



September 17, 2024

Warden Eleanor Roulston & CAO Kim Ramsay
15 Commerce Court
Elmsdale, NS
B2S 3K5

Dear Warden Roulston and Ms. Ramsay,

We hope this letter finds you well. We are writing to inform and update you on an important initiative underway in the Northern Zone—specifically within Colchester, Cumberland, Pictou counties, and the Municipality of East Hants—that aims to address a significant barrier to healthcare access in our rural communities: transportation.

As part of the Northern Zone's response to recommendation C.13 from the MCC report, Public Health launched a Transportation Support pilot in August 2023. This initiative was driven by the recognition that transportation is a critical factor in addressing unmet mental health, grief, and bereavement needs, particularly in rural areas where access to healthcare services can be challenging.

Since its inception, the pilot has provided over 10,000 rides, serving over 1,400 users, with a steady increase in usage month-over-month. The majority of these rides have been essential for accessing critical services, such as dialysis, cancer care, and mental health and addiction support, including opioid recovery.

The current funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is coming to an end, presenting a challenge as we strive to maintain and expand this essential service. To address this, we are exploring several cost-effective options, including trialing fixed routes, implementing a registered user system, and redefining service parameters to focus strictly on healthcare appointments.

Given the importance of this initiative and its impact on our communities, we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss potential support and collaboration. Your insights and advocacy at the municipal level could be invaluable in ensuring the sustainability of this program, which is vital to the well-being of many residents in our rural areas.

We would also like to take this opportunity to introduce a new staff member who joined our team in Public Health in June: Danielle McCabe is our Healthy Built Environment Coordinator. Danielle has a background in planning and works alongside the Public Health team in creating healthier communities within the built environment. Danielle supports the Transportation Support Program by interpreting trip data as we work towards long-term solutions for rural transportation needs. Danielle can be contacted at danielle2.mccabe@nshealth.ca or 782-370-0668 for transportation, planning, and/or public health-related needs.

We look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further and explore how we can work together to continue addressing these critical healthcare access issues.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Cristin Muecke, MD, MSc, FRCPC
Regional Medical Officer of Health, Northern Zone



Lori McCracken
Director, Public Health, Northern Zone

lori.mccracken@nshealth.ca

cristin.muecke@nshealth.ca



THERE ARE NOW MORE
WAYS TO ACCESS CARE
IN NOVA SCOTIA.

Download the
YourHealthNS app today.



App Store



Google Play



Trouble getting to your healthcare appointments?

Public Health is here to support you and can help arrange free transportation to non-urgent healthcare and wellness appointments.

For transportation support contact Public Health:
Call 902-893-5820 or email PublicHealthTransportation@nshealth.ca



*72 hours (3 days) notice is required

Requests must be made Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (closed on holidays)




You shouldn't have to worry about how you will get to and from your health care and wellness appointments.

Public Health is partnering with local transportation companies to ensure all residents from Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants and Pictou counties, have access to free transportation to get to non-urgent health care appointments.

Call us today for support.



Financial contribution:
 Public Health Agency of Canada Agence de la santé publique du Canada

Learn more:
Scan this code using your phone's camera to visit our website



[Nshealth.ca/nztransportation](https://nshealth.ca/nztransportation)

Northern Zone Public Health's Transportation Support Program

The Transportation Support Program arranges free transportation with local transportation companies to residents of Northern Zone (Cumberland, Colchester, East Hants, and Pictou counties) to attend non-urgent medical or wellness appointments.

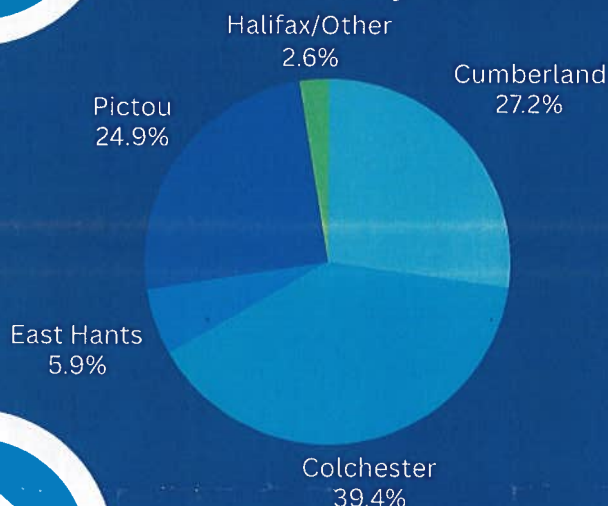
Statistics of trips provided to Northern Zone residents between August 2023 and May 2024...



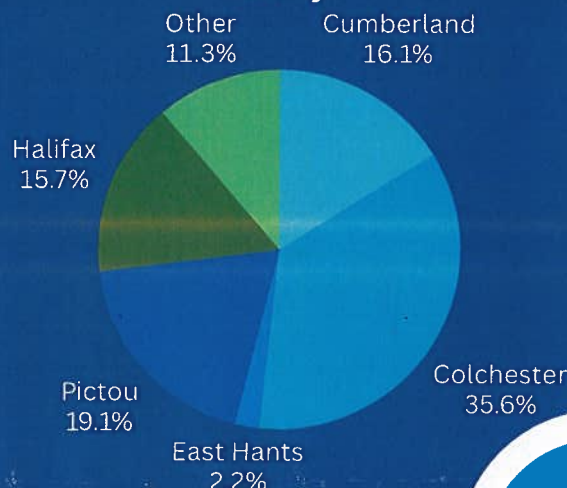
6,255 trips were provided, increasing month-over-month.

1,422 Northern Zone residents have used the program.
54% are repeat users.

Breakdown of trip origin by county:



Breakdown of trip destination by county:



The top communities trips originated from were:

1. Truro
2. Amherst
3. New Glasgow
4. Pictou
5. Stellarton

The top trip destinations were:

1. Colchester East Hants Health Centre
2. Aberdeen Hospital
3. QEII sites
4. Moncton Hospital
5. Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre



Financial contribution:

Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Learn more:
Scan this code using
your phone's camera
to visit our website.



[Nshealth.ca/nztransportation](https://nshealth.ca/nztransportation)