



SUMMARY REPORT

Community Health Needs Assessment

2018-2019

GRAND FALLS | SAINT-LÉONARD | DRUMMOND

Introduction

Message from the President and CEO



We are happy to start the five-year cycle of Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA).

A CHNA is the pivot point for a process in which health professionals and decision-makers will determine which individuals', families' or population groups' needs constitute priorities and ensure that the resources of the healthcare system are assigned in a way that has optimal effects on improving population health.

The CHNA cycle is one form of intervention that encourages transparent communications and community participation.

We are grateful for the engagement and participation of citizens, our community and government partners, staff and the general public during the various consultations.

Gilles Lanteigne
President & CEO

Purpose

Under the *New Brunswick Regional Health Authorities Act (2011)*, the Regional Health Authorities, Vitalité Health Network and Horizon Health Network, are held responsible for identifying the health needs of the communities they serve. CHNAs are done for each of the 33 communities defined by the New Brunswick Health Council (NBHC). Vitalité Health Network covers 13 of these communities.

Community Health Needs Assessment

A CHNA is a dynamic, on-going process undertaken to identify the strengths, and needs of the community and to enable community-wide establishment of wellness and health priorities that improve the health status of the population.

Main Objective

The main objective of a CHNA is to determine a prioritized list of health and wellness needs that will help Vitalité Health Network, its partners and community organizations to plan services and assign resources in the community.

Population Health Approach

The CHNA process is best understood from a population health approach. This approach aims to improve the health of the entire population and reduce health inequities between various population groups. This approach takes in a vast range of factors and conditions that have the greatest effect on our health and tries to influence them (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2012). These factors and conditions, commonly referred to as "the determinants of health", include: income and social status, social support networks, education, employment/working conditions, social environments, physical environments, personal health practices and coping skills, early childhood development, biology and genetic endowment, health services, gender and culture.

Methodology

CHNA Process

Referring to the Community Health Needs Assessment Guidelines (Government of New Brunswick, 2018), the CHNA process consists of five key activities. However, it needs to be flexible and reactive to the local context of each community being assessed.

1. Community Engagement

- Creation of a temporary Community Advisory Committee (CAC) in the community.

2. Data Collection

- Collect the quantitative data available on the community.
- Collect new qualitative data (e.g. discussion groups, individual interviews, etc.).

3. Interpretation and Analysis

- Analyze quantitative data and new qualitative information.
- Cross reference qualitative results with quantitative data.

4. Develop Priorities and Recommendations

- Prioritize the needs identified by the CAC.
- Identify community assets and strengths.
- Identify potential solutions.

5. Report back to the Community and Feedback

- Write the summary report and distribute it to the community and the general public.

Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is the true cornerstone of the CHNA process. The mandate of the CAC is to encourage community participation and engagement throughout the process, as well as to provide advice and information on health and wellness priorities in its community.

The CAC for the CHNA of Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond had representatives from various sectors: North West Wellness Network, Association francophone des aînés du New Brunswick, Valley Chamber of Commerce, Madawaska-Victoria Family Resource Centre, Grand Falls Municipal Police, Services d'aide à la famille, Department of Social Development, Grand Falls Association for Community Integration Inc, Grand Falls Town Hall, Extra-Mural Program, Public Health, Primary Healthcare, Community Mental Health Centre, Addiction Treatment Services, Child-Youth Team (integrated service delivery), and Grand Falls General Hospital.



