



THE NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
COUNCIL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

2025 - 2027

STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

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I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT.

Established in 2012, the Newfoundland and Labrador Council of Health Professionals (“NLCHP”) regulates Acupuncturists, Audiologists, Dental Hygienists, Medical Laboratory Technologists, Midwives, Respiratory Therapists, and Speech-Language Pathologists. Effective May 1, 2025, the College of Medical Radiation Technologists will join the Council, and the long-term goal remains to continue to grow the number of registrants by onboarding additional healthcare professions that government decides to regulate.

The work of NLCHP is overseen by a governing body, referred to as the Council throughout this report. The mandate and composition of the Council is provided in the Health Professionals Act (2010) (“the Act”), which broadly outlines the mission and role of the NLCHP. This legislation and the related regulations also articulate the roles and responsibilities of the individual health professions that the NLCHP regulates, collectively referred to as the Colleges throughout this report. Each college is currently overseen by its own board of directors and each health profession has at least one representative that serves as a member of the Council.

Operationally, the NLCHP is led by the CEO and Registrar, who is supported by a Deputy Registrar and two other paid staff positions. There are no paid staff positions within the Colleges which are supported entirely by practitioners who volunteer to serve on the various boards of directors.

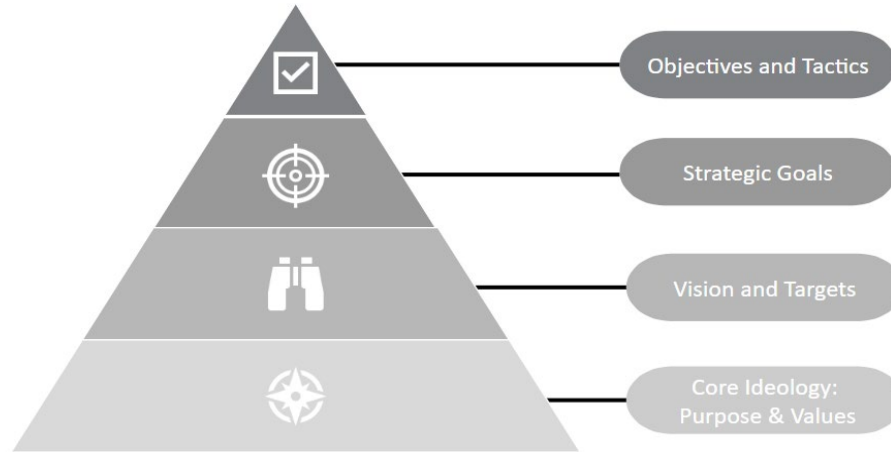
Prior to developing strategy, the NLCHP engaged an external consultant, Ethree Consulting, to conduct a comprehensive Current State Review. Further detail is provided in Section 2.1, but at a high-level, the review considered what was working well and where there were opportunities to improve the way that the NLCHP currently operates and is governed.

This provided deep and valuable insight in advance of the strategy development work that followed, which was also supported by Ethree Consulting, ensuring that what was learned through the Current State Review was transferred to the strategic plan.

This report provides an overview of the strategic planning process and contains NLCHP’s strategy for 2025-2027, including its mission, vision, core values, strategic goals and key focus areas / initiatives.

2. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.

When developing strategy, we consider the strategy pyramid as shown below:



Every organization has a core ideology which consists of the purpose (or mission) of the organization and its core values. For NLCHP, its mission is codified in the Act and, as such, was referenced but not reviewed as part of developing this strategic plan.

This strategic plan determines a short-term vision (three years) for the organization and the strategic goals and drivers that need to be prioritized to achieve that vision. These goals or strategic directions then inform the operational activities that take place each year. The strategic directions should focus on ‘make or break’ issues that must be addressed for the organization to be successful. As no organization has limitless resources, the number of strategic directions must be limited to what is achievable for the organization. These directions must then be turned into actionable operational plans each year, with objectives and time frames.

