



New Brunswick Association of Social Workers
VISION FOR HEALTH CARE IN NEW BRUNSWICK

JANUARY 2021



Vision for Health Care in New Brunswick

Introduction

The New Brunswick Association of Social Workers (NBASW) is an organization representing more than 2,100 social workers provincially. Its role is the promotion of excellence in social work practice and the protection of the public.

Social workers are committed to supporting the well-being of all individuals and protecting the most vulnerable in our society. Social workers provide a vital service to New Brunswick, working in a variety of fields such as health care, mental health and addictions, child and adult protection, education, non-profit organizations, policy, and more. Social workers are on the front-line every day, working with some of New Brunswick's most vulnerable populations. To ensure a social work perspective is included in the shaping of a health care system, the NBASW has developed a set of key recommendations that it implores the government to include in its vision for a health care system, in order to meet the ever-evolving needs of the population.

Recommendations

Effective public health care is critical for a well-functioning society, as has been highlighted since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. What has also been emphasized throughout the pandemic is the need for enhanced and innovative community-based services, to reduce the number of New Brunswickers who depend on the hospital system to receive care that could otherwise be managed at home. **The NBASW envisions a health care system that provides health and other support services to people in their homes.**

To support the wellbeing of all New Brunswickers, every citizen must have access to equitable health services. To achieve this, the government must fully implement Jordan's Principle to ensure children's health care needs are met, along with ensuring equitable health services are available to all peoples in First Nations communities. **The NBASW envisions a health care system that provides equitable health services to those in First Nations communities across New Brunswick.**

In recognition of the many barriers to accessing equitable health services, the government must commit to ensuring equitable health services are accessible by citizens province-wide and covered under the Medicare program. **The NBASW envisions a health care system that allows for equitable health services to be covered under Medicare and that provides accessible health and reproductive services province wide.**

As both the fastest aging province in Canada and the province with the highest number of older adults, the health care system must address the needs of older adults through programs that allow them to age in place. Social workers play a key role in supporting New Brunswick's aging population to lead healthy lives with the greatest level of independence possible. **The NBASW envisions a health care system that invests in home care, home support services, and services within retirement homes to allow older adults to age in place, delaying institutionalization and allowing them to continue living in their communities.**

Recruiting and retaining health professionals throughout New Brunswick, particularly in rural and remote areas of the province, should be an ongoing governmental priority. The government must continue to recruit and retain health professionals to meet the health care needs of citizens around the province and should make sure each profession's scope of practice is utilized to its full potential. Social workers are not only experts in areas of mental health and addictions, but have a broad scope of practice, as outlined in the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) [Scope of Practice Statement](#) (Appendix A). The social work scope of practice addresses a wide variety of individual, group, and organizational needs and should be used to its full potential within the health care system. **The NBASW envisions a health system that maximizes the social work scope of practice within health care settings, uses each health professions scope of practice to its full potential, and increases the use of multi-disciplinary teams to meet the health needs of New Brunswickers, including those in rural and remote areas of the province in both official languages.**

The social determinants of health are the various social and economic factors that influence people's health in positive and negative ways. Lack of housing, food security, income, etc. are all factors that increase the likelihood of people experiencing poor health outcomes. It is important that the government recognizes that investments in social support systems (housing first programs, etc.) will result in long term health care cost saving measures. Implementing a health care model that includes social workers as part of primary health care teams is key in ensuring the social determinants of health are taken into consideration and are addressed within health care settings, to ensure citizens receive the support and services required for positive long term health effects. Community health centers are one such model and have the potential of being a hub for addiction and mental health services throughout the province. **The NBASW envisions a health care system that recognizes the social determinants of health, that includes social workers as part of primary health care teams, and that makes community health centers with extended hours of service available throughout the province. Through community health centers, citizens would have access to a variety of health professionals and would be able to receive wraparound services, including mental health and addiction services.**

A re-imagined health care system must include an organizational culture that is patient centered. Access to interdisciplinary health care teams is key to citizens having access to a range of health services that aim to promote not only health, but wellness. To develop care plans that are effective, comprehensive, and aimed at promoting overall wellness, patients and their loved ones must be involved in the development and implementation of care plans in the language of their choice, in addition to there being strong communication and collaboration between health professionals and service providers. **The NBASW envisions a health care system that is patient centered, utilizes interdisciplinary health teams, is a leader in collaboration and coordination among health professionals and service providers, and that involves patients and their loved ones in the development of care plans.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an extremely negative effect on people's mental health, with global stress, unemployment, underemployment, lack of social connection, and lack of or reduced access to services exacerbating mental health issues. Mental health has a direct impact on all aspects of life, influencing how people respond to stressful situations, relate to others, and make choices. It is critical that citizens have access to early intervention mental health services and are not waitlisted until their need for mental health services becomes critical. **The NBASW envisions a health care system that invests in more positions for mental health practitioners to ensure people have access to mental health and addiction services in a timely manner.**