Community Assessed

Socio-demographic Profile

Grand Falls and its neighbouring communities:

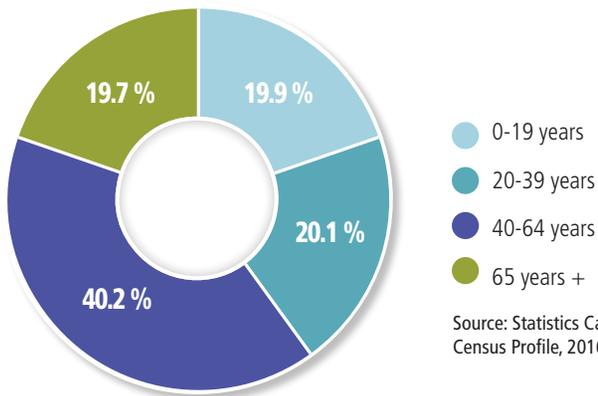
Drummond
 Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes
 Saint-André
 Sainte-Anne
 Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska
 Saint-Léonard
 Pont Lafrance

Source: NBHC. (2017). My Community at a Glance 2017: Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond



The community of Grand Falls and its surrounding area is part of Zone 4 in Vitalité Health Network, known as the Madawaska and Northwest Region. This community is predominantly Francophone with a percentage 79.5% compared to 27.9% in New Brunswick (NBHC, 2017). In 2016, the region of Grand Falls and surrounding areas had 15,700 inhabitants (Statistics Canada, 2016).

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS (2016)



Source: Statistics Canada. (2016). Census Profile, 2016 Census.

Overview of Priority Sectors

1. Healthy Weight among Children and Youth

- Lifestyle habits and health-related behaviours
- Promotion of health weight among children
- Surrounding environment

2. Improve Mental Health (in the community and hospital)

- Stigma around mental health at all ages
- Timely access to the services available in the community
- Improve patient support within the hospital

3. Adjustment to an Aging Population

- Precarious social, economic and geographical status of seniors
- Prevention of loss of autonomy

4. Stress Level among Adults

- Health of family members and financial situation
- Preparation for aging

5. Access to Care and Services

- Timely accessibility and accessibility outside regular hours to a family physician
- Access to transportation
- Coordination between healthcare services and community services

6. Environment and Community Engagement

- Access to public transportation
- Community infrastructure
- School environment

7. Self-management of Chronic Health Problems

- Medication cost and management
- Empowerment for individual health

8. Socioeconomic Disparities and Poverty

- Inequities linked to various other health needs

1 Healthy Weight among Children and Youth

The adoption of unhealthy lifestyle habits, the lack of healthy weight promotion approaches, and the surrounding environment seem to contribute to the challenge of maintaining a healthy weight among children and youth.

The lifestyle habits adopted by the parents can have a considerable impact on their child or youth's path in life. Although the challenge regarding overweight or obesity is often raised as a concern among child and youth in the community, the problem of underweight seems to be increasing among youth in the community.

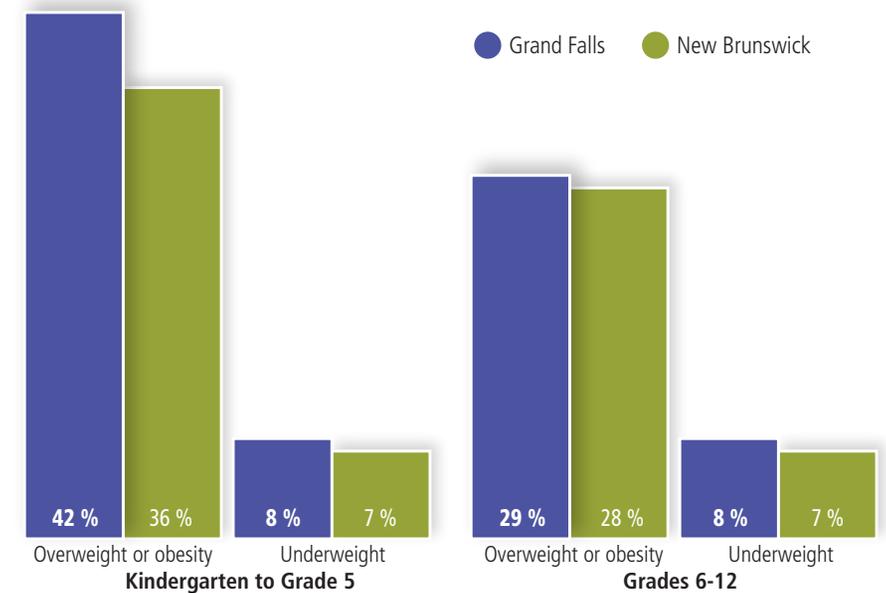
"We are in a society where the challenge of obesity is already rooted in our lifestyle habits. On the other hand, children and youth are growing up in a dieting society, and this increases the risk of underweight and the development of mental health problems among youth." - focus group participant.

