

Patient Access to Chronic Pain Services

The following provides information on chronic pain services under the Provincial Chronic Pain Initiative and how they can be accessed.

1. What are chronic pain services and how will they affect your patients?

Approximately 20% of people living in Nova Scotia report experiencing chronic pain. In 2006, the government identified chronic pain as a priority and directed funding to this initiative. Since the fall of 2007, Nova Scotia launched new interdisciplinary chronic pain services throughout the province that allows your patient to access services sooner and closer to home.

This information packet contains the information you need to understand where the clinics are located, what is available at the different clinics, and how to access these services.

2. What services are available and where?

Primary services operate one day a week and include access to a physician with interest and training in pain management, a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, a clinical therapist, a coordinator, and administrative support. This service is designed to give pain education to our patients.

Primary services for the provincial chronic pain clinics are available in the Northern Shared Zone:

- **St Martha's Regional Hospital, Antigonish**
- **Aberdeen Regional Hospital, New Glasgow**
- **Colchester Regional Hospital, Truro**
- **Cumberland Regional Hospital, Amherst**

Secondary services are available either one or two days per week and include access to a physician with interest and training in chronic pain management, anesthesiology services, a psychiatrist or psychologist, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a case manager, and administrative support.

Secondary services for the provincial chronic pain clinics are available in:

- **Yarmouth Regional Hospital** – two days/week
- **Colchester Regional Hospital** – Dr. Colleen Maguire **
- **Cumberland Regional Hospital** – Dr. Krol-Lass & Dr. Dan Stojanovic
- **Hants Community Hospital**
- **Dartmouth General Hospital**
- **Cape Breton Regional Hospital**

** waitlist currently closed (Feb 2022)

Tertiary services for adults continue to be available in **Halifax** at:

- The **Pain Management Unit** at the Victoria General site of Capital Health for adults
- The **Pediatric Complex Pain Clinic** at the IWK Health Centre for children

3. What patients will benefit from these a referral?

Patients who will benefit from these services include:

- those who experience chronic pain defined as pain which has persisted longer than 3 to 6 months and/or that has persisted beyond the expected course and/or where the etiology of the pain complex remains unknown.
- those for which prescribed pain relief measures have been ineffective
- those in conditions for which curative treatments are unavailable

In addition, patients with evidence of physical and/or psychosocial deterioration related to the pain that would benefit from interdisciplinary assessment and treatment may be referred to the program.

4. Where do I refer children and adolescents?

Children and adolescents with chronic pain are quite complex -- school, peer, and family management is an important part of the care plan, and medication approaches often differ from those of adults. In general, anyone under age 17 with pain that is neuropathic in character, or that interferes with school, social activities, or general functioning, or pain that is not responding to standard medical care should be referred directly to the Pediatric Complex Pain Clinic at the IWK. Seventeen and 18 year olds may also be accepted at the IWK, but prior discussion with the IWK Pain Team would be advisable.

5. How do I refer a patient?

New standardized chronic pain referral forms are available. Physician/ NP referrals are a requirement of the chronic pain services. Complete the referral form, include all pertinent patient information including lab, diagnostic, and consultation reports, and direct it to the appropriate clinics. A sample of the referral form is attached for your convenience. All referrals for the Northern Shared Chronic Pain Service are faxed to 902-755-7322. You will get a confirmation when the referral was received with an approximate wait time indicated on the response.

***Dr. Maureen Allen** indicated she is happy to accept a generalized referral note with a history of the patient. As the coordinator, I do triage the referrals and then liaison with Dr. Allen as needed. If you have any questions regarding addictions, medications, prescribing (particularly narcotic), she is happy to advise. She can be reached on her cellphone **902-870-0853**.

6. How long is the wait list and how is it being managed?

The wait for services is dependent on the number of referrals received and on case severity. Upon receiving the referral, once triaged, the clinic will send a confirmation of referral received with the expected wait time for that area to both the provider and the patient. Currently in Antigonish, our wait time is approximately 2-6 months for initial assessment.

