop a detailed timeline to obtain baseline data and identify how to monitor performance.

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Feb 2010	2	4	Complete	DHW follows the GCIO annual detailed instructions related to current and future Tangible Capital Asset (TCA) project requests. Within DHW all TCA submissions are reviewed by CHIO, presented to Executive for prioritization and approval by the Deputy.
Feb 2010	2	5	Complete	DHW is following the documented Secure Health Access Record (NS EHR Project - SHARE) change control process. Further, a formal Change Control Board Committee was established and meet regularly.
Feb 2010	2	6	Work in Progress	Bill 89, An Act Respecting the Collection, Use, Disclosure and Retention of Personal Health Information (<i>Personal Health Information Act</i> – PHIA) received Royal Assent December 10, 2010. DHW has been working on proclamation readiness with a PHIA Implementation Planning Committee created to assess what needs to be done for full readiness for compliance and confirm a plan to complete these tasks. As well the PHIA EHR working group is making recommendations regarding interpretation of provisions related to electronic information systems and EHRs. Regulations are being identified and a toolkit for stakeholders is being developed.
Feb 2010	2	7	Work in Progress	SHARE Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) Risk Management Action Plan developed and is reviewed and updated monthly as required. This includes both PIA and Threat Risk Assessment (TRA) risks identified in all SHARE components and PIA and TRA documents.
Feb 2010	2	8	Work in Progress	The 5970 Readiness assessment has been replaced with the Canadian Standard on Assurance Engagement (CSAE) 3416 which is the same but with some additional requirements. The draft call-up for a firm to do a partial then full audit is being completed.

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Mental Health Services				
June 2010	4	1	Work in Progress	Standards approved to date and indicators identified to ensure clarity and measurability include: Promotion Prevention and Advocacy Standards, Community Supports, Inpatient Standards, Outpatient Standards for Adult Services, Early Psychosis five year review. Eating Disorders five year review completed with measures added but not yet approved. A new three year self-assessment process has been developed and its related self-assessment tool is currently under development.
June 2010	4	2	Work in Progress	Ministerially appointed 12 member Mental Health and Addictions Strategy Advisory Committee developed a “living” background paper outlining the current state of mental health and addiction services in Nova Scotia which served as a starting point for consultations completed in May 2011. Results will inform the development of a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.
June 2010	4	3	Work in Progress	DHW directed DHAs/IWK that it will require evidence of assessment compliance ratings to ensure adequate support for its assessment of compliance with mental health standards. Results of self-assessments will be reviewed through site visits to the DHAs/IWK.
June 2010	4	4	Work in Progress	New three year self-assessment developed and its related self-assessment tool currently under development. This process will include completion of a self-assessment every three years to coincide with DHAs/IWK accreditation process. DHW will conduct site visits and make recommendations to increase compliance based on these self-assessments. DHW will produce an evaluation report for the Deputy and DHAs/IWK documenting

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				required improvements to increase compliance. An annual follow up will ensure changes have been implemented or a plan is in place for implementation.
June 2010	4	5	Work in Progress	A Provincial Concurrent Disorders Advisory Committee was established with membership comprising experts in mental health and addictions services. Committee has been working on the development of Concurrent Disorder Standards. Draft standards are currently being validated by stakeholders.
June 2010	4	6	Work in Progress	Most current standards (July 2009) posted to DHW website February 2010 with updates in June 2011 with standards that have been approved.
June 2010	4	7	Complete	Annapolis District Health Authority (AVHA), in addition to all other DHAs/IWK are recording the triage category.
June 2010	4	8	Work in Progress	Process for reviewing standards approved. Standards approved to date and measures/ indicators identified to ensure clarity and measurability include: Promotion Prevention and Advocacy Standards, Community Supports, Inpatient Standards, Outpatient Standards for Adult Services, Early Psychosis five year review. Eating Disorders five year review completed with measures added but not yet approved. A new three year self-assessment process has been developed and its related self-assessment tool is currently under development.
June 2010	4	9	Complete	MOUs regarding inpatient services between Colchester and Cumberland and between Colchester and Pictou were approved. The MOUs will be monitored by DHW through the self-assessment process and site visits.

