

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Lung Association of Nova Scotia releases COPD health system analysis findings on World COPD Day (November 20)**

Halifax, NS – In the spring of 2018, the Lung Association of Nova Scotia began a COPD Health System Analysis project, aimed at identifying shortcomings in the care pathway. COPD (or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), is an umbrella term used to describe progressive lung diseases including emphysema, chronic bronchitis. This disease is characterized by increasing breathlessness.

Unfortunately, Nova Scotia has the highest proportion of COPD in the country (5.9% versus national average of 4%). Given that Nova Scotia also has the highest prevalence of smoking in the country, it is expected that COPD will remain a major public health concern in our province.

The health system analysis involved in-depth interviews with patients and health professionals working in COPD prevention and management. Information gathered in the study phases was intended to gain knowledge on COPD management, identify areas for improvement and identify gaps in COPD prevention.

Based on feedback received, the analysis identified the following areas where improvements could be made in regards to COPD care: Smoking Cessation, Testing/Diagnosis, COPD Education, Pharmacotherapy, and Pulmonary Rehabilitation.

“We were so pleased with the level of engagement from all stakeholders involved in this analysis,” said Mohammed Al-Hamdani, Director of Health Initiatives with the Lung Association of Nova Scotia. “While we understand not all changes are feasible, we have identified four recommendations based on their promising tendency to yield positive outcomes. We thought it would be prudent to release the results to the public on World COPD Day.”

The key recommendations that came as a result of this analysis include adding nicotine replacement therapy to the formulary, making spirometry accessible in primary care settings, adopting pharmacotherapy recommendations by the Atlantic Common Drug Review, and using virtual pulmonary rehab to increase outreach in rural Nova Scotia.

The Lung Association of Nova Scotia presented the findings from the analysis at a COPD policy forum held in June, 2019. Stakeholders at the meeting included respirologists, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, nurses, government officials, researchers, and patients.

“Healthcare professionals who deal with respiratory issues in Nova Scotia have done a remarkable job, contributing to a system that has been very helpful to many Nova Scotians coping with COPD,” said Al-Hamdani. “We’re grateful to have such incredible people working towards better lung health, and we look forward to collaborating with them in the future as we strive to improve COPD care in Nova Scotia.”

Copies of the COPD Health Care Analysis summary can be found on the Lung Association of Nova Scotia’s website at <https://ns.lung.ca/sites/default/files/COPD%20Health%20System%20Analysis%20Report.pdf>

-30 -

### **About the Lung Association of Nova Scotia**

The Lung Association of Nova Scotia is a volunteer-driven charity organization whose mission is to improve quality of life by controlling and preventing lung disease through research, advocacy, patient services and education.

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