



2023-2024 Annual Report



Cover: Morghan Manuel, first recipient of the Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia Scholars Endowment, which encourages applicants from under-represented communities enrolled in Dalhousie University's Master of Science Speech-language Pathology and Audiology programs. Morghan is now a full-time speech-language pathologist at Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia's Truro office.



Table of Contents

Message from the Board Chair and CEO	3
Strategic Plan 2024	5
Accomplishments in 2023-2024	6
Fun and learning in Eskasoni for the whole family	7
Quality Improvement Project: Informed consent	8
New and improved equipment and technology	10
Learning from communities: Thinking about accessibility and equity	12
Fostering hope in the community of East Preston	13
Talking the talk	14
Strategic partnership brings much-needed ENT services to Eskasoni	16
Retired speech-language pathologist becomes board volunteer	17
Client/Patient & Family Experience Survey 2023	18
Performance Indicators	20
2023-24 Board of Directors	21
Statement of Financial Position	22
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures	23
Statement of Changes in Net Assets	24
Statement of Cash Flows	25



Message from the Board Chair and CEO

CONTINUOUSLY ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY, COMMUNICATION, AND ENGAGEMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY

Last year marked our 60th anniversary, and we are proud of the key milestones we've achieved. Those achievements genuinely reflect our mission and strategic goals to enhance **accessibility, communication, and engagement** for the communities we serve across the province.

For us, our strategic focus on the theme of accessibility is not just about checking a box; it is at the heart of everything we do, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background or abilities, can access the services they need from us. Our commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion has been the guiding principle of our decision-making process. Whether providing supportive materials for Indigenous or neurodiverse clients or ensuring equitable access to preschool hearing and speech services province-wide, we are dedicated to enhancing inclusion inside and outside our organization. We were particularly pleased to welcome Morghan Manuel, Speech-Language Pathologist, to our team in Truro. Morghan was

the first recipient of our Scholars Endowment Scholarship, which supports students from under-represented communities enrolled in the Master of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology program at Dalhousie's School of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

We would also like to take this opportunity to announce the recipient of the 2023 George and Lenore Mencher Award: Simon Pawlowski, a second-year student at Dalhousie's School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, whose service, leadership and academic achievements have been exemplary. This prestigious scholarship, supported by generous donations, aims to assist exceptional students like Simon during their clinical externship program.

Our concerted focus on communication strategies, introduced this year, was effective in raising awareness of our organization and the vital services we offer Nova Scotians.

We witnessed significant growth in community engagement, demonstrated by our clients' increased awareness and improved understanding of our organization and the services we offer. From revamping our website to sharing client success stories, every effort has fostered more connection and understanding within our communities and increased awareness of Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) services by over 500%. The feedback we've received from our staff, clients and partners, has fuelled our passion and propelled us forward, even in the face of challenges. These strategies have supported our collaborative work with government to ensure our passionate staff continue delivering essential quality services to those in need.

Lastly, our accomplishments through productive engagement strategies have been rewarding. Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia staff increased efforts for meaningful engagement, a cornerstone of all our endeavours, fostering more collaboration and dialogue among our staff, board members, partners, patients and their families. From meeting with stroke survivors in Truro to listening to the insights of our dedicated staff members across Nova Scotia, every interaction has enriched our understanding and strengthened our resolve for continuous improvement. Establishing the Innovations Fund grant program highlights the HSNS Board's commitment to fostering creativity and staff engagement by providing small grants for staff to implement innovative ideas to improve services.

The Provincial Preschool Autism Service is another excellent example of how collaborative efforts with partners can make strides in service improvements. Together with IWK Health, Nova Scotia Health and Autism Nova Scotia, HSNS has expanded services to support autistic preschoolers and their families across the province. And in terms of funding, we are pleased to report significant contributions received in April 2024 from the Department of Health and Wellness. Funding of \$260,000 was received to assist in offsetting inflationary cost drivers.

Additional amounts received included \$1,425,000 to address inequities in wait times for preschool hearing and speech services and an additional \$1,108,000 for capital equipment and software enhancements.

We are proud to present this year's annual report to Nova Scotians. It contains information on our performance for 2023-2024 and highlights the accomplishments of our staff and volunteers.

As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing accessibility, communication and engagement within our organization and beyond. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, board members, and volunteers, and we would be remiss not to mention our supportive partners, who remain vital to our shared mission.

Thank you, and here's to another year of progress and achievements!