The surrounding environment in which a child grows up has a strong influence on the health choices and lifestyle habits that the child will adopt. For instance, the school environment, family, friends, home and community infrastructure are all important components that have to be taken into account to address this need.

Did you know?

Health-related behaviours represent **40%** of determinants of health. Health-related behaviours consist of eating, physical activity, smoking and drinking habits, and coping with life's stressors which can influence health and well-being (NBHC, 2017).

BODY MASS INDEX



Source: NBHC. (2017). My Community at a Glance 2017: Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond.

Potential Solutions

- Develop new approaches to promote healthy weight and healthy lifestyle habits.
- Support the services and workshops offered by community organizations to strengthen parenting skills.

2 Improve Mental Health (in the community and hospital)

Generally, mental health remains stigmatized within the community. According to participants, the stigma around mental health leads to isolation for some people who don't know where to go for help.

"Even now, taking a day off for mental health reasons is frowned upon, but not for physical health reasons." – focus group participant.

On one hand, people in the community don't know when to get services, and on the other hand some of them hesitate to obtain community mental health services for fear of being judged or labeled. Added to this is the possibility of a long waiting period to obtain community mental health services, which discourages people from seeking services. The lack of timely accessibility can make the initial problem worse and send people to the Emergency Room.

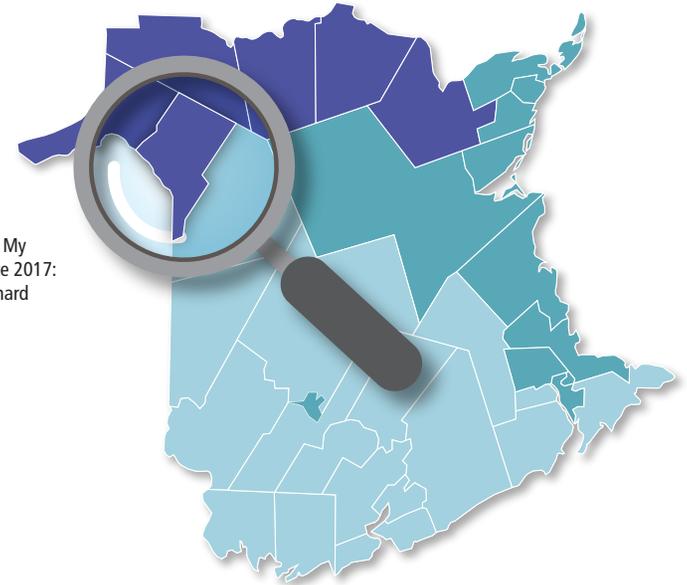
As for the healthcare services delivery within the hospital, it seems that the support for patients suffering from a mental problem or illness could be improved.

Community Assets and Strengths:

- One of the initiatives in the Vitalité Health Network's *"Enraciner vers l'espoir"* pilot project targets community awareness and reduced stigma around mental health.
- The Canadian Mental Health Association of New-Brunswick (CMHANB) offers several low-cost or free programs and trainings to spread awareness, educate and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

HOSPITALIZATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS, RATE PER 10,000 POPULATION (2013-2016)

- 72-128
- 38-71
- 7-37



Source: NBHC. (2017). My Community at a Glance 2017: Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond.

Potential Solutions

- Improve community awareness and education on mental health starting in childhood: reinforce the possibilities for collaboration between Vitalité Health Network and CMHANB.
- Improve community treatment for persons suffering from mental health problems.
- Increase awareness about mental health issues among health professionals working in hospitals through various trainings.

