

# The Caregiver's Handbook

## Section 4

### INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

This section provides information on programs and services in Nova Scotia that can benefit caregivers and care recipients, and which organizations offer them. There is a list of health organizations, as well as resources that may be helpful if you or your care recipient are a member of a visible minority or of a specific ethnic or cultural group.

Help for Unpaid Caregivers  
in Nova Scotia

  
**Caregivers**  
Nova Scotia

for friends and family giving care

[www.CaregiversNS.org](http://www.CaregiversNS.org)

## Government Services

Services offered by government agencies are often provided for no or low cost to the client. Below is a brief overview of some government agencies that offer services that may be useful for caregivers and care recipients.

### **Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, Continuing Care Branch**

The Continuing Care Branch of the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness provides access to a range of services by distributing funds to each District Health Authority (DHA) in the province.

The DHAs are responsible for implementing and running the services, which include home care, long-term care, respite options, home oxygen, palliative care, self-managed care, and adult protection services.

You can visit the Department of Health and Wellness website for more information on Continuing Care Services. Helpful Fact Sheets which explain each of the benefits and services for which caregivers and care recipients may be eligible are available to download from: [www.novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/live-well-at-home.asp](http://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/live-well-at-home.asp)

## Nova Scotia Department of Community Services

The Nova Scotia Department of Community Services has two main program areas that coordinate services that may be useful:

- **Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD)** is a program that provides residential and day programs for adults with intellectual/physical disabilities or long-term mental illness. Residential services include a continuum of options ranging from support to families caring for a family member with a disability in their own home, to full 24-hour residential support.

For more information visit: [www.gov.ns.ca/coms](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms) and see the section titled 'Services for Persons with Disabilities'.

- **Housing Nova Scotia** offers programs to help lower-income households, and seniors and persons with disabilities to maintain, acquire, or rent safe, adequate and affordable housing. Grants and loans for home repairs, adaptations, and additions are also available.

For more information visit: [www.housingns.ca](http://www.housingns.ca)

## Nova Scotia Department of Seniors

The Department of Seniors provides a single entry point to government that can respond to seniors' issues and concerns. It offers a toll-free information line that allows seniors, as well as concerned family members and friends, to get help in accessing information dealing with government services and programs.

The Department also provides important information and support on Senior Abuse. The website has details about different community Senior Safety Programs. The section called 'Understanding Senior Abuse' provides information on how to recognize physical, sexual,

emotional, and financial abuse, as well as violations of human rights and neglect, what to do if you suspect abuse, and where to find help.

For more information:

Toll-free: 1-800-670-0065 | [www.novascotia.ca/seniors](http://www.novascotia.ca/seniors)

Senior Abuse Information and Referral Line: 1-877-833-337

## **Veterans Independence Program**

The Veterans Independence Program (VIP) is a national home care program offered by Veterans Affairs Canada. If you or the person you care for is a veteran, you may qualify for financial assistance to obtain services such as grounds maintenance, housekeeping, personal care services, nutrition services, and health and support services provided by a health professional. The role of this program is to complement existing federal, provincial, and municipal assistance to help you meet your needs.

For more information:

Toll-free: 1-866-522-2122 (English) | 1-866-522-2022 (French)

[www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)

## **Respite, Home Care, and Other Helpful Services**

This section provides information on home care, respite and other services such as transportation, meals, and affordable housing options. We begin this section with Respite because, whether or not you have private or publicly funded home care, respite is essential to you as a caregiver and to your care recipient.

Respite can be defined as a reprieve, a short interval of rest, temporary relief, and as an interruption in the intensity of a caregiving activity. It can be a crisis intervention; but ideally, respite is part of a network of services to support caregivers and their care recipients.<sup>14</sup>

Respite can be provided by a variety of people, such as family members, friends, volunteers, or healthcare workers. It can take

different forms, such as a coffee with friends while your care recipient participates in an Adult Day Program, or while your child attends a class or activity with a volunteer or respite worker. It also allows care recipients to participate in activities outside their home, and learn new skills.