Mark Landy, *Board Chair* Anne Mason-Browne, *CEO*





Hearing & Speech Nova Scotia Strategic Plan 2024



Our Mission: To improve the lives of Nova Scotians by delivering quality audiology and speech-language pathology services.

Our Vision: Every person deserves a voice. Every voice deserves to be heard.

Our Values: Foundational to HSNS core values is our commitment to honour the cultural heritage and diversity of our communities, always doing our best to promote equity, accessibility, and inclusion in all that we do.



Strategic Plan 2024

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023-2024

ACCESSIBILITY - Goals

- Sites, services, and information meet provincial accessibility standards.
- Patient and Family Centred Care (PFCC) is guided by principles of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).
- Information Technology (IT) is enhanced to support accessible administrative processes and resources.
- Safety (physical and psychological) is demonstrated as a core value of the organization.

This year we achieved:

- ✓ Developed plan for meeting Provincial Accessibility Standards (built environment) across all HSNS sites.
- ✓ Implemented Equity, Diversity and Inclusion principles in review of clinical standards.
- ✓ Ways to reduce inequity in clinical wait times across provincial health zones.
- ✓ Completed assessment and implementation plan for Assistive Listening Devices and Supports.
- ✓ Improved on resources to support Virtual Care.
- ✓ Completed preliminary investigation in remote programming for cochlear implants.
- ✓ Identified staff resources and strategies to address waitlist pressures.

COMMUNICATION - Goals

- Use range of communication strategies with internal and external stakeholders.
- Clients, patients, families, staff, and partners share their experience stories.
- Promote Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) (a "household name") across all communication, services, activities, and products.

This year we achieved:

- ✓ 512% increased public awareness of HSNS services.
- ✓ Developed data analytics and visualization supports for quality improvement and transparency of performance.
- ✓ Shared stories of experience from staff, clients, and volunteers on HSNS website and social media.

ENGAGEMENT - Goals

- Build on professional development and leadership development for all staff.
- Use collaborative decision-making and engagement with clients, HSNS staff, and external stakeholders.
- Promote recruitment, retention, and a supportive workplace culture.

This year we achieved:

- ✓ Improved supports for clients'/families' informed consent to sharing information.
- ✓ Established ways for staff to take holiday time to participate in non-Christian observances.
- ✓ Established strategies to increase staff diversity and to support inclusion.
- ✓ Implemented new Provincial Preschool Autism Service in collaboration with partners (IWK Health, NSHealth, Autism NS, and Government).

Fun and learning in Eskasoni for the whole family

Since 2014, Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) has provided audiology and speech-language services to clients in Eskasoni, a Mi'kmaq community in Unama'ki (Cape Breton). HSNS staff in Eskasoni—Erin Burke, Speech-Language Pathologist, Patricia Babin, Audiologist, and Adele Lawrence, Communication Disorders Technician—ensure children and families can access services. They accomplish this by providing services at various community locations, including at home, daycare, preschool or the Old Health Centre to meet their varying needs.

A significant part of their work is empowering parents and caregivers through training and education to help improve their own children's communication skills. In recent years, families have expressed a desire to meet other families in the community, with similar communication needs, and to attend play groups together. They also expressed interest in learning more information about autism and how to support autistic children at home.

In the fall of 2023, the Provincial Preschool Autism Service—a partnership between HSNS, IWK Health, Autism Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Health—developed and released the [Autism Education Series](#). This video series is designed to help caregivers learn about autism and build skills to support their preschool-aged children's engagement, establish daily routines, explore play, improve peer interactions, and develop language. Erin, Adele and team members from Nova Scotia Early Childhood Developmental Intervention Services (NSECDIS) saw an opportunity to bring this learning to Eskasoni and fulfill the requests of parents, and so the Family Autism Group was created.

Focusing on the first four videos of the series, HSNS and NSECDIS invited 10 families of children and caregivers to come together at the Eskasoni Elder Centre. The caregiver group watched one of the videos together and discussed learnings regarding their own children. The children then joined the group to develop their play and communication skills while parents practiced strategies they learned, with HSNS staff guidance and assistance as needed. Food and snacks were available, and caregivers had a chance to talk with each other and form connections.

As one parent expressed, "I'm very happy, and even relieved, that we've got a chance to attend autism family play support group. As an 'older' parent whose child has been diagnosed early with autism, I felt a little lost and even overwhelmed as this is all new to us. Being a part of this wonderful and educational environment has helped us realize there is a huge support group out there for our family."