7. How does the patient get an appointment?

In the Northern zone, the patient will receive a letter in the mail to offer them an appointment to an Orientation – Getting Started with Pain Management. It is an hour long session and the patient is welcome to bring a family member or friend. At this session, the coordinator gives a general overview of persistent pain, what to expect from the assessment, which clinicians will be involved, and a bit about our Group Persistent Pain Treatment Program we offer to some patients. If the patient is interested in having an assessment once the expectations have been outlined, they leave the Orientation with an initial appointment with the Chronic Pain Team.

8. What does the initial assessment entail?

The initial assessment is with a multidisciplinary team which involves a detailed history of present illness, social history, daily routine, emotional function/mood, medication review, and physical assessment. The Antigonish team is comprised of Dr. Maureen Allen, Jessica Syer PT, and Kendra Sweet MSW. Currently, our Occupational Therapist position is vacant. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, the treatment option of the Persistent Pain Treatment Program may be offered. If the patient requires further diagnostic imaging, or a referral to an allied health professional, this will be explained in detail in the consult report.

9. What is the discharge process?

If the patient was offered treatment through our Persistent Pain Treatment Program, we will send a discharge letter indicating that the course of treatment is complete, and if a follow-up plan is recommended, and your patient will be discharged from the program. A summary of the treatments provided, outcomes, and ongoing recommendations will be sent to you. If the patient completed an assessment only, a report will be sent to you to indicate its findings and recommendations. Follow-up care is provided by the primary care practitioner.

Provincial Pain Clinic Contacts

**Health Services Manager for Acute, Chronic and Regional Pain Services Central Zone
(Halifax, Hants, Dartmouth)**

Vicky Mills
Pain Management Unit
5820 University Avenue 4th Floor
Dickson Bldg
Halifax, NS B3H 1V7
(P) 902-473-3628
(F) 902-473-4126
Vicky.Mills@nshealth.ca

Pain Management Unit – VG Hospital

Kim Greek, RN
Nova Scotia Chronic Pain Waitlist Coordinator
Pain Management Unit
5820 University Avenue 4th Floor Dickson Bldg
Halifax, NS B3H 1V7
(P) 902-473-8336
(F) 902-473-4126
Kim.Greek@nshealth.ca

IWK Health Centre

Shelley Lowther, RN
Pediatric Pain Management Centre
5850/5980 University Avenue
P.O. Box 9700, Halifax, NS B3K 6R8,
(P) (902) 470 8769
(F) (902) 470 7911
Shelley.Lowther@iwk.nshealth.ca

Halifax Pain Self-Management Program

Patti Pattenden, MSc.
Psychometrist/ Program Coordinator
(P) (902) 473-5471
(F) (902) 473-4126
Patricia.Pattenden@nshealth.ca

Hants Community Hospital

Hilary Rancourt, RN
Pain Clinic
89 Payzant Drive
Windsor NS B0N 2T0
(P) 902-792-2271
(F) 902-473-4126
Hilary.Rancourt@nshealth.ca

Cape Breton Regional Hospital:

Paula Hickey, RN
Chronic Pain Services Coordinator
Cape Breton Health Care Complex
1482 George Street
Sydney, NS B1P 1P3
(P) (902) 567-7410
(F) (902) 567-3307
Paula.Hickey2@nshealth.ca

Northern Shared Pain Services

- St Martha's Hospital, Antigonish
- Aberdeen Hospital, New Glasgow
- Colchester Regional Hospital, Truro
- Cumberland Regional Hospital, Amherst

Liz MacDougall, PT
Chronic Pain Services Manager
Aberdeen Professional Building
835 East River Road
New Glasgow, NS B2H 3S6
(P) (902) 752-7600 ext 3312
(F) (902) 755-7322
Elizabeth.Macdougall@nshealth.ca

Western Kings Memorial Health Centre

Gaetane d'Entremont, OT
Chronic Pain Program Coordinator
PO Box 490
Berwick, NS B0P 1E0
(P) (902) 538-7102
(F) (902) 538-7103
Gaetane.d'Entremont@nshealth.ca

Yarmouth Regional Hospital

Ashley Bishara, RN
Coordinator for Pain Clinic
60 Vancouver St.
Yarmouth, NS B5A 2P5
(P) (902) 742-3542 ext 692
(F) (902) 742-5170
Ashley.Bishara@nshealth.ca