It can be provided in the home or in a care facility, for varying amounts of time from a few hours to several days or weeks. It is a good idea to try to arrange respite care as far in advance as possible, as it may take time to put the service in place depending on availability and demand in your area.

In Nova Scotia, the Department of Health and Wellness coordinates in-home respite and licensed respite beds in long-term care facilities across the province. Each DHA is responsible for contracting respite services through different agencies within their region. For more information call Continuing Care: 1-800-225-7225

The Department of Community Services also offers help with respite through the Direct Family Support Program. This program provides supports and services, including Enhanced Family Support (EFS), to both children and adults with disabilities who live at home with their families.

Other agencies that offer respite care:

### **Veterans Affairs Canada**

Toll-free: 1-866-522-2122 | [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)

### **Victorian Order of Nurses (VON)** (See description on page 72.)

(902) 453-5800 | [www.von.ca](http://www.von.ca)

### **Private Agencies**

Several private agencies also offer respite services.

Caregivers Nova Scotia can answer your questions about who provides respite care and how to access it. Please note we cannot recommend one service provider over another, but we can supply you with a list.

## Adult Day Programs

Adult day programs offer care outside the home, usually during regular working hours. Programs are typically held in local hospitals or community centres. The services they provide can vary but may include health monitoring, foot care, hair styling, exercise, information sessions, group outings, and social events.

To find an Adult Day Program in your area, please call us or visit the 'Adult Day Programs' section of our website.

## Home Care

Continuing Care provides community-based healthcare services and assistance with activities of daily living to Nova Scotians of all ages who require support to stay in their homes for as long as it is safely possible.

Home care can range from help with daily living tasks and personal care to light housekeeping, nursing services, home oxygen, and palliative care.

If you require an assessment for home care, you must contact Continuing Care. A care coordinator will then arrange for a time to meet with you to complete an assessment. Depending on your family's income and size, there may be a charge for services.

### Continuing Care for Aboriginal Peoples

Registered First Nations individuals living on-Reserve in Nova Scotia have access to home-based healthcare and residential care through provincially and federally funded programs.

Eligibility for provincial Continuing Care services depends on whether a person lives on-Reserve and whether they are a Registered Status individual under the Federal Indian Act. Eligibility is assessed by a care coordinator.

Non-Status individuals living off-Reserve can access all Provincial Continuing Care services. Status individuals living off-Reserve can access many Continuing Care services, but there are some exceptions.

Helpful Fact Sheets about Aboriginal Continuing Care services and eligibility requirements are available to download from:  
[www.novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/aboriginal-continuing-care.asp](http://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/aboriginal-continuing-care.asp)

For more information or to apply for home care services, call Continuing Care: 1-800-225-7225

## **Other Agencies that Offer Home Care**

### **Veterans Affairs Canada**

The Veterans Independence Program is a home care program established to help clients remain healthy and independent in their own homes or communities.

See page 64 for more information.

### **The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON)**

See a complete description and contact information for the VON on page 72.

### **Private agencies**

Many private agencies also offer home care services. Please call us or visit our website for more information about home care agencies. Please note we cannot recommend one agency over another, but we can supply you with a list.

## Equipment, Assistive Devices and Medical Supplies

### Canadian Red Cross in Nova Scotia

The Canadian Red Cross Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP) provides temporary loans of home health and mobility equipment to help individuals recovering from illness or surgery maintain independence and safety in their own homes.

Toll-free: 1-800-418-1111 | [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)

### Easter Seals Nova Scotia

The Easter Seals Assistive Devices Program helps applicants acquire a wide variety of equipment including wheelchairs and seating inserts, walkers, home safety equipment, communication devices for children, and various orthotic/orthopedic devices.