The Family Autism Group in Eskasoni grew out of direct feedback from community members and had a positive impact on both families and staff. "By also being a part of this, we have opportunities to make friendships, getting educated on how to manage and support in a fun and interactive environment," said one caregiver. "We will always be forever grateful and thankful for the opportunity, love and patience from all of the wonderful people who made this group grow and help us better lead our lives. You're always in our hearts. Welali'iq."

Ensuring ongoing responsiveness to feedback and consistently offering valuable opportunities like this will enhance meaningful client access to HSNS programs and other community services. As the HSNS and NSECDIS team members shared, "It was a very motivating experience to be a part of this team. Not only for us to watch our mutual families make connections with each other, but for the NSECDIS and HSNS teams to continue supporting each other, with our like-minded goals and commitment to family-centred service." Staff are looking forward to future programs based on feedback from this series, including virtual access to similar programs.



Quality Improvement Project: Informed consent

In 2021, Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) began to collect baseline information on client consent, knowing that we wanted to make improvements to our existing policies and processes. The two types of client consent are:

1. **Consent to Release Information:** Clients have the ultimate authority on what happens to their personal health information. HSNS staff members and clients have conversations and sign forms to tell staff with whom they can share client information.
2. **Consent for Assessment, Treatment and Training:** We want to ensure that our clients and their family members are fully engaged in understanding their assessment results and in planning treatment that aligns with their personal goals. Clients need to hear information in ways that are meaningful to them to make informed choices about their care.

There were three reasons for doing this:

1. Many of the quality improvement initiatives at HSNS are driven by client- and family-centered care and patient safety. Gone are the medical model days when 'experts' prescribed things and clients and families were passive participants in their care. We continually seek to improve how we collaborate with clients and their families, many of whom have communication challenges.
2. HSNS has a service agreement with the Department of Health and Wellness that requires us to report on the percentage of clients who have valid and informed consent in their medical record.
3. Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists in Nova Scotia became regulated health professionals in 2019. HSNS wanted to ensure that all staff members met the Professional Standards and Practice Standards required by the Nova Scotia College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists.

HSNS's Quality Improvement Working Group, which consists of staff members from around the province, has led this work. Using a Plan-Do-Study-Act framework and supported change principles, the staff members assessed the benefits and shortcomings of the current processes, implemented and supported changes, collected information and feedback about the changes, and then adapted and modified the plans as needed.

Plan-Do-Study-Act is an iterative process that repeats itself as often as is necessary until a good outcome is reached and the change becomes the new normal for the staff members. Since the beginning of the project, the Quality Improvement Working Group has conducted meetings with every site across the province every six months, providing education on consent issues, giving instruction on new procedures and asking for feedback to make improvements.

In 2023-2024, the Quality Improvement Working Group focused on improving the Consent to Release Information form and processes. This work relates to helping our clients and their family members understand how we collect and use their personal health information. HSNS' Partners In Care Advisory Committee, a patient advisory group, was instrumental in helping create a form that was as user-friendly as we could imagine.

In 2024-2025, the focus is shifting to improving processes related to informed Consent for Assessment, Treatment and Training. Partners In Care continues to provide the client perspective on these processes and forms. For example, Partner-in-Care Ferne Mardlin-Smith emphasized the importance of using bold text on printed materials to highlight keywords for people who find reading difficult. This also helps appeal to a variety of learning styles. She also suggested that informed consent would be improved if staff members "let us know if they are going to touch our bodies. It helps us feel more comfortable, even if we have done this before." Partner-in-Care Shawn Cadden stressed the importance of leaving space for clients to change their minds about their services, because client and family priorities can change from one appointment to the next.

HSNS is confident that the time invested in working with staff and clients to improve these processes will result in higher-quality services. Erin Lamond, co-chair of the Quality Improvement Working Group, states, "Hearing and Speech staff members are highly skilled at co-creating meaningful and functional assessment, treatment and training experiences with their clients. Ensuring our clients and families know they are the co-creators of all their HSNS care plans enhances feelings of trust and safety. In a model where our staff and clients work so collaboratively on goals and plans, making sure our clients know they can trust us and feel safe with us is incredibly important."



New and improved equipment and technology

Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) was fortunate to receive funding from the Department of Health and Wellness for the 2022-2023 fiscal year to update specific audiology equipment, which is used to measure electrical signals in the brain.

