



Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Budget 2018 Pre-Budget Submission

Introduction

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers (NLASW) is the regulatory body and professional association for over 1500 social workers in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). The vision is Excellence in Social Work.

As an organization, NLASW is committed to advancing health and social policy to ensure the well-being of the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador. The NLASW believes that health and social policy development must reflect the social determinants of health framework. This includes policies to address poverty, inadequate wages, and the growing economic gap; investments in affordable and sustainable housing; programs/policies to address food insecurity; support for early intervention and prevention programs; investments in early childhood learning and childcare; and the creation of conditions to promote social inclusion.

NLASW has been participating in the provincial pre-budget consultation process for over 20 years. In this submission for 2018, we outline the key areas and recommendations that budget 2018, as part of a long-term strategy, needs to address to improve daily living conditions, reduce inequities in health and foster positive health outcomes for individuals and communities. These are budgetary recommendations that have been brought forward in previous NLASW submissions and policy documents that can be accessed on the NLASW website at <http://www.nlasw.ca/social-work-in-nl/health-social-policy>.

Poverty Reduction

- Annual increases to the minimum wage that are indexed to inflation or tied to the average wage increase for the province, whichever is higher.
- Monitor and increase income support rates to ensure this program adequately meets the needs of those requiring support.
- Investments in social programming and safe and affordable housing for those with complex mental health needs.

- Investments in programs and services to address the depth of poverty and those living in extreme low poverty.
- Support a housing first approach within government departments.
- Ensure that poverty reduction strategies are integrated with health care reform.
- Continued support for community based organizations who are working with populations who experience poverty.
- Investments to address the rising economic gap between the rich and the poor.

Submissions/Documents:

- http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Minimum_Wage_Consultation.pdf
- <http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Poverty%20Reduction%20Strategy%202015%20Consultation%20Written%20Submission.pdf>
- http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Poverty_Reduction_Strategy_2010.pdf

Seniors

- Enhanced access to a flexible home care program for seniors. A cost benefit analysis between 24-hour home support and institutional care would be timely.
- Continue to increase capacity for portable subsidies for personal care home for seniors and protective care residencies.
- Greater access to more affordable assisted living for seniors.
- Improved access to convalescent services, respite care, and adult day care programs. This will provide support and relief for families.
- Increased access to mental health services for seniors in long term care and in the community.
- Heightened policy initiatives to assist seniors who are living, or at risk of living in poverty, regardless of the setting in which they live (i.e., enhanced transportation services, elimination or reduction in dispensing fees for prescriptions that are filled monthly; enhanced dental coverage and access to specialized equipment).
- Increase the allowance seniors receive in long term care.
- Expanded access to palliative care, including home based palliative care programs.
- Improved access to allied health professionals.

Submissions/Documents:

- http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Long_Term_Care_and_Community_Support_Services_Strategy.pdf

Mental Health

- Integration of social work in the K-12 education system.
- Enhanced services to support those with addictions and problematic substance abuse including cannabis.
- Enhanced accessibility to mental health care services and reduced wait times.

Submissions/Documents:

- http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Enhancing_Mental_Health_and_Addictions_Services.pdf
- http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/social_workers_in_education_system.pdf

Health Care Service Delivery

- Ensure any health care reform incorporates the social determinants of health.
- Advance primary health care initiatives that integrates interdisciplinary teams including social work.

Submissions/Documents:

- http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Social_Determinants_of_Health.pdf

Children and Families

- Eliminate the claw back of child support payments from income assistance benefits.
- Ensure that issues such as capped caseloads, appropriate supervision ratios, access to continuing professional education and human resource planning remain a priority in the delivery of child protection and in care services.
- Continue to increase access to regulated, accessible and high-quality child care; particularly for infant care.

Submissions/Documents:

- http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Adoption_Consultation.pdf
- http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/CYFS_10-Year_Child_Care_Strategy.pdf
- http://www.nlasw.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Children_and_Youth_Care_and_Protection_Act_2016_Review_%28Final%29.pdf