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June 2010	4	10	Complete	DHAs/IWK now required to have formally documented future shared services agreements for mental health services submitted to DHW in the form of an MOU. MOUs between CDHA and each of the DHAs for the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) have been submitted. DHW will monitor service agreements through the self-assessment process and site visits.
June 2010	4	11	Work in Progress	Deputy Minister written directive sent to all DHAs/IWK that access to services must not be restricted. An Out of District Admission Protocol for out of district admissions or transfers has been drafted by a working group of the Provincial Mental Health Planning Committee. Approval to follow.
June 2010	4	12	Work in Progress	Colchester East Hants, Pictou, Guysborough Antigonish Strait, and Cape Breton DHAs' policies regarding youth transferring to adult services have been received. A formal policy has been developed between CDHA and IWK and awaiting approval.
June 2010	4	13	Work in Progress	Mental Health Services websites for all DHAs/IWK updated and DHW website updated to include DHAs/IWK links.
June 2010	4	14	Work in Progress	DHW requested provincial Mental Health Directors to submit current processes for formal communications with physicians and directed Chief Executive Officers of DHAs/IWK to develop a process of formal communication with physicians within their catchment areas.
June 2010	4	15	Work in Progress	Process and guiding principles for the review of mental health data systems developed. Regular meetings taking place.

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June 2010	4	16	Work in Progress	Data used include Management Information System (MIS) data and Discharge Abstract Data (DAD) both using Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) definitions and standards to enable interprovincial comparisons and community wide scheduling standardization which allows various statistical reporting capabilities in the areas of utilization/activity, utilization/efficiency trending, no show and cancellations, all by various demographics. Data quality report tools have been developed and business processes are in place to monitor data quality.
June 2010	4	17	Work in Progress	Standardized provincial approach to reporting wait time information for mental health programs and services developed. Quarterly reporting has been established on a go-forward basis with Mental Health Outpatient Clinics/Community Mental Health chosen as a starting point for provincial reporting.
June 2010	4	18	Complete	Minimum data set was defined and approved. A standardized provincial approach to reporting wait time information for mental health programs and services has been developed and quarterly reporting using a data quality audit tool is in place. Data quality issues have been addressed.
June 2010	4	19	Complete	Capital District Health Authority (CDHA) reviewed its wait times information for accuracy. Improvements were implemented and an audit report demonstrated accuracy. Regular data quality audit reports will be produced to ensure accuracy of information.
Government Financial Reporting				
Nov 2010	5	8	Work in Progress	The scope of the work related to the audit of the Performance Based Agreement with Medavie Inc was expanded to include the

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				Seniors' Pharmacare Program. The work has been completed and the report issued for the fiscal years ending March 31, 2009 and March 31, 2010. The auditors will be engaged for the year ended March 31, 2011 and the audits will continue yearly.
Colchester Regional Hospital Replacement				
May 2011	4	1	Work in Progress	Administrative process now in place requiring completion of a schematic design including a Class C budget estimate to be completed prior to a submission to Cabinet seeking funding approval. This process will advance with the next construction project and at that time will be added to the Capital Spending Manual.
May 2011	4	2	Work in Progress	Energy model to evaluate operating costs of the physical structure to be complete Fall 2011. Colchester East Hants Health Authority's (CEHHA) request for potential expansions will be reviewed as part of the DHA business planning for 2012-13.
May 2011	4	3	Complete	DHW has a comprehensive <i>Submissions to Cabinet Policy</i> in place which includes financial staff involvement as early as possible in the submission process to ensure submissions are accurate.
May 2011	4	4	Work in Progress	Only one engineer was available for this project highlighting the need for more; now there are six. The manager challenges the design, budget and timeline of a project based on the Project Management Book of Knowledge. DHW has also implemented a process whereby program leads must sign off on schematics acknowledging to the design consultants that the plan is understood and agreed upon. This will be reflected in the DHW Capital Spending Manual in April 2012.