Auditory evoked potentials are one important procedure in the audiologist's toolbox. By playing sounds through an earphone in a person's ear, audiologists can measure a client's response from their brain through electrodes placed on the scalp. The sound played is usually a click or a tone and can be played at different volumes. The audiologist can then visualize the brain's response to the sound on a computer screen. Did you know the client being tested does not have to respond in any way? In fact, it's much better if they are calm and relaxed or even if they fall asleep during the test.

This type of testing is generally recommended when there are suspected auditory disorders, which can affect hearing and balance, to monitor the integrity of the auditory nerve. It can also be used to measure a person's hearing when they are unable to respond to more traditional types of testing. This is also the test an audiologist uses to diagnose hearing loss in babies.

With our aging equipment becoming less reliable, we were thrilled to receive this funding to get new and improved tools. To ensure our decision to invest in this new equipment can serve our clients for many years to come, we secured test models from manufacturers for audiologists to test in their clinics. Their valuable input and feedback, coupled with the responses we received from the vendors we contacted, guided our selection process to secure the best equipment suited for the services our audiologists provide. Soon, our audiologists will receive their brand-new equipment along with relevant training, allowing them to continue to conduct thorough tests for Nova Scotians of all ages.





Some of our clients do not rely on speech to communicate and use alternative means. To enable our team to add devices to our library and help our clients with their communication needs, our HSNS Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) services received funding for new equipment this year. As a result, we've added 30 iPads to our lending library, as important tools for both our clients and clinicians. Before clinicians recommend iPads as alternative communication devices, they ensure the family has the chance to try the device through our lending library to determine whether it is a good fit for their child.

Previously, the wait time for an iPad was over three months, affecting the family's ability to decide whether this tool is the right fit for their needs. With the extra 30 iPads, the wait time decreased from three months to two weeks. This improvement made the program much more accessible for families, helping clinicians better support those families in their decision-making process in facilitating their child's communication.

Another service we're now able to offer is a mobile cart loaded with assistive technology for the ICU and acute care floors at the IWK. This offering provides children and families access to this technology, while in the hospital, to help them with their communication and accessibility needs. This equipment is meant to be used not only by the speech-language pathologist but also by the interdisciplinary team in the hospital. The equipment helps children practice and develop their communication abilities using switches and buttons. Giving families and clients this ability to communicate in a barrier-free environment is both powerful and motivating, and we are delighted to be able to facilitate this service for them.

Learning from communities: Thinking about accessibility and equity

With a steadfast commitment to making our services accessible and equitable, Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) had the opportunity to further this goal in 2023. We were able to accomplish that by working closely with the East Preston Daycare and Family Resource Centre in the historically underserved Preston community.

In discussion with staff at the East Preston Daycare: Trina Fraser, Juanita Smith and Kim McMullin, we learned that lack of access to transportation has been a major barrier to community members receiving hearing and speech services. They shared that offering our services locally in their community would make it easier for caregivers to connect with us and for the early childhood educators to be included. Trina also expressed that the daycare would welcome professional development workshops, to better help community members learn how to support children with speech and language needs.

As a result, HSNS clinicians have been visiting the East Preston Daycare regularly to provide direct and indirect speech and language services. The daycare has provided us with space to meet with caregivers one-on-one, and the early childhood educators have welcomed us into their classrooms. "Collaborating with classroom educators has been such a positive experience," said Kathryn Francis, Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP). "They care so much for the children they're working with and have been very open to trying new strategies, to support the children's learning and growth."

One of the highlights of the year was a screening event, where SLPs Ashley Tucker-McIntosh and Ariane Tye visited the daycare to carry out speech, language and hearing screenings for preschool children aged 3-5 years. Twenty-one children were screened, identifying a number who would benefit from a more in-depth assessment of their communication skills or hearing abilities. In cases where further assessment was recommended based on the screening results, Ashley and Ariane supported the daycare in communicating to caregivers the results of the screening and recommendations on next steps.

To continue our engagement with the community, we recently sent out a survey to daycare staff to plan for the requested professional development opportunities. This will enable our team to discover what early childhood educators would value learning about most. Possible workshop topics include supporting early language development, building social skills and developing early literacy skills.

Working with East Preston Daycare and Family Resource Centre has allowed us to learn directly from community members about how HSNS can better support families in Preston. "It started with a conversation in a parking lot," says Myrto Brandeker, Manager. "And it has led to an emerging relationship with the community and a greater understanding of how we can best provide hearing and speech services, in a way that is truly valuable to community members." We are grateful for this opportunity and look forward to our ongoing collaboration with the daycare and community.



