

CHB Partners Survey Summary of Feedback



Community Health Boards

Background

- A structural and operational review of Community Health Boards was launched in 2020 and the first phase was completed in 2021.
- A core finding of the first phase of the review process was a lack of clarity about the role of Community Health Boards.
- In the second phase of the review, CHB members, staff and community partners were surveyed to help clarify the CHB role. The survey was conducted in Fall 2022.
- 74 community partners from across Nova Scotia responded to the survey.

Survey Highlights

There was strong alignment and consistency of themes with the CHB member and staff survey results.

Community partners indicated the top activities of CHBs should be:

- Award wellness funds
- Build community partnerships for health promotion activities or projects
- Advocate for health public policy
- Engage with the public to determine health promotion activities
- Work on health promotion activities

The following high-level themes emerged from the open-ended feedback shared by community partners:

Visibility and accessibility of CHBs in community



Community partners said that it would be helpful if both CHB members and CHB staff had a greater presence more frequently in the community. A greater presence leads to more opportunities for partnership and other synergies. It was also noted that CHBs have a tremendous story to tell, particularly around the Wellness Fund projects they sponsor, so greater visibility in local media, community newsletters and bulletins should be a priority for CHBs.

Community engagement that is meaningful, grassroots, and trauma-informed



Engaging communities was seen to be an important CHB role by community partners. They felt that CHBs were well-situated to engage communities at a grassroots level because CHB members are community volunteers. There was an emphasis on the engagement needing to be meaningful and purposeful, and that this work could be used to amplify the voices of vulnerable populations who are most impacted by the social and economic determinants of health. Some partners also noted that CHBs and CHB staff would benefit from learning about trauma-informed approaches to their community engagement work in order to meaningfully connect with diverse populations and around social inequities and health disparities. Partners also commented on the need for simple, accessible and visual community health plans as tools that could help CHBs better engage with their communities and report back what they hear.

CHBs could play a greater role in convening, networking, and social planning with community partners



Many partners saw great potential in the CHBs to help create conditions for collective impact work at the local level, especially related to the community health plan priorities. Community partners identified that additional resources for CHBs in this area would contribute to more impactful results from partnering. Specifically, some advocated for investment in and changes to the Wellness Fund grants that would allow for multiyear funding to make grant-funded projects more sustainable and impactful.

Align priorities with partners to increase advocacy to all levels of government



Partners felt it would be helpful to understand where CHBs are having the most impact on government policy, and to use this information to strengthen and coordinate their approach to advocacy with governments and in partnership with community organizations. Strengthening relations with municipal government staff and building the capacity of CHB staff to take on a larger role in advocacy were identified as important steps.

Progress on Community Health Plan priorities needs to be made more visible to community and partners



CHBs need to be able to report on the progress and impact of their community health plans. Community health plans should also be made more accessible and easier to read by creating infographics of the reports and the results. There was also a suggestion to report on how the activities are contributing to progress on the social and economic determinants of health.

Measure impact of all CHB activities



Partners emphasized the need for CHBs to plan for results and to measure the progress and impact of their work in meaningful ways. This will help to align with and supplement the work of their partner organizations in community.

How will the results of the community partner survey be used?

- The feedback on the CHB role aligns with feedback we have gathered from CHB members and CHB staff. Generally, this will be used to inform the recommendations Nova Scotia Health brings forward to the Minister of Health and Wellness for changes to the Community Health Board sections of the Health Authorities Act.
- Community partners were generous with their advice throughout the survey and much of the feedback will be used to inform change and innovation in how the CHB Support program operates.

For more information about Community Health Boards, visit:
[Communityhealthboards.ns.ca](https://communityhealthboards.ns.ca)