

SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE
LUNENBURG COUNTY



ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016

Contact Information

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Personnel

Julie Veinot, Executive Director
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Kendra Fevens, Co-Chair
Rhonda Haines, Financial Officer
Jill Skinner, Secretary
Kaitlin Richard, Director
Scotty Vaughan, Volunteer

Mission

To promote sexual and reproductive health throughout the lifespan by providing information, education, and services, and encouraging informed responsible attitudes toward sexuality.

Founded

1988

Services

Education
Outreach
Pregnancy Testing
Health Supplies (Condoms, Lube, and Dams)

Individual Guidance
Advocacy
Resource Production
Library

INTRODUCTION

Sexual Health Centre Lunenburg County is a small non-profit located on the South Shore of Nova Scotia that promotes sexual and reproductive health.

The fiscal year April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 has been one of both comfort and change. This year, staffing remained constant, while the Board of Directors kept a steady course. After moving in 2014, the centre has nestled into its corner office in Freeman House, which has undergone extensive renovations to make it a home-like, welcoming space for families and youth.

However, change at the provincial level of Sexual Health Nova Scotia and uncertainty about operational revenue continues to be a concern. Typically, non-profits that promote a stigmatized subject like sexuality often struggle to attract donations and funding. Furthermore, the economic situation of an aging province like Nova Scotia generates unease about ballooning healthcare dollars and limited tax revenues.

Thankfully, we have survived another year and look forward to promoting healthy sexuality in 2016-2017. The non-profit life is always one of uncertainty, but here at the Sexual Health Centre, we are committed to remaining a cornerstone of sex-positive resources in our rural area.

Stay safe.



TRENDS IN SEXUAL HEALTH

Here are some trends we have been seeing in our community:

- The creation of hubs with community partners, integrating collaboration in our schedules on a weekly or monthly basis
- Concern about technology and youth, such as sexting and online predators
- Using social media and technology to facilitate health promotion
- Increasing awareness about the importance of creating safer spaces for people who are LGBTQ
- Ongoing challenges accessing primary health care for things such as Pap tests, STI testing, abortion referrals, and birth control prescriptions
- Changes and consolidations within the Department of Health and Wellness
- Increasing support for victims and survivors of sexual assault
- New access to reproductive options like medical abortion, as well as ongoing worries about rural access
- Less money for professional development and capacity building



Some of these topics have been around for generations, while others are creating new panics, such as sexting and online pornography. It is important to note that while the technology has changed, it is still framed by old problems such as gender inequality and lack of consent for sexual activities.

These many trends suggest that robust sexual health education is needed as much as ever. While some things change, the root causes of poor health are age-old problems: race, gender, ability, education, orientation, socio-economic situation, and other intersecting challenges.

IMPACT

While the services we deliver today differ from those of yesteryear (e.g. fewer pregnancy tests), we continue to see a demand for sex-positive resources, especially for folks marginalized by society.

Direct service delivery to individuals through phone or in-person appointments has dropped in favour of increased access by professionals to support their clients' directly. As a result, much of our work includes advising professionals and providing them safer sex supplies to give directly to their clients. This allows people to use pre-existing relationships to improve their comfort level around sexual health.

However, we maintain an open door policy at our office in Freeman House so that people are free to drop in and get condoms or a pregnancy test. We also offer guidance, which is often a great tool for those who have missed sexual health education through traditional means, including those with disabilities or newcomers to Canada.

Distribution of safer sex supplies grew this year, thanks to many sites offering free condoms and lube. We now supply 17 sites throughout the South Shore, allowing people to pick up safer sex supplies wherever they feel comfortable to do so. We have added youthful and fun ONE condoms to our stock, as well as silicon lube. Altogether, we supplied the South Shore with over 10,000 units of safer sex supplies including condoms, lube, and dams.

Another aspect of our service is health care navigation. Many clients are looking for primary health care. While we cannot provide this directly, we can offer tips and tricks to accessing health care in the community or through other allies in the province. Unfortunately, many of our clients do not have family practitioners, creating gaps in screening such as STI testing.

Finally, we delivered many presentations this year on a variety of topics including safer spaces for LGBTQ people, safer sex, and menstruation. Our 31 presentations were attended by 681 participants, including 498 youth. We also make it a priority to work with at-risk youth and adults, including those with disabilities.



