

Preventing Suicide and Attempted Suicide

Across the Care Continuum

Overview



Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Health Services was a recipient of the Healthcare Insurance Reciprocal of Canada (HIROC) 2021 Safety Grants Program. The HIROC Foundation Safety Grants Program supports innovative safety solutions that contribute to improved patient outcomes.

The Central Zone received the grant for preventing suicide and attempted suicide across the care continuum through improved training in suicide risk assessment and tools.

The five project goals are:

- Meet Accreditation Canada's requirements regarding the assessment and monitoring of clients for suicide risk;
- Create a suicide mitigation strategy and integrate it within the Central Zone;
- Standardize policy and procedure across all mental health and addictions programs, long-term care sites, and emergency departments in the Central Zone;
- Standardize staff education; and
- Enhance emergency intervention kits.

NL has the fourth highest suicide rate of all Canadian provinces and territories. The project contributes to the quintuple aim goals of population health and enhancing the care experience and outcomes.

Activities/Initiatives

A suicide mitigation strategy was created by:

- Forming a working group with key partners;
- Completing jurisdictional scans of regional, provincial, and national suicide risk policies and best practices;
- Completing comparative analyses of existing policies across different services and programs; and
- Completing analyses of current suicide risk assessment tools used in all program areas.

Enhancement of Emergency Intervention Kits

- In 2018, all health-care sites across the Central Zone that offer emergency and mental health and addictions services received a suicide intervention kit for staff to use in a mental health crisis or emergency.
- The kits include emergency supplies such as a cutting tool, dressings, pliers and sutures.
- Accreditation Canada recognized this as a leading practice in 2018. A leading practice is an innovative, people-centred, evidence-informed practice which demonstrates a positive change related to safe and reliable care.
- In 2023, NL Health Services placed kits within all case management vehicles used by mental health and addictions staff and in all long-term care sites and acute care sites in the Central Zone.

Goals

Improve suicide risk assessment through a blended education model of delivery, focusing on:

- Electronic learning system module updates.
- Suicide risk assessment inventory.
- Emergency suicide intervention kits training
- Emergency preparedness of the team in the event of a suicide attempt.

Progress Towards Goals

NL Health Services' Mental Health and Addictions Services team in the Central Zone is pleased that it has met and implemented all project goals.

By meeting these goals, NL Health Services has increased knowledge and awareness among staff of the suicide risk of patients, clients and residents and has helped to reduce the stigma around suicide.

Next Steps and Opportunities

Next steps include:

- Evaluating the initiative after all staff have received education and training; and
- Expanding and spreading this initiative to all zones throughout NL Health Services, in alignment with the provincial government's NL Life Promotion Suicide Prevention Plan Action #6: "Improve Access to Prevention, Intervention, and Follow-up Supports."

HIROC's 2024 Annual Conference

NL Health Services was honoured to attend HIROC's 2024 annual conference where representatives were invited to highlight this important safety initiative. Members of NL Health Services' team spoke about the importance of the project and how the grant was used to achieve the goals of the project.



“ We want to thank HIROC's Safety Grants Program. This grant helped to support our innovative safety work on suicide prevention. We utilized the grant to enhance suicide prevention kits, distribute them to the Central Zone and enhance the delivery of education and practical training. ”

- Chief Nursing Officer, NL Health Services



ICARE

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- Compassion
- Accountability
- Respect
- Excellence

Central Zone Mental Health and Addictions Services Team

NL Health Services