

Oversight of Mental Health and Addictions Services



Why We Did This Audit

- Mental health and addictions issues can lead to serious consequences for Nova Scotians, including increased hospitalization and challenges related to stable housing and food security.
- In 2024, the Canadian Mental Health Association reported Nova Scotia as having higher than the national average rates of mood and anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, and alcohol-related hospitalizations.
- In 2021, the Government committed to provide universal mental health and addictions care for all Nova Scotians and the Office of Addictions and Mental Health was created with its own Minister.
- In 2024-25, the Office of Addictions and Mental Health had total departmental expenses of \$350 million.

Key Audit Results

- The Office of Addictions and Mental Health (the Office) is not providing effective oversight of mental health and addictions services in Nova Scotia.
- Five years since its creation, the Office's role, responsibilities, and distinction from the Department of Health and Wellness are not clear.
- The Office lacks service access standards and does not know the full extent of mental health and addictions services and service locations in the province.
- Reporting requirements for health authorities are not clear and do not contain benchmarks or targets to measure performance. There is limited monitoring of this reporting by the Office.
- The Office does not publicly report on the performance of mental health and addictions services in Nova Scotia.

This report makes

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Recommendations

to strengthen the oversight, management, and public reporting of mental health and addictions services in Nova Scotia.