Fostering hope in the community of East Preston

Ida, from East Preston, first heard about Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) when she brought her great-grandson, Zeondre, for a check-up visit with her family doctor. Zeondre was struggling to meet his speech and language milestones, communicating his needs with only a few words and gestures. Determined to seek help, Ida brought Zeondre to Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia for an assessment and then navigated the challenges of her demanding shift work schedule to ensure Zeondre attended his speech therapy appointments, facing numerous barriers along the way.

Then, Ida heard about HSNS clinicians providing support for caregivers and staff in Zeondre's daycare. She described how relieved it felt to make her first appointment and meet with a speech-language pathologist in Zeondre's familiar daycare environment. Ariane Tye provided Ida and the daycare staff with the right strategies to support his language during daily routines. It wasn't long before Zeondre started using new words and even combined two and three words to make simple sentences.

Using the new strategies Ida was learning, Zeondre's progress soon extended beyond language. Ida started noticing he was less upset when trying new foods. He began imitating songs, following her directions, and responding when she called his name. "The strategies we found helpful were things like giving Zeondre choices during breakfast and play time and modelling simple words when he requested through pointing," she said.

Ida remembered the first time Zeondre asked her a question. She went into his room to get him ready for the day, and when he couldn't see her, he said "Why you hide?" She was overjoyed with his progress in a few short months.

Ida immediately started sharing the strategies she learned with other members of her family, so they could be part of this incredible journey. She is looking forward to her next session with Ariane to learn more, and she has even started encouraging others in her community to make an appointment with HSNS for their children.

As our interview came to a close, Ida finished by saying "We need this program in our community, so our children don't get left behind." She wanted to thank Ariane for teaching her how to help and shared how very hopeful she feels for Zeondre's future.

Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia continues to adapt our services to meet the unique needs of each of our clients. For Ida, this meant bringing support directly to her community and providing her and her great-grandson's daycare staff with the strategies necessary for Zeondre to thrive. We are proud to have supported Zeondre, Ida, and the East Preston community.



Talking the talk

HSNS FIRST VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR CEMENTS 'NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US' COMMITMENT

Our clinical services have long focused on clients having input in their own care, yet we still needed to expand upon this. That meant making concerted efforts to include clients and families more broadly in the care of others and as equal partners in the organization.

Our journey toward greater client and family involvement in care began with establishing the Hearing and Speech Partners in Care (PIC) Advisory Committee in 2016. Unlike any other patient advisory group, this committee was a testament to our unwavering organizational commitment to incorporating the 'patient voice' into service planning and assessment. Recognizing most of our clients face communication differences, we were determined to make committee meetings more inclusive and accessible for all.

That's why our team designed an innovative model, pairing clients or their caregivers with a staff member, who would support them during their participation. Examples range from:

- ensuring a Speech-Language Pathologist or Audiologist is available during meetings;
- providing computer access for meetings;
- making photocopies of meeting information;
- accessing closed captioning or assistive listening devices; and/or
- supporting clients who are using communication strategies.

Over the years, Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) PIC has welcomed members who accessed both hearing and speech services across the province.

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted a shift of all PIC meetings transitioning to virtual platforms. In many ways, this change was an improvement over our previous hybrid in-person/on-the-phone model, as it allowed us to provide enhanced support and accessibility.

We now display keywords on the screen, ensuring all meeting attendants can conveniently follow the discussions.

PIC continues to provide valuable insights and ideas. The committee meets six times annually and provides opportunities for consultation and collaboration on various projects. This year, the group helped HSNS adapt the readability of brochures, improve the website experience and develop consent processes among other initiatives.

Angela Vlasic joined the committee this year as a new member from Antigonish. An elementary school teacher, Angela became involved with HSNS along with her oldest child, who has autism. Angela describes herself as a life-long learner who wants to support parents and advocates navigating the autism diagnosis process.

From the beginning, the PIC Advisory Committee was committed to having a volunteer co-chair. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this goal was delayed until the group was able to achieve it this past year. As a result, we are very pleased to announce HSNS's first volunteer Co-chair of Partners in Care: Courtney Douglas. This was a significant priority and milestone for our organization, demonstrating the ongoing growth of PIC and elevating the profile and role of patient advocates within the organization.



Courtney Douglas,
Partners in Care Co-chair

Living in Halifax, Courtney joined PIC in February 2021 after receiving services for her now-eight-year-old son. "I love giving back to the organization as a way to support the team that supported our family in a number of ways," she said.

