

Mental Health and Addictions System Transformation

Improving care experiences and environments for patients, clients, residents and families.

Overview



NL Health Services is preparing to open the new Mental Health and Addictions Centre, located on the Health Sciences Complex, in April 2025. This modern facility will replace the Waterford Hospital, first opened in 1855.

The Mental Health and Addictions Centre (MHAC) will be an integral part of a mental health and addictions system that has been redesigned as a community-oriented service delivery model. Inpatient services will become more recovery focused, creating a therapeutic environment that enables a seamless transition to and from community-based services. The system's redesign and transformation will ensure provision of care that is recovery oriented, trauma informed, grounded in the principles of harm reduction and supported by a system committed to employee psychological health and safety.

Goal

MHAC is just one piece of an improved mental health and addictions system that will significantly improve the care experience and environment for patients, clients, residents and their families. The new strategically designed state-of-the-art facility has natural light, outdoor terraces, green spaces, artwork, colour palette and furniture – all selected to create a holistic and welcoming environment conducive to recovery.

Additional Activities

In addition to opening a new facility to replace the Waterford Hospital, the Mental Health and Addictions Program is also working towards the opening of a community-based treatment facility as part of the Downtown St. John's Health and Well-Being Centre tentatively scheduled for opening in 2027.

- Tertiary Care Unit
 - providing service for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness who require longer-term treatment than the service to be provided at MHAC.
- Neuropsychiatry Program
 - offering increased access to assessment and cognitive testing, cognitive remediation, behavioural management, intervention and other supports for individuals who are experiencing behavioural and emotional consequences of neurological disorders.
- Walk-In Centre
 - supporting individuals in mental health distress who do not need to be in hospital but need a safe place to resolve their current health issues.

Progress

In March 2017, the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions released **Towards Recovery: A Vision for a Renewed Mental Health and Addictions System for Newfoundland and Labrador**.

The report specifically addressed the need for a new adult mental health and addictions facility. Recommendation 12 states: "The Waterford Hospital must be replaced as an urgent priority. While it is recognized that some type of infrastructure and in-patient services are needed, having them all located in one psychiatric hospital is not the answer." We are happy to report that in April 2025 this will come to fruition.

The design team has worked closely with staff, physicians, and the Client and Family Advisory Committee to ensure the guiding principles are being met.

The guiding principles of the design include:

- reducing stigma;
- client-centred care;
- recovery-focused philosophy;
- access to quality care; and
- community and family integration.



“ The new state-of-the-art Mental Health and Addictions Centre, located on the Health Sciences Complex, will help us break down barriers and stigma related to mental health and addictions by adopting a 'health is health' approach. ”

- Senior Director for Clinical Services, NL Health Services

Opportunities

As the program continues to innovate and expand on mental health and addictions service delivery, it is committed to increasing and improving as follows:

- **Transition points in care:** expansion of discharge liaison services and continued partnerships with community programming and partners.
- **Addictions medicine:** implementing a consultative harm reduction and addictions medicine team that can mobilize across MHAC, other inpatient facilities and residential settings across NL Health Services.
- **Reducing seclusion:** decreasing use of seclusion through enhanced partnerships with the Protection Services Program and exploring the implementation of a Safewards model that positively and proactively reduces conflict and tension.



MHAC Services

MHAC will be a 102-bed state of the art facility, including:

- Two adult acute care units;
- An eating disorder inpatient program and specialized unit;
- A geriatric assessment unit;
- A forensic psychiatry unit;
- A short stay unit;
- Psychiatric intensive care units imbedded in acute, geriatric and forensic psychiatry units;
- Outpatient and various other clinics; and
- A Main Street (a supportive shared space to learn skills to transition into the community).

ICARE

Innovation
Compassion
Accountability
Respect
Excellence

Mental Health and Addictions

NL Health
Services