

Nova Scotia Association of Sexual Health Centres
Office Profile: Halifax Sexual Health Centre

Year founded:

- Established in 1970 as Metro Family Planning Association, later Planned Parenthood Metro Clinic

Clients seen in 2000 and 2005:

- 2000: 8,100 clients plus 30 presentations to 600 people
- 2005: 9,700 clients plus 40 presentations to 800 people

Staff complement:

- Full time: 6; part-time: 3; volunteers: 35 including 10 board members

Total annual office budget in 2005:

- \$569,024.00

Most urgent sexual health issues facing community today:

- Lack of communication between partners
- Denial among community members young and old that “it won’t happen to me”
- Lack of discussion within families about sexuality and sexual health

Most urgent sexual health issues facing community 5-10 years from now:

- Emotional, health, and social implications of increased STI transmission and/or unwanted pregnancies among youth in our community
- Unstable support and resources to provide necessary sexual health services
- Doctors and pharmacists limiting access to reproductive health services

Areas where office excels in serving community today:

- Accommodating client schedules and needs (recently added 2 clinics / week)
- Providing non-judgmental, inclusive and informed sexual and reproductive healthcare services
- Approachable, well-trained staff

Areas office is currently unable to adequately serve community today:

- Limited by external prejudices regarding sexual health in general and our mandate in particular
- Unstable and insufficient funding leads to:
 - Challenges in staff recruitment, retention and professional development, strained office space and infrastructure, and constrained education and promotional activity
 - Limited office space means we can’t accommodate a second doctor or third nurse, can’t hire more staff, have constrained client services and access
 - Limited nursing appointments can delay time-sensitive services such as pregnancy and STI tests and counselling for unintended pregnancy and birth control options

Critical facts about office that are misunderstood or unknown locally that need clarification, correction or reinforcement locally:

- We do not perform abortions
- Men are welcome as are all ages, creeds, cultures and orientations
- We provide information about all pregnancy options
- We provide referrals to other community partners and health professionals
- We conduct educational sessions through our community partners

Office claims to fame

- We have been providing sexual and reproductive health care for 36 years
- We provide: anonymous HIV testing, sexual health counselling, affordable birth control options
- Teaching clinic with a vibrant volunteer program and conduct community outreach programs

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