3 Adjustment to an Aging Population

According to participants, the organization of services is not suitable for elderly people in a rural environment, who have a low income or little financial support, and who have a weak social network. These persons accumulate numerous risk factors due to their vulnerable condition.

To continue, the loss of autonomy is a concern for many seniors in the community and can be a source of stress for them. According to the consultations carried out, seniors wish to remain in their home as well as to prevent the loss of autonomy for as long as possible. That being said, some seniors have to move, which means they have to leave their home, their entourage and their community because they no longer have the financial resources to stay in their home or no longer have physical skills to assure the tasks related to housekeeping or ground maintenance (e.g. snow removal in winter, mowing the lawn, etc.).

“ Many seniors are already isolated with few social connections and they’re at the highest risk [...] it’s a huge challenge to get them to participate in the activities and programs offered in the community. The first step is being able to identify who these people are.” – focus group participant



THINGS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO DAY-TO-DAY STRESS - SENIORS (65+) (2014)

1	Health of family members
2	Financial situation (e.g. not enough money, or debts)
3	Your own physical health problem or condition

Source: NBHC. (2017). My Community at a Glance 2017: Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond.

Did you know?

Support from families, friends and communities is associated with better health. (NBHC, 2017).

Community Assets and Strengths:

- The Saint-Léonard and Grand Falls public libraries organize a variety of activities for seniors.
- Service d'aide à la famille offers a broad range of in-home services for seniors (based on a needs assessment).

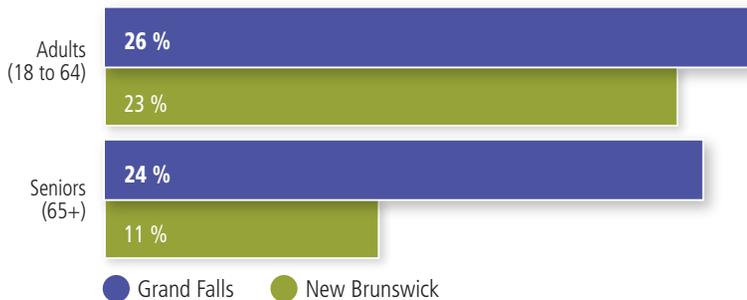
Potential Solutions

- Create an inventory of services and resources available in the community that could help to prevent functional loss among seniors.
- Consider possibilities for expanding the Vitalité Health Network's *At Home Program*.
- Improve collaboration between Vitalité Health Network and various community organizations that can equip seniors to maintain their autonomy.

4 Stress Level among Adults

A few factors have been identified as contributing to the high stress level among adults in the community, in particular the health of family members and their current and future financial situation (e.g. not enough money, a lot of debts, no funds for retirement, etc.). This is even more common in low-income households with children.

SEEING YOUR STRESS AS QUITE OR BIT EXTREME (2014)



Source: NBHC. (2017). My Community at a Glance 2017: Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond.

THINGS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO DAY-TO-DAY STRESS

- ADULTS (18 TO 64) (2014)

1	Time pressure/not enough time
2	Your own work situation (e.g. working hours or conditions)
3	Financial situation (e.g. not enough money, or debts)

Source: NBHC. (2017). My Community at a Glance 2017: Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond.

In 2016, the percentage of individuals living in low-income households was 18.3% for the Grand Falls surrounding areas, compared to 17.1% for New Brunswick (Statistics Canada, 2016).

As well, a number of adults in the community take care of their aging parents (caregivers), and this requires frequent travel and absenteeism from work several times a week. This additional load may be one of the components contributing to high stress levels among adults in the community.

Potential Solution

Offer support to adults acting as caregivers to their parents so that they can rest and meet their own needs.