(902) 453-6000 | [www.easterseals.ns.ca](http://www.easterseals.ns.ca)

### Northwood Intouch

Northwood Intouch is a non-profit organization working in communities across the province. They provide a range of assistive devices such as medical alarms and sensor technologies that help people to live more confidently in their home, knowing that help is always available. The website features a useful video on some of the assistive devices and technologies they offer and how they help.

Toll free: 1-800-461-3346 | [www.northwoodintouch.com](http://www.northwoodintouch.com)

### Other Agencies that Offer Assistive Devices

**Care Alert Canada** – When you use their SmartDialer technology, your call for help is always answered by someone you know.

Toll-free: 1-800-661-5481 | [www.carealertproducts.com](http://www.carealertproducts.com)

**Medic Alert, Safely Home** – When someone with dementia goes missing Medic Alert will bring them safely home.

(902) 422-7961 | [www.alzheimer.ca/ns](http://www.alzheimer.ca/ns)

**Philips Lifeline** – offers a number of medical alert and medication dispensing services.

Toll-free: 1-800-387-8120 | [www.lifeline.ca](http://www.lifeline.ca)

## Transportation

### **Access-A-Bus (AAB)**

Access-A-Bus (AAB) is a shared ride, door-to-door, public transportation service operated by Halifax Metro Transit. Buses are designed to carry mobility-impaired persons and those unable to utilize the existing conventional Metro Transit service due to cognitive or physical disabilities.

(902) 490-6681 | TTY/TTD: (902) 490-6664  
[www.halifax.ca/metrotransit](http://www.halifax.ca/metrotransit)

### **Dial-A-Ride Nova Scotia**

Dial-A-Ride provides door-to-door accessible transportation services to all residents. Priority is placed on services to seniors, persons with disabilities and those with transportation barriers to medical appointments, personal errands, business, volunteering and social events.

**Pick-up areas:** West Hants, Windsor, Hantsport and surrounding areas with service to anywhere in Nova Scotia.

(902) 792-1800 | [www.hantscountycan.org](http://www.hantscountycan.org)

Other local transportation services may exist in your community, such as the VON or your local hospital. On our website we include details of transportation services available throughout the province, as well as a link to the directory of Rural Transportation Association (RTA) member organizations.

## Accessible Parking

The Registry of Motor Vehicles issues accessible parking plates and permits to qualified individuals with mobility impairments, free of charge. Registry of Motor Vehicles offices are located in most Access Nova Scotia locations.

(902) 424-5200 | Toll-free: 1-800-670-4357 | [www.novascotia.ca](http://www.novascotia.ca)

## Meals

For information on In-Home and Community Meal programs in your area, contact Continuing Care toll-free: 1-800-225-7225

The Nova Scotia Meals Network publishes a directory of meal programs available in different areas, including information about Meals on Wheels, Wheels to Meals, Meals and More, and Frozen Favourites. The directory is available by calling Continuing Care toll-free: 1-800-225-7225

The 2013 Positive Aging Directory, published by the Department of Seniors, also includes details about meal programs and the contact information for Nova Scotia Meals Network representatives throughout the province. The Directory can be downloaded from the Department of Seniors website: [www.novascotia.ca/seniors](http://www.novascotia.ca/seniors)

## Housecleaning and Maintenance

Some agencies that offer home nursing care may also provide some housecleaning and maintenance (see ‘Home Care’ on page 66). Private companies also offer housecleaning services. See ‘House Cleaning’ in your local telephone book, or visit the ‘Resources’ section of our website.

## Affordable Housing

The Nova Scotia Department of Community Services provides a variety of affordable housing programs that are available through Housing Nova Scotia. These include rental housing programs for seniors and families with low or fixed incomes.

### **Improvements, modifications, and adaptations**

Housing Nova Scotia also offers specific housing programs for Seniors, as well as several grant and loan programs to help lower income Nova Scotians maintain, repair, or modify their homes to accommodate the needs of care recipients so they can remain in their homes.