FIVE YEAR STATISTICS

	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
Total services accessed	135	126	113	379	532
Guidance or support	5	10	9	76	83
Pregnancy tests	22	9	8	14	39
Info requests	214	148	158	3009	2441
By phone	44	45	44	122	146
In person	140	76	66	43	116
By email or social media messaging	31	27	48	2844	2179
Clients					
Women	63	57	40	82	223
Men	31	31	26	61	71
Trans	9	3	0	33	44
Estimated age					
Less than 11	0	1	0	0	0
12 to 14	0	1	4	0	8
15 to 19	22	28	18	65	141
20 to 29	48	40	15	29	64
30 to 50	30	25	25	54	90
Older than 50	6	6	4	18	28
Distribution					
Condoms	7366	6077	6613	5582	8323
Lubricant	2978	683	730	1050	3345
Oral dams	156				
Internal condoms	48				
Gloves	7		143		
Print Resources	1622	401	1464	3721	4292
No. of locations for distribution	17				
Education sessions	31	23	25	27	32
Schools	19	19			
Community Organizations	7	2			
General	1	1			
Professional	4	1			

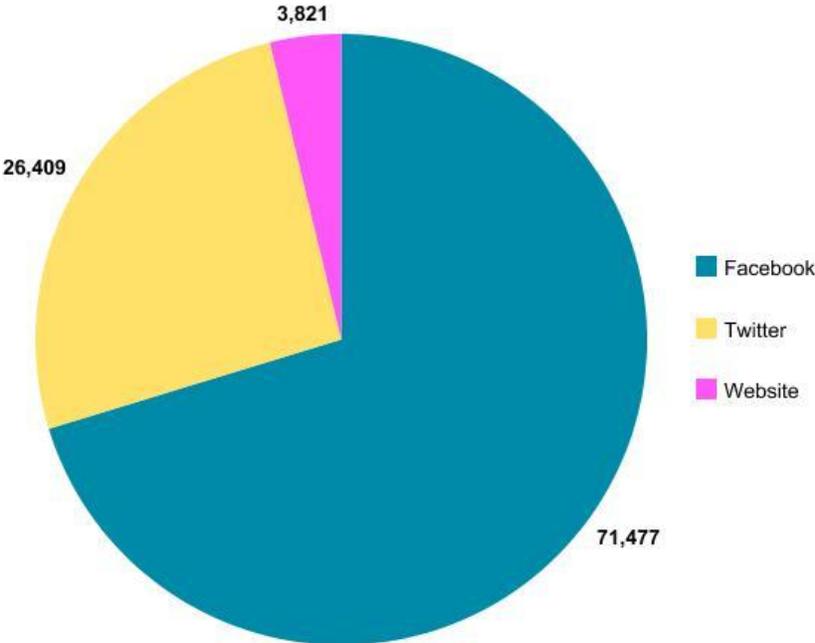
COMMUNICATIONS

Social media allows our centre to have a large reach. This is something we simply would not have the budget to do through traditional means such as print advertising. However, our profiles on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow us to disseminate information widely and frequently with a minimal amount of effort. Despite the size of our organization, this year’s social media reach was 97,886!

Our website has been updated over the past few years to include helpful information, questions and answers, and tips on how to navigate local sexual health services. Our website was viewed 3,821 times.

This year, we have firmed up our branding inspired by a new logo for Sexual Health Nova Scotia. Our provincial partner now uses a teal logo in the shape of Nova Scotia, a concept we have added to our communications materials. It replaces the logo affectionately known as Sweaterman, which served us well for years.

We continue to receive support from local media, and have resurrected our e-news, which goes out monthly featuring trends in sexual health and opportunities in the field. If you wish to subscribe, just email us or click the link on our website.



COMMUNITY

As a one staff organization with limited financial resources, collaboration is vital to our work. We partner with numerous organizations informally and formally. To date, we participate in 33 collaborations.

Sexual Health Nova Scotia

Our provincial partner is an umbrella organization similar in concept to CONNECT! which unites women's centres in Nova Scotia. We are an independent organization, but receive our funding through SHNS; SHNS applies for provincial grants, then allocates some of the money to provincial work at the local level. Each member centre sends a representative to serve on the SHNS Board of Directors. This year, we are adding members at large to the SHNS Board to ensure our Board is well-rounded, with the intention of easing employees out of their governance role.

Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights

Since its merger with Canadians for Choice and Action Canada for Population and Development, our national partner has been streamlining communication to ensure centres like ours have the resources to respond to important issues, like the release of the abortion pill. It also brings us together for Sexual and Reproductive Health Week in February, promoting healthy sexuality across the country from our various centres.

Public Health

Given our similar mandates to improve the health of Nova Scotians, the Centre works closely with Public Health to monitor local need and determine what steps are needed to ensure healthy sexuality for everyone. This partnership has been crucial given the many changes within Public Health as well as our own organization. Our funding through Sexual Health Nova Scotia is also linked to Public Health standards.