Courtney works full-time as a Human Resources Specialist outside her co-chair position on the committee. Her two sons keep her busy, while she still finds time for spin classes and coaching soccer. "Having myself as a client co-chair in a leadership role on the committee will strengthen the partnership between clients and Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia".

"Having a volunteer co-chair solidifies our commitment to partnering with clients and families in a new way," said Erin Lamond, PIC co-chair and HSNS manager. "The focus has been more about asking for advice from our patient advocates on topics we brought to the table.

"I really hope this will give a new avenue to making sure topics of importance to our clients and their families are on our agenda," said Erin. "This is a whole other level of collaboration, and I'm eager to see where it takes us."



Strategic partnership brings much-needed ENT services to Eskasoni

Starting in 2020, a dedicated team of partners has collaborated to provide needed audiological and Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) services in Eskasoni. The team includes Eskasoni Health, Dalhousie University research, the clinical Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) team at the IWK, and clinical and leadership representatives from Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS).

Since the ENT clinic's inauguration in Eskasoni in October 2022, Dr. Paul Hong from the IWK has been working in the community quarterly to provide ENT services out of the Eskasoni Health Centre. His services are open to community members of all ages, and the clinic accepts referrals from Eskasoni Health physicians and nurses, HSNS clinicians and the local school speech-language pathologist.

HSNS Audiologist Patricia Babin ensures that all clients, who need audiological testing in advance of the ENT clinic, are seen either in the Eskasoni location or in Sydney, depending on the type of testing required. Patricia shared that children identified with chronic ear infections, which have affected their hearing thresholds, have been seen and treated by Dr. Hong.

"Not only is it improving their health but also their ability to communicate," says Patricia. She also noted that children have been fitted with hearing aids thanks to this strategic partnership. "I'm proud to be a part of this beneficial process and hope to see our services not only continue but grow."



Retired speech-language pathologist becomes board volunteer

A graduate of Dalhousie's School of Human Communication Disorders (now called the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders), Mark Landy completed the practical portion of his degree under the supervision of clinical staff of what was then called Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Clinic. Through several supportive and positive clinical placements, he was impressed by the professionalism of the supervising staff and the way Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) provided comprehensive services across the province.

Working as a speech-language pathologist for 20 years, in a career that spanned three provinces and a short stay in Scotland, Mark had many opportunities to compare how services are delivered through various health services. Over time, he followed the progress of HSNS and remained impressed by the organization's continuous strive to meet its commitment, to provide high-quality clinical services across the spectrum.

After a 35-year career in healthcare, Mark retired from his position of Director, Medicine, and Oncology at Grey Bruce Health Services, relocating to Riverport, N.S. Having previously served on the Board of the Owen Sound and County of Grey Children's Aid Society, he decided to return to a volunteer Board where his experience could be of benefit, joining the HSNS Board in 2021.

In addition to his work as a speech-language pathologist, Mark has also worked in the clinical administration of hospital and community-based health services. He contributed to developing and launching the Ontario Preschool Speech and Language program and was seconded to its initial start-up in the Halton Region. He has assumed a number of leadership roles in Rehabilitation and Acute Care services, providing leadership at a regional level with the Ontario Stroke System, Cancer Care Ontario and the Ontario Emergency Room Wait Time Initiative.

Rounding out his volunteer work, Mark has joined the Canadian Red Cross and volunteers his time to disaster and emergency management with the local Lunenburg and Queen's County team – through which he was deployed to assist in the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona and during the Shelburne Area fires. HSNS is honoured to have Mark's leadership and experience on our Board of Directors.





Client/Patient & Family Experience Survey 2023

Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) is committed to providing high-quality services, which can be measured in many ways. One vitally important way is to ask HSNS clients how they feel about the quality of services they received. HSNS conducts a client survey annually, and the results help identify strengths and areas for improvement.

The 2023 survey ran between November and December, and HSNS received 764 responses, representing a total of 2.99% of all HSNS clients seen in 2023 and exceeding the minimum required response rate for analysis.

Here are some of the survey highlights:

<p>99% said they were satisfied with the quality of care they received</p>	<p>92% said they had a better understanding of their (or their family member's) hearing</p>	<p>88% said they have improved speech-language skills because of HSNS services provided</p>	<p>97% said they learned helpful new skills or knowledge during their visits</p>	<p>98% said they had a good understanding of managing their own care</p>	<p>99% feel that HSNS is a safe space to receive services</p>
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In 2023, HSNS maintained high satisfaction rates in helping clients and families understand the results of their assessments.