For more information on these programs and to see if you qualify for the grant and loan programs, please visit the Housing Nova Scotia website: [www.housingns.ca](http://www.housingns.ca).

You can also contact the Housing Nova Scotia Office in your area:

|                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Eastern Region       | Toll free: 1-800-567-2135 |
| Northern Region      | Toll free: 1-800-933-2101 |
| Halifax Metro Region | Toll free: 1-800-774-5130 |
| Western Region       | Toll free: 1-800-278-2144 |

## Other Programs and Services

### **The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON)**

The VON is a not-for-profit, national healthcare organization and registered charity offering a wide range of community healthcare solutions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Their home healthcare services include palliative care, pediatric services, dialysis, foot care, and more. Other support services may include personal care, light housekeeping, meal preparation, and respite care.

For more information: 1-888-866-2273 (VON-CARE) | [www.von.ca](http://www.von.ca)

### **Personal Response Services**

A personal response service usually consists of a personal help button worn around the wrist or neck. When the button is pressed, help is summoned based on your pre-arranged instructions. A personal response service can be life-saving and is especially important for people who live alone. There are government, not-for-profit, and private organizations that offer a personal response service in Nova Scotia. To find out more, contact Caregivers Nova Scotia.

### **Vial of Life**

The Vial of Life provides emergency medical personnel with vital and perhaps life-saving medical information about you if they are called to your home and find you unconscious or very ill. The vial is a small plastic container which holds a specially designed form on which you record information such as your name, health card number, medical history, doctor's name and phone number, and a contact person. The vial is kept inside your fridge and a Vial of Life sticker is placed on the outside of your fridge to alert emergency personnel that vital medical information is available. Thanks to the efforts of local sponsors, the Vial of Life kits are available free of charge in many communities. To find out the contact in your area, call the Department of Seniors toll-free: 1-800-670-0065

## Information and Support

### Caregivers Nova Scotia Association

Our focus is on empowering caregivers, supporting their efforts, and on recognizing the invaluable contribution they make both to those in need and to society in general. In this Handbook we have made every effort to include the types of services and support that we feel are most relevant to caregivers, however, this list is not exhaustive.

If you are still unsure which organization to call, or would just like to speak to someone to help you understand a service and how it may help, please contact us. One of our Support Coordinators will be happy to speak with you and connect you with the right healthcare and community supports based on your situation.

(902) 421-7390 | Toll free: 1-877-488-7390  
[www.CaregiversNS.org](http://www.CaregiversNS.org) | [Info@CaregiversNS.org](mailto:Info@CaregiversNS.org)

### 211

When you dial 211, you can easily and quickly connect to the community and social services you need throughout the province, regardless of where you're located. You can also visit their website: [www.ns.211.ca](http://www.ns.211.ca)

### 811

When you dial 811 you will have access to non-emergency health information and services. A Registered Nurse will give you the advice and information you need and provide reassurance concerning all kinds of general health issues and questions. If you are hearing-impaired, call 7-1-1 (TTY). You can also visit their website: [www.811.novascotia.ca](http://www.811.novascotia.ca)

## Health Organizations

Several non-profit organizations provide support and information about specific health-related conditions. We have listed a number of them here.

### **AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia**

(902) 425-4882 | Toll-free: 1-800-566-2437

[www.acns.ns.ca](http://www.acns.ns.ca)

### **ALS Society of Nova Scotia**

(902) 454-3636 | Toll-free: 1-866-625-7257 | [www.alsns.ca](http://www.alsns.ca)

### **Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia**

(902) 422-7961 | Toll-free: 1-800-611-6345 | [www.alzheimer.ca/ns](http://www.alzheimer.ca/ns)

### **The Arthritis Society, Nova Scotia Division**

(902) 429-7025 | Toll-free: 1-800-321-1433

[www.arthritis.ca/NS](http://www.arthritis.ca/NS)