Freeman House

Because of our location in Freeman House, operated by Family Service of Western Nova Scotia, we often work together. We united for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The Centre also has increased visibility due to the many people meeting at Freeman House. As more people learn about us, we become more integrated into the community.

Sexual Assault Services Lunenburg Queens

This summer, trauma-informed sexual health services were launched in all hospitals on the South Shore, including Liverpool, Bridgewater, and Lunenburg. The work of this group allowed us to come together to create protocols that will ensure future sustainability. Already, the program has proven successful; previous to the launch, approximately one person per year accessed forensic exams and support; since last summer, five people have come forward. Numbers are expected to increase not because assaults are up, but because people are more likely to be aware of dedicated services and use them. The anonymous storage of forensic kits is also a benefit to the program, along with increased mental health support.

Community Hub

Hubs are popping up over the South Shore, enabling organizations and agencies to meet and informally chat about ways we can support individuals in our community, especially those involved in complex cases requiring numerous services. Not only does this allow the community to respond more effectively, and in ways that are client-centered, it supports workers who are sometimes faced with situations requiring more brainstorming. The main hub meets at Freeman House weekly, while Queens and the Chester area have developed interagency hubs centered on students.



Bridgewater flew the Pride flag for the first time ever in 2015. We were there to celebrate the occasion at Shipyards Landing.

FUTURE PLANS

Safer Spaces for LGBTQ...

A commitment to creating safer spaces for all genders and orientations has become a key professional development piece this year. Sexual Health Nova Scotia will be using a kit piloted by Sexual Health Centre Cumberland County and the local health authority to help professionals become more culturally competent when working with people who identify as LGBTQ. The program will be offered to departments, organizations, and businesses who wish to support all their clients and customers.

Sex Talks

This year, we were honoured to receive funding from the Lunenburg County Community Health Board and Queens Community Health Board to launch Sex Talks, a video series for everyone looking to improve their knowledge of sexual health. The money allowed us to buy camera equipment for filming. We hope to create media which can be used by individuals, professionals, and educators in the classroom. This grant is only the seed of a much larger effort to make information accessible to everyone, regardless of reading ability.

CATIE Roadshow

A request from the national organization CATIE has led to plans to host a roadshow in Nova Scotia. It will be comprised of workshops for professionals on Hepatitis C, with a Bridgewater date of Monday, October 17 from 1:00 to 4:30. These workshops will be free, and mileage for those travelling a long distance will be reimbursed as per CATIE's policies.



FINANCES

The revenue allotted to the Sexual Health Centre is small, but with that small budget comes immense gratitude when we secure extra funds for programming and other essential services. This year, we received numerous grants including:

- a shared grant with Freeman House for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (\$2,000)
- a full-time Canada Summer Jobs student (\$3521)
- Lunenburg County Community Health Board (\$1709)
- Queens Community Health Board (\$1,000)

In anticipation of future funding challenges due to changes at the provincial level, we have been scrimping as much as possible to bulk up our contingency funds. Our biggest expenditure was an economical laptop for the office.

Most of our operating funds go to payroll and rent, with the rest going to mileage and office supplies like paper and cleaning supplies.

The full financial statement follows in this report.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without our many partnerships and supporters, we would be unable to do our work and reach as many people as we do. Many community organizations and sites also distribute our condoms.

Acadia Broadcasting	Nova Scotia Health Authority
Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights	Nova Scotia Public Libraries
AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia	Mental Health & Addictions
Better Together Family Resource Centre	Municipal Alcohol Project
Bridgewater Police	Public Health
Canada Summer Jobs	Queens Community Health Board
CATIE	RCMP
Department of Health and Wellness	SchoolsPlus
Employment Solutions Society	Second Story Women's Centre
Family Service of Western Nova Scotia	Sexual Assault Services Lunenburg Queens
FutureStart	Sexual Violence Strategy
Growing Green Festival	South Shore Breaker
Harbour House	South Shore Regional School Board
Hep NS	Supported Community Living
LighthouseNOW	Town of Bridgewater
Lunenburg County Community Health Board	United Way of Lunenburg County
New Germany Promotional Society	

Also, thank you to the volunteers who provide their free time to running the Centre, including our Board of Directors. Words are not enough to show our appreciation for the value you bring to our efforts.

Finally, thanks to those who take the time to send donations, retweet our social media posts, or offer words of encouragement.

Thank you for supporting sexual and reproductive health.