In recognizing the ongoing importance of timely mental health services, mental health social workers must be available to respond to mental health emergencies throughout the province on a 24/7 basis through mobile crisis units. Furthermore, to provide people with mental health services when they need it most, police interventions such as wellness checks, mental health calls, family violence disputes, and addiction issues should involve professionals who are specifically trained to de-escalate and respond to these types of emergencies and other crises. Trained mental health professionals, such as social workers, should respond to wellness checks, mental health calls, family violence disputes, etc. along with police. This would allow for social workers to address mental health crises, connect people with services, provide follow-up, and enhance public services while providing long term cost-saving measures. **The NBASW envisions a health care system that provides province-wide 24/7 in-person mental health response through mobile crisis units and that facilitates a collaborative co-response model between police and mental health professionals.**



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Health provided free Zoom for Healthcare accounts to health professionals, including social workers, for a limited period of time to allow them to provide secure telehealth services to clients. Citizens must continue having access to secure and reliable telehealth services when needed, even after the COVID-19 pandemic is over, to make health services more accessible for all New Brunswickers. **The NBASW envisions a health care system that continues to provide health professionals with the tools they need to provide secure telehealth services, by making the Zoom for Healthcare program a permanent investment.**

Conclusion

The NBASW commends the government for its' commitment to engaging all health professions in sharing their vision of health care in New Brunswick. To create the strongest health care system possible, it is important that the voices of all health professions are included, as well as the voices of New Brunswick citizens. The NBASW looks forward to continuing to work with the Department of Health, to ensure the health care system fully reflects the needs of New Brunswickers.



CASW Scope of Practice Statement

Social work is a practice-based profession and academic discipline founded on theories of social work, social science, and humanities. It is advanced through an evidence informed approach and recognizes the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing in practice, the development of knowledge, and education, clinical services, policy, and research. Social work focuses on the person within their environment and recognizes the importance of family, community, culture, legal, social, spiritual, and economic influences that impact the well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities. Social work applies a strengths-based perspective and views individual, families, and communities as resourceful, resilient, and having capacity. Principles of respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons, the pursuit of social justice, and culturally responsive practice that applies an anti-oppressive lens to all areas of practice and is grounded in ethics, values, and humility, are central to social work.

Social work practice responds to needs of individuals, families, groups, and communities and addresses barriers and injustices in organizations and society. Social work focuses on improving health and social well-being using the social determinants of health framework when delivering services, navigating systems, and advocating for equitable access to and improvement of the multiple dimensions that impact health and well-being. Social work engages people and communities to address life challenges and traumatic events, to create change, and build resiliency. Social work also collaborates with other professionals, communities, and organizations to provide services, improve conditions, and create opportunities for growth, recovery, and personal development.

Individual competency is developed through education, training, continuous professional development, supervision, and a self-reflective approach to practice that bolsters learning from experience. Social work practice includes but is not limited to the roles outlined below. The appendix that follows provides specific roles related to the general descriptions.

- The delivery of clinical services provided either face-to-face or with electronic means, within the context of a helping relationship including assessment, diagnosis, case management, counselling, therapy, consultation, crisis intervention, treatment, group services, and programs, social support, and referral services.
- Advocacy activities to address barriers and inequities that exist in organizations and society, and to uphold human rights and social justice including support for Indigenous populations based on the Indigenous community's identified needs
- The delivery of services and interventions that support community development and enrich individual, family, and collective well-being.
- Supervision to a social worker, social work student or other supervisee.
- The development, promotion, management, administration, delivery, and evaluation of services and programs, including those done in collaboration with other professionals.
- The management, leadership and administration of an organization and oversight of services, programs, and interventions provided by social workers or another supervisee.



- The development, promotion, implementation, and evaluation of social policies aimed at improving social conditions and equality for individuals, families, groups, and communities, and social policies that promote social justice.
- Education, training, and professional development regarding the practice of social work.
- Research and evaluation to reflect on social work practice, to develop social policy, and to implement research informed findings into practice, including research that engages those using social work services and research done in collaboration with other professionals.





APPENDIX #1

Roles and Responsibilities within Social Work Scope of Practice

NOTE: Qualifications relating to the above-noted roles and responsibilities are established through legislation in each province/territory and may vary across jurisdictions.