### **Autism Nova Scotia**

(902) 446-4995 | Toll-free: 1-877-544-4495 | [www.autismnovascotia.ca](http://www.autismnovascotia.ca)

### **Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia**

Tel: (902) 473-7301 | Halifax Chapter: (902) 473-7303

[www.braininjuryns.com](http://www.braininjuryns.com)

### **Canadian Cancer Society**

TTY 1-866-786-3934 | Toll-free: 1-888-939-3333 | [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)

### **Canadian Diabetes Association, NS Regional Office**

(902) 453-4232 | Toll-free: 1-800-326-7712 | [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

### **Canadian Mental Health Association**

(902) 466-6600 | Toll Free: 1-877-466-6606

[www.novascotia.cmha.ca](http://www.novascotia.cmha.ca)

### **Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)**

Toll-free: 1-800-563-2642 | [www.cnib.ca](http://www.cnib.ca)

### **Cancer Care Nova Scotia**

(902) 473-4645 | Toll free: 1-866-599-2267 | [www.cancercare.ns.ca](http://www.cancercare.ns.ca)

**Craig's Cause Pancreatic Cancer Society**

[www.craigscause.ca](http://www.craigscause.ca)

**Heart and Stroke Foundation Nova Scotia**

(902) 423-7530 | Toll-free: 1-800-423-4432

[www.heartandstroke.ns.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ns.ca)

**Hepatitis Outreach Society of Nova Scotia (HepNS)**

(902) 420-1767 | Toll-free: 1-800-521-0572 | [www.hepns.ca](http://www.hepns.ca)

**Huntington Society of Canada**

(902) 446-4803 | Toll-free: 1-800-998-7398

[www.huntingtonsociety.ca](http://www.huntingtonsociety.ca)

**Lung Association Nova Scotia**

(902) 443-8141 | Toll-free: 1-888-566-5864 | [www.lung.ca](http://www.lung.ca)

**Multiple Sclerosis Society**

Toll-free: 1-800-268-7582 | [www.mssociety.ca](http://www.mssociety.ca)

**Parkinson Society Maritime Region**

(902) 422-3656 | Toll-free: 1-800-663-2468

[www.parkinsonmaritimes.ca](http://www.parkinsonmaritimes.ca)

**Prostate Cancer Canada Atlantic Region**

(902) 420-1444 | Toll-free: 1-855-420-1444

[www.prostatecancer.ca](http://www.prostatecancer.ca)

**Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia**

(902) 465-2601 | Toll-free: 1-800-465-2601

[www.openpockets.com/SSNS](http://www.openpockets.com/SSNS)

**Support Groups** – Many of these organizations also run support groups for caregivers and care recipients. Contact them directly for more information.

## Other Resources

Some agencies offer information, programs, or services for specific groups. Below is a list of organizations which may be helpful to you if you or your care recipient are of a specific ethnic or cultural background, or if you are a member of a visible minority. We have attempted to include organizations that may provide supports most relevant to caregivers, but this list is not exhaustive.

### Aboriginal

#### **Eskasoni Community Health Centre**

(902) 379-3200 | [www.eskasonihealth.ca](http://www.eskasonihealth.ca)

#### **Native Council of Nova Scotia**

(902) 895-1523 | Toll-free: 1-800-565-4372 | [www.ncns.ca](http://www.ncns.ca)

#### **Tui'kn Partnership**

Funded by Health Canada's Primary Health Care Transition Fund, the five First Nations Bands in Cape Breton have embarked upon an historic partnership – the Tui'kn (Dw-ee-gun) Initiative.

The Initiative seeks to achieve a model of primary health care that is holistic, multi-disciplinary, comprehensive, and supportive of the vision of improved health and quality of life in our communities.