<p>98% of clients and families said they understand the results of their assessments</p>	<p>98% said that staff counseled them during their care</p>	<p>98% said they are involved in decisions about their care</p>	<p>99% said staff listens and answers questions</p>
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In 2023, HSNS clients told us they felt respected by our staff and that we considered individual -client/ family needs during their assessment and treatment.

99.8%
felt they were treated with respect by staff

99.3%
said that staff considered their individual needs, preferences, and values

99%
said they know they can refuse treatment that is offered

97.4%
knew how to submit a complaint or compliment

This year, we asked new questions about physical, emotional, and cultural safety and accessibility.

98%
said they were able to move around the office with ease

99%
said staff considered their cultural background and needs when providing services

99%
said staff considered their primary language when providing services

99%
said staff considered hearing and vision needs when providing services

96%
said HSNS hours of operation met their needs

Of the 575 written comments HSNS received, 83% were positive comments about:

- how caring, helpful, kind and professional the HSNS staff is;
- feeling physically and psychologically safe during visits; and
- they had an overall great experience.

Clients and families also let us know where HSNS needs to improve. Key suggestions include:

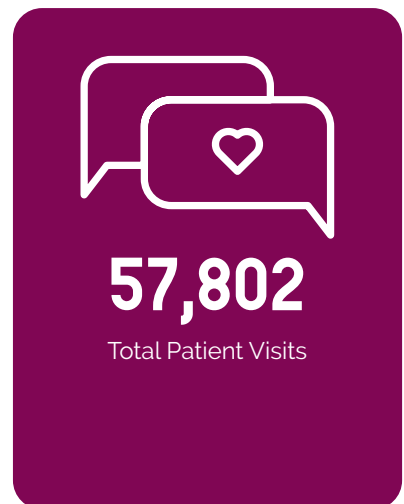
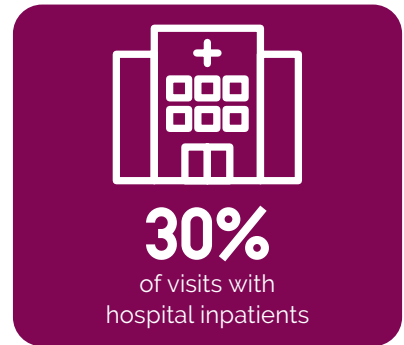
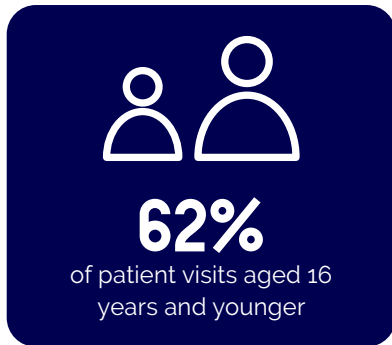
- improved wait times;
- improved physical accessibility and parking; and
- improved access to services in other languages.

[To share your feedback, complete the form on the HSNS website.](#)

Performance Indicators

Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS) provides high-quality audiology services to all Nova Scotians and speech-language pathology services to preschool children, home-schooled children and adults. HSNS is accredited by Accreditation Canada and provides services from 37 clinics in 25 communities throughout Nova Scotia. Our Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists, licensed with the provincial regulatory college, received over 27,000 referrals from individuals, families, healthcare providers, educators and other professionals in the past year. Most services are provided at no cost to Nova Scotia residents with a valid health card.

In 2023, HSNS celebrated 60 years of providing audiology and speech-language pathology services to Nova Scotians.





2023-24 Board of Directors

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We are a volunteer board of directors and are always looking for new members. If you are interested, please contact us at info@nshsc.nshealth.ca or visit our website at www.hearingandspeech.ca.