2.1 THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

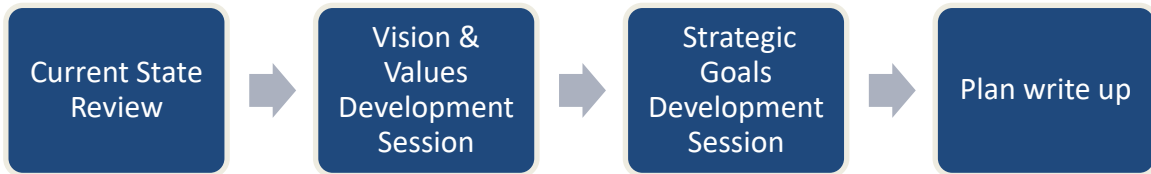
The strategic plan was developed in two phases, the first being a deep dive into current state that focused on:

- The efficiency and effectiveness of Council operations and governance practices,
- The level and manner of on-going stakeholder engagement, and
- The information and communication needs of the Council and other identified stakeholders.

The findings and recommendations provided in this report were a critical input to NLCHP’s strategic plan.

The Current State Review final report was reviewed with the Council in November 2024 and was finalized in December 2024. It compared current practices against best practices in governance and the roles and responsibilities of disciplinary and regulatory bodies in other jurisdictions. This ensured that the Council and leadership team of NLCHP went into the strategic plan development with a solid view of opportunities for improvement.

In the first quarter of 2025, Council members and NLCHP staff engaged in several workshops to build NLCHP’s strategy. The following shows the high-level strategic planning process:



This document is the final output of these efforts and is the foundation on which more detailed operational plans can be developed.

3.NLCHP's MISSION.

An organization's mission or purpose is a concise explanation of an organization's reason for existence and speaks to the value and impact of the organization. For NLCHP, this mission is codified in the Act, specifically in Section 7(2):

The council shall act in the public interest and the objects of the council are to

- (a) support the quality and safety of health services;*
- (b) enhance public protection;*
- (c) improve patient safety and strengthen the regulatory system; and*
- (d) facilitate patient-centred inter-professional collaboration and care.*

The NLCHP was created to regulate previously unregulated health professions in the province that did not have an adequate base of registrants to have a standalone college. This aligned with broader trends in national and international health care regulation that recognized the important role of an independent regulator in public safety and the provision of patient-centered care. It also led to a demarcation between the role of health profession regulators and health profession associations, which, by contrast, promote the interests of and support healthcare practitioners.

While health professions with a larger base of registrants may be regulated by a single college, the NLCHP is a multidisciplinary regulatory body that oversees several health professions. The Act designated eight health professions which are subject to it and the ability of the minister to add additional health professions to the schedule.

4. CORE VALUES.

Along with the organizational mission, the core values of the organization make up the core ideology. While the mission outlines the purpose of the organization, or why it exists, the values define the principles that guide how the organization (and thus the people within it) operates. Core values are important for aligning culture and providing guidance to employees on how to operate within the organization.

NLCHP had not, prior to 2025, identified core values and, as the process demonstrated, having guiding statements regarding what the organization stands for and aspires to uphold consistently, is particularly important when there is high turnover in Council membership and a desire to continue to grow the registrant base through regulation of additional health professions.

The following core values were identified:

We prioritize public protection above all else.

We facilitate effective, efficient, and transparent regulation.

We are a unified voice on regulatory matters.

We anticipate and embrace change by establishing processes that balance stability and adaptability.

We think long term and build governance and operating models that last.

We ensure a supportive working environment that promotes cohesion.

5. SWOT REVIEW.

Once the core ideology was confirmed, the strategic plan was developed. The plan sets the direction for the organization in a defined time frame; in this case from 2025-2027.

The first step for strategy development is to review the current state of the organization, through a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. Strengths and weaknesses identify elements that are internal to the organization, opportunities and threats are external in nature.

This section provides an overview of the main themes that were identified through the strategic planning process.

5.1. STRENGTHS SUMMARY.

Internal strengths are the things that are working for us and that we don't want to lose sight of. The Current State Review identified numerous strengths within the NLCHP in