I. MISSION STATEMENT

Our collective purpose, within the Medical School of the Maritimes, is to increase research capacity, generate evidence, and engage in knowledge exchange in order to: 1) improve health outcomes for people/patients; and 2) advance effective and sustainable systems for health services access and delivery.

Our Collective Purpose
The Department of Community Health & Epidemiology unites faculty to achieve our collective purpose through leadership in research, pedagogy, and service. We demonstrate leadership in research by advancing and disseminating knowledge to improve health outcomes and enable the development of effective and sustainable systems for health services access and delivery. We offer leadership in pedagogy through excellence in educational programs that train and develop the next generation of health and epidemiology scholars. We provide leadership in service within the Faculty of Medicine and Dalhousie University, as well as provincial, national and international organisations that align with and advance our mission.

II. OUR STRENGTHS

Research Expertise and Focus
• Aging and health over the lifecourse
• Chronic disease prevention and management
• Sexual health, mental health and addictions
• Injury prevention and control
• Inequities in health and healthcare
• Environmental exposures, biomarkers, exposomics
• Health technology assessment and resource allocation
• Patient-centred outcomes measurement

Research Infrastructure
• Health Data Nova Scotia
• Maritime SPOR Support Unit
• Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging
• Health and Environments Research Centre (HERC) Laboratory
• Cochrane Collaboration Network Site
• Atlantic Interdisciplinary Research Network for Social and Behavioural Issues in Hepatitis C and HIV
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Education Programs
- PhD program in Epidemiology and Applied Health Services Research
- MSc program in Community Health and Epidemiology
- Undergraduate medical education through the Research in Medicine Program, the Professional Competencies Unit and the Foundations Unit

III. OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Strategic Areas of Research
People and populations are complex in physical, social and demographic structures, and do not respond to environments, treatments or care in the same way. Recognition of the special needs and challenges of individuals and population subgroups is necessary to improve the health and minimize health inequities of all individuals over their life course.

Progress will be made through:

1. Advancing our understanding of health by examining the incidence and effects of co-existing conditions that lead to increased vulnerability in populations and individuals, such as multi-morbidity and frailty.
2. Developing new epidemiological approaches to understand complexity, as well as individual differences, including analytic techniques, indicators and biomarkers of exposures and the incorporation of multi-level (community, environment, and person) longitudinal data.
3. Increasing patient-centred research and care by developing more comprehensive measurements of outcomes that matter to people and families, such as quality of life, improving function, reducing pain and access to services.
4. Furthering the use of research evidence to support health care decision-making leading to tailored and improved healthcare accessibility, interventions, management of chronic diseases, and, ultimately improved health outcomes.

Strategic targets for future growth
We will tailor our expansion and future hires, where possible, to fill the following needs:
- Measurement
- Economic evaluation
- Health technology assessment
- Health services research
IV. OUR FIVE YEAR PLAN

We will work together to accomplish the following goals.

**Research:** Advance our strategic priorities through peer-reviewed grant funding, publications, and training the next generation of researchers.

Specific priorities and actions:

1. Advance programs of research which address our strengths in Population Health, Health Services & Policy, and Methods & Measurement.
2. Advance patient and public engagement within research portfolios.
3. Build collaborations within core faculty, cross-appointed faculty to advance scholarship in our key priorities through co-supervision, co-teaching.
4. Increase the department’s success rate in external funding.
5. Support the sustainability and enhancement of research infrastructure units - HDNS, HERC, CLSA, MSSU.
6. Provide leadership in translating research to policy and practice by building relationships with diverse knowledge users.
7. Increase research outputs, including those from students.

**Pedagogy:** Advance our strategic priorities through curriculum development, teaching, mentoring.

Specific priorities and actions:

1. Build the profile and number of qualified applicants to the PhD program.
2. Use the existing mapping of competencies to ensure ongoing relevance and assess new course offerings and/or course changes against them.
3. Facilitate the integration of MSc, PhD, and MHI graduate programs.
4. Incorporate new faculty members, build capacity and cross-training in the faculty, update and refresh course materials with expertise of diverse faculty.
5. Participate in the Medical/Health Informatics program review and MPHEC submission jointly with Medicine and (potentially) Health.
6. Maintain significant engagement and provide leadership in UGME, BScMed, PGME.
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**Service:** Advance our strategic priorities and work collaboratively within the Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, the Department of Health & Wellness, and engage with patients and community organizations.

Specific priorities and actions:

1. Lead a new way of collaborative working across faculties, sectors, disciplines.
2. Build synergies and bi-directional alignment between our research and community, government, and NGO decision-makers to improve the health of the population.
3. Strengthen ties and collaborative relationships with NSHA, IWK, DHW, and faculties across the university.
5. Expand public engagement through traditional and novel methods of advocacy.
6. Contribute to diversity in leadership in FoM, university.
7. Provide service to CIHR’s College of Reviewers and Institute Advisory Boards.

V. OUR ACCOUNTABILITY

A review and update of our strategic goals will be conducted annually in department meetings specifically dedicated to this purpose.

- Add, update or remove strategic goals according to current department needs.
- Determine/update the actions, individual responsibilities and timelines required to accomplish specific strategic goals.
- Recognize and document individual and collective activities contributing to our strategic priorities.
- Seek input and feedback from our key strategic partners.