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2024

	Operating Fund	Fund 1 (Emergency)	Fund 2 (Innovation)	2024	2023
ASSETS					
CURRENT					
Cash	\$ 3,335,428	\$ 18,188	\$ -	\$ 3,353,616	\$ 2,710,921
Accounts receivable	1,438,485	321	418	1,439,224	2,179,405
Interfund receivables	31,770	2,664	7,282	41,716	39,578
Prepaid expenses	116,992	-	-	116,992	78,604
	4,922,675	21,173	7,700	4,951,548	5,008,508
CAPITAL ASSETS	541,571	-	-	541,571	297,096
MARKETABLE SECURITIES	-	726,305	590,365	1,316,670	1124,281
	\$ 5,464,246	\$ 747,478	\$ 598,065	\$ 6,809,789	\$ 6,519,885
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS					
CURRENT					
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 407,155	\$ -	\$ 1,663	\$ 408,818	\$ 534,590
Interfund payables	9,946	31,770	-	41,716	39,579
Deferred revenue	540,530	-	-	540,530	-
	957,631	31,770	1,663	991,064	574,169
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS - CAPITAL ASSETS	2,696,624	-	-	2,696,624	1,219,470
SPECIAL PURPOSE FUNDS	450,281	-	-	450,281	2,155,281
	4,104,536	31,770	1,663	4,137,969	3,948,920
FUND BALANCES	1,359,710	715,708	596,402	2,671,820	2,570,965
	\$ 5,464,246	\$ 747,478	\$ 598,065	\$ 6,809,789	\$ 6,519,885

LEASE COMMITMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD



Director



Director

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

Year Ended March 31, 2024

	Operating Fund	Fund 1 (Emergency)	Fund 2 (Innovation)	2024	2023
REVENUE					
Department of Health	\$13,600,965	\$ -	\$ -	\$13,600,965	\$ 13,658,465
Department of Health – EIBI	1,575,397	-	-	1,575,397	1,559,755
IWK-PPAS	1,167,551	-	-	1,167,551	867,295
Contract Revenue	10,274	-	-	10,274	17,067
Out of Province	180,722	-	-	180,722	190,213
Miscellaneous Income	39,894	-	-	39,894	55,734
Investment Income (loss)	-	71,959	47,579	119,538	(16,627)
Recoveries	31,220	-	-	31,220	28,016
	16,606,023	71,959	47,579	16,359,918	16,359,918
EXPENDITURES					
Administrative expenses	1,241,750	-	-	1,241,750	1,215,394
Autism program	944,474	-	-	944,474	1,010,383
Core hearing and speech services	9,517,797	-	-	9,517,797	9,625,101
EIBI	1,575,397	-	-	1,575,397	1,559,755
Operational	1,927,104	-	-	1,927,104	1,787,878
PPAS	1,167,551	-	-	1,167,551	867,295
Investment fees	-	9,420	5,900	15,320	15,751
Scholarships	-	1,060	-	1,060	1,058
	16,374,073	10,480	5,900	16,390,453	16,082,615
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES FROM OPERATIONS					
	231,950	61,479	41,679	335,108	277,303
OTHER EXPENSES					
Amortization of capital assets	234,253	-	-	234,253	181,379
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES					
	\$ (2,303)	\$ 61,479	\$ 41,679	\$ 100,855	\$ 95,924

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

March 31, 2023

	OPERATING FUND	Fund 1 (Emergency)	Fund 2 (Innovation)	2023	2022
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$1,362,013	\$654,229	\$554,723	\$2,570,965	\$2,475,041
Excess of revenue over expenditures	(2,303)	61,479	41,679	100,855	95,924
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$1,359,710	\$715,708	\$596,402	\$2,671,820	\$2,570,965

Statement of Cash Flows

Year Ended March 31, 2023

	2024	2023
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ 100,855	\$ 95,924
Items not affecting cash:		
Amortization of capital assets	234,253	181,379
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	(121,766)	(67,494)
Realized gain on sale of marketable securities	(24,111)	(8,799)
Unrealized loss (gain) on marketable securities	(32,662)	103,127
	156,569	304,137
Changes in non-cash working capital:		
Accounts receivable	740,184	(747,400)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(125,775)	(345,006)
Deferred revenue	540,530	-
Prepaid expenses	(38,388)	(41,231)
	1,116,551	(1,133,637)
Cash flow from (used by) operating activities	1,273,120	(829,500)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of capital assets	(478,728)	(135,635)
Proceeds from sale of marketable securities	95,092	32,106
Purchase of marketable securities	(140,709)	(97,375)
Cash flow used by investing activities	(524,345)	(200,904)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Special purpose fund receipts	839,720	2,697,422
Special purpose fund expenses	(2,544,720)	(978,341)
Deferred capital contributions	1,598,920	1,168,491
Cash flow from (used by) financing activities	(106,080)	2,887,572
INCREASE IN CASH FLOW	642,695	1,857,168
Cash - beginning of year	2,710,921	853,753
CASH - END OF YEAR	\$ 3,353,616	\$ 2,710,921

Full 2023-24 [audited Financial Statements](#) can be viewed on our website.