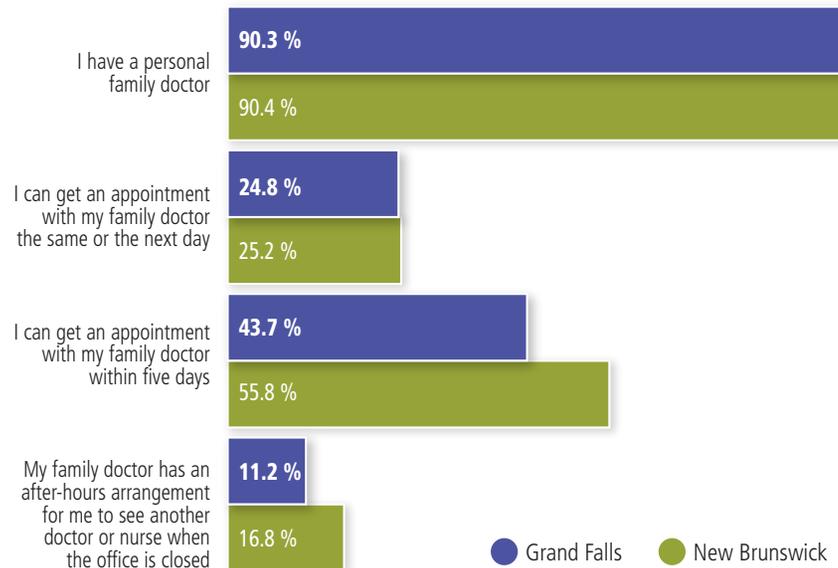


5 Access to Care and Services

According to the participants, the lack of access to a family physician in a timely manner and outside of regular hours and the absence of walk-in and after-hours clinics largely explain the trend in which people of the community go to the hospital Emergency Room for primary health care matters that, in most cases, are not urgent.

Lack of access to transportation causes a primary barrier to accessing care and services as well as specialist services, often located outside the region.

ACCESS TO A FAMILY PHYSICIAN (2017)



Source: NBHC. (2017). Primary health survey 2017: Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond. Population 18+: 12,885; sample size: 431; margin of error: ± 4.6%.

Community Asset and Strength: Timely access for patients followed by a nurse practitioner in the region.

Potential Solution

Encourage the use of the Vitalité Health Network’s Individualized Care Management Program.



6 Environment and Community Engagement

An improvement of the community engagement and mobilization could contribute to the prosperity of the community. The lack of public transportation for vulnerable people and the community at large means that a number of people cannot participate in the activities taking place in the community.

With regard to community infrastructure, it is argued that it is not conducive to the adoption of an active lifestyle. The walking path is unsafe and poorly lit in the evening. The city sidewalks require a lot of repairs, in particular because certain intersections and crosswalks are dangerous and poorly maintained.

“ People don’t feel safe biking on the trail and aren’t comfortable biking on the town sidewalks because it’s too dangerous.” – focus group participant

Potential Solutions

- Encourage local promotion of activities, services and resources available in the community (e.g. golden age clubs, churches, community radio station, etc.).
- Encourage discussion with the municipality about the town sidewalks and the walking trail.

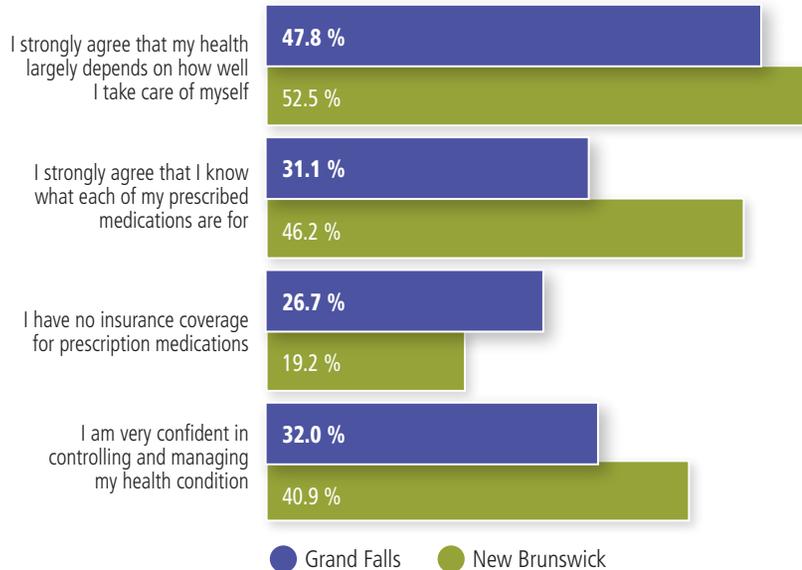


7 Self-Management of Chronic Health Problems

The challenges related to the cost and management of medications, as well as a lack of engagement and responsibility towards individual health, are factors that were identified as explaining the need to increase the support for self-management of chronic health problems.