(902) 564 6466 ext. 282 | [www.tuikn.ca](http://www.tuikn.ca)

## Acadian or Francophone

### **La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse**

(902) 433-0065 | [www.acadienne.ca](http://www.acadienne.ca)

### **L'Office des affaires acadienne/Office of Acadian Affairs**

(902) 424-0497 | Toll-free: 1-866-382-5811

[www.novascotia.ca/acadian](http://www.novascotia.ca/acadian)

### **Réseau Santé - Nouvelle-Écosse**

(902) 222-5871 | [www.reseausantene.ca](http://www.reseausantene.ca)

## African Canadian

### **African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes**

(902) 404-3670 | [www.adamns.ca](http://www.adamns.ca)

### **Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs**

(902) 424-5555 | Toll-free: 1-866-580-2672 (ANSA)

[www.ansa.novascotia.ca](http://www.ansa.novascotia.ca)

## Family Resource Centres

Family Resource Centres across the province can be excellent sources of information and support. There are 38 centres in Nova Scotia, each offering a range of services to its surrounding community. To find the Family Resource Centre nearest you, contact the Nova Scotia Council for the Family:

(902) 422-1316 | [www.nscouncilfamily.org](http://www.nscouncilfamily.org)

## **Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer (GLBTIQ)**

### **prideHealth**

prideHealth is a partnership of Capital Health and the IWK Health Centre. It provides safe and accessible primary health care services for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (GLBTIQ).

(902) 473-1433 | [www.cdha.nshealth.ca/pridehealth](http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/pridehealth)

## **Immigrant or Newcomer**

### **Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services (ISIS)**

(902) 423-3607 | [www.isisns.ca](http://www.isisns.ca)

### **Nova Scotia Interpreting Services**

Patients can request an interpreter in advance when making an appointment, or can ask for assistance once they have arrived at the doctor's office or hospital. Generally, interpreting services are provided by hospitals at no charge to patients when attending appointments in Capital District Health Authority or the IWK. Other organizations may also cover the cost of interpreting.

(902) 425-6604 | [www.interpretingservices.ca](http://www.interpretingservices.ca)

## **Persons with Disabilities**

### **Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission**

The Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission (DPC) gives people with disabilities living in Nova Scotia a way to participate in the provincial government policy-making process.

TTY: 1-877-996-9954 | Toll-free: 1-800-565-8280  
[www.disability.novascotia.ca](http://www.disability.novascotia.ca)

## **Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities**

A provincial consumer organization that provides information and referral services to all Nova Scotians regarding disability issues and available programs and services.

TTY: (902) 455-6942 | Toll-free: 1-866-696-7536  
[www.novascotialeo.org](http://www.novascotialeo.org)

## **reachAbility**

reachAbility provides accessible opportunities for persons of all abilities. Their programs, camps, and events are free to all clients.

Tel/TTY: (902) 429-5878 | Toll-free/TTY: 1-866-429-5878  
[www.reachability.org](http://www.reachability.org)

## **Seniors**

### **Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP)**

Toll-free: 1-888-363-2279 | [www.carp.ca](http://www.carp.ca)

### **Community Links**

A province-wide organization that promotes age-friendly communities and quality of life for Nova Scotia seniors through community development and volunteer action.

(902) 422-0914 | Toll-free: 1-855-253-9355  
[www.nscommunitylinks.ca](http://www.nscommunitylinks.ca)

### **Group of IX Seniors' Advisory Council of Nova Scotia**

An independent advisory body made up of nine organizations dedicated to improving the well-being of Nova Scotia seniors.

[www.novascotia.ca/seniors](http://www.novascotia.ca/seniors)

## Young Caregivers

### **Young Carers Initiative**

The Young Carers Initiative (YCI) is a non-profit agency based in Niagara Centre, Ontario, with a mission to promote the well-being of Young Carers, their families, and their community partners.

Visit [www.powerhouseproject.ca](http://www.powerhouseproject.ca) to find resources and links to information for young caregivers.

Certain health organizations in Nova Scotia may also have supports for young caregivers. Check with the individual organization directly or contact us.