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May 2011	4	5	Work in Progress	DHW now requires the grossing factor to be clearly identified by the designer on all large new construction projects as well as regular review of grossing factors. This will be reflected in the DHW Capital Spending Manual in April 2012.
May 2011	4	6	Work in Progress	Design decisions on all new projects will be evaluated with the view of standardization of design across all acute care facilities in the province. Design and specification standards are being developed for acute care, LTC, primary care and mental health facilities.
May 2011	4	7	Action No Longer Required or Appropriate	This project was approved and designed before the requirement for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. Now LEED compliant facilities are the practice for new construction within all government departments.
May 2011	4	8	Complete	A process is now in place to address changes to contract documents during construction. This process is described in the Replacement Project Manual.
May 2011	4	9	Complete	DHW will only accept Canadian Standards Association standards for area measurement on all future new construction projects. Capital Spending Manual will be updated April 2012.
May 2011	4	10	Work in Progress	Increased frequency of estimates by multiple sources will be used for future construction management projects of significant size. This will be reflected in the Capital Spending Manual in April 2012.
May 2011	4	11	Work in Progress	Contract is currently being developed with a target completion/signature date of December 2011.

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May 2011	4	13	Work in Progress	A post occupancy assessment tool is being jointly developed to be applied typically 12 to 18 months after the facility is in use.
Long Term Care - New and Replacement Facilities				
May 2011	5	1	Work in Progress	DHW dedicated its next round of long term care (LTC) facilities/beds replacement to be based on a transparent, consistent process supported by documentation. First steps are the development of assessment criteria for existing LTC facilities and an evaluation tool to weight and score criteria which have been completed.
May 2011	5	2	Work in Progress	Lessons learned from the previous LTC planning process indicated the need to update process/methodology. The Expenditure Management Initiative (EMI) informs a review of the entire Continuing Care Strategy with a special focus on home care utilization. The Continuing Care Branch (CCB) is partnering in extensive research (2011-2014) entitled "Care and Construction: Assessing Differences in Nursing Home Models of Care on Resident Quality of Life". DHW recognizes the impacts of change as it implements its 10 year strategy to enhance and expand the continuing care system.
May 2011	5	3	Work in Progress	DHW and DHAs/IWK signed an MOU and developed an accountability framework which sets out roles, responsibilities, and authorities for LTC in Nova Scotia. DHAs are working on a service agreement with LT Providers. DHW has been supporting DHAs as they negotiate with about 128 LTC facilities. Negotiations have involved a DHA-provider working group which includes respective legal counsel. A service level agreement has been developed. DHW is working collaboratively

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				with both the DHAs and the service providers to ensure that they enter into service level agreements pertaining to LTC.
May 2011	5	4	Work in Progress <i>(No Progress to Date but Plan to Take Action)</i>	DHW is dedicated to developing a risk assessment process for projects and include in their charters. CCB is filling one position and trying to secure a project manager position for which developing a risk assessment process will be a required task for both.
May 2011	5	5	Work in Progress	DHW's CCB and Healthcare Quality, Safety and Wait Time Improvement Branch have met to begin development of a wait time measure for those awaiting LTC placement. Previous work on wait times for LTC placement has been reviewed for lessons learned.
May 2011	5	6	Work in Progress	DHW has reviewed and updated the status of the June 2007 Chapter 4 Auditor General recommendations.
May 2011	5	7	Work in Progress <i>(No Progress to Date but Plan to Take Action)</i>	In order to lay the ground work for meeting with the Department of Community Services to update the <i>Homes for Special Care Act</i> , DHW has begun updating all policy and standards documents, which will inform the work on the legislation and regulations.