Role and Responsibilities
A1) Delivery of Clinical Services
a. Assessment of the client’s situation, their needs, and their readiness for services, applying sensitivity to individual and/or cultural differences and engaging the client in defining their situation.
b. Service and intervention planning based on the assessment of client needs, eliciting the client’s point of view, identifying interventions and services to meet the needs, and review and evaluation of progress.
c. Seeking to understand the values, beliefs, traditions, and historical context of clients and incorporating this knowledge into social work assessments, planning, and interventions.
d. Case work and case management.
e. Counselling and therapy.
f. Contractual consultation to social workers, other professionals, and organizations.
g. Crisis intervention services.
h. Linking adults, children, families, groups, and communities to community resources.
i. Social support services to individuals, families, and groups.
j. Matching clients with other services based on the assessment of their needs and their preferences, and referrals to other agencies and programs.
k. Collaboration with other professionals for service planning, interventions, and service delivery.
l. Seeking out cultural advice and, when appropriate, pursuing consultation with the assigned Indigenous leaders and Elders when providing services to Indigenous individuals, families, groups, and communities.
A2) Delivery of Clinical Services: clinical social work services that require additional training and competence
a. With comprehensive training and sanctioned by an Indigenous community, the provision of Indigenous approaches to social work services to Indigenous individuals, families, groups, and communities including traditional healing and ceremonies.
b. Psychosocial assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioural disorders and conditions, for the purpose of providing psychosocial intervention to enhance personal, interpersonal, and social functioning when authorized by provincial or territorial legislation.
c. Social work in health service settings including hospitals, clinics, home care and other organizations providing health services.
d. Social work in child welfare services.
e. Social work services to children and adults who experienced sexual violence, abuse, trauma, and/ or human trafficking.
f. Social work with individuals experiencing substance use.
g. Social work in settings that provide services to diverse communities including refugees, immigrants, and newcomers.
h. Social work with 2SLGBTQ individuals and communities.



i. Social work in legal settings, the criminal justice system, witness support services, alternative dispute resolution services, and mediation services.
j. Social work with women and children experiencing violence and/or individuals who act in violent ways.
k. Court ordered assessments of client needs, client capacity, client functioning, client mental health, parenting capacity, and custody and access family court plans.
l. Adoption services, including adoption assessment, permanency planning, and support services to adoptees, birth parents and the adoptive family.
m. Independent or private clinical practice including treatment, assessment services, consultation, and psychotherapy.
B) Advocacy
a. Advocacy activities and engagement in practices to further human rights and social justice for individuals, groups, and communities.
b. Advocacy activities to improve systems and to address structural or systemic inequalities.
c. Strategies that include members of a community in conversations and actions.
C) Community Development
a. Analysis of community needs.
b. Organizing a community to address various social issues.
c. Strategies that raise public awareness.
d. Services and interventions that support community development and community organization.
D) Supervision
a. Supervision to a social worker, social work student or other supervisee providing clinical services and/or programs and/or operational functions. Supervision includes clinical, case management and program delivery and the administrative, supportive, and educational functions.
b. Supervision to a social worker in private practice.
E) Management and Leadership
a. Management and administration of programs, services, information systems, and organizations.
b. Coordination of programs.
c. Design, development, and initiation of programs.
d. Management of the review of programs and services to evaluate effectiveness and program improvement initiatives as guided by the review.
e. Services to support the development of Board of Directors.
f. Strategic Planning for organizations.
F) Development, implementation, and evaluation of social policies
a. Identifying the need for social policy, engaging others in highlighting the need for social policy, and facilitating public participation.
b. Development and implementation of social welfare policy, and analysis of social policy.
c. Advocacy for policy and legislation changes that will effectively address social condition and social justice.
G) Education and professional development
a. Education to students enrolled in social work programs.
b. Training and professional development to practicing social workers.
c. Training to other professionals, individuals, families and groups regarding programs and services available.
d. Training and education regarding community needs and problems.
H) Research and Evaluation



a. Participation in research and evaluation and dissemination of research informed knowledge.
b. Design of research and evaluation including methods design and data analysis
c. Conducting organizational needs assessment and environmental scan.
d. Assessment of the needs of clients for the purpose of informing design of programs and services.
e. Design and delivery of program review and program evaluation.
f. Participation in continuous quality improvement duties.
g. Planning, management or coordination of quality assurance programs and processes including formulate quality control policies and initiatives to improve programs, organization effectiveness and efficiency.

References: The above chart was developed and adapted from the following social work professional resources

- Canadian Association of Social Workers; Social Work Scope of Practice. (2008) retrieved at: https://www.casw-acts.ca/sites/default/files/attachements/scope_of_practice_august_08_e_final_17.pdf
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- Carlton University, School of Social Work. Essential Requirements for MSW Program- students available at: <https://carleton.ca/socialwork/wp-content/uploads/Essential-Requirements-for-the-MSW-Final-2018.pdf>
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- Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers; Position Paper on Scope of Practice. 2008 retrieved at: <https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Position-Paper-on-Scopes-of-Practice-2018-revised-20180626.pdf>
- Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice September 2018 retrieved at <https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Code-of-Ethics-and-Standards-of-Practice-September-7-2018.pdf>.



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