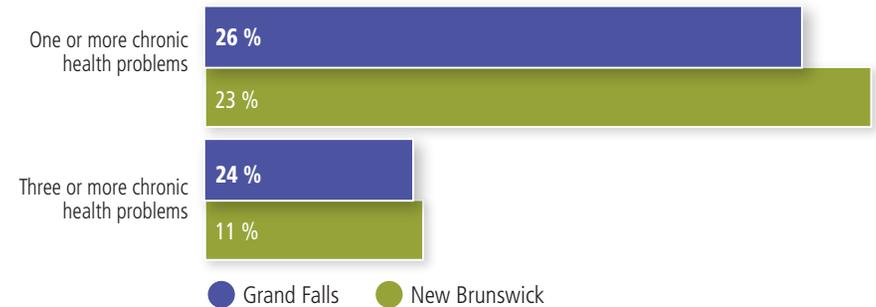
Generally, when an individual suffers from several health problems, does not have insurance for prescribed drugs and has difficulty understanding the written information and the effect of each of the prescribed medication, this individual is at risk of facing several challenges in order to adequately manage their health.

SELF-MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS, 18+ (2017)



Source: NBHC. (2017). Primary health survey 2017: Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond. Among the chronic health problems: arthritis, asthma, chronic pain, emphysema or COPD, cancer, diabetes, depression, mood disorder other than depression, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and gastric reflux. Population 18+: 12,885; sample size: 431; margin of error: ± 4.6%.

CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS, 18+ (2017)



Source: NBHC. (2017). Primary health survey 2017: Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond. Population 18+: 12,885; sample size: 431; margin of error: ± 4.6%.

Potential Solutions

- Prevention, education and taking responsibility are identified as priority areas of action for this need.
- Train employees of the Vitalité Health Network on self-management strategies.
- Start steps to promote the NB Prescription Drug Program locally.

8 Attacking Socioeconomic Disparities and Poverty in the Community

The presence of socio-economic disparities and poverty is a reality linked to several health needs.

The precarious economic situation in which many families in the community find themselves affects their ability to adopt a healthy lifestyle, including accessibility to certain physical activities and healthy food. As a result, this creates food insecurity among marginalized groups.

Moreover, the *working poor* population, who are the individuals on the job market with a low income (or the minimum wage) build up more risk factors.

Did you know?

“ Economic factors like income, education and employment are linked to health. ” (NBHC, 2017).

Potential Solution

Initiate engagement from various community organizations and government sectors to act on this need and to stimulate the local economy.



Opportunities for Action

Collective Impact

The health and wellness challenges confronting communities' impact not only their quality of life, but also their ability to contribute to the growth and economy of their community. An organization alone cannot overcome all these challenges. Therefore, it is through citizen engagement and collaboration between various community organizations and government departments that we will be able to improve the quality of life and the health status of our communities.

Key Partners

- New Brunswick Health Council
- Madawaska-Victoria Family Resource Centre
- North West Wellness Network
- Grand Falls Town Hall
- Department of Social Development
- Extra-Mural Program
- Grand Falls Association for Community Integration Inc

Next Steps

- During its planning process, senior management of Vitalité Health Network will take into consideration the needs identified in the Grand Falls, Saint-Léonard and Drummond CHNA.
- Distribute the results of the CHNA to the community and the general public.
- Spread awareness among the relevant teams and the key partners that can help to fulfill the needs identified in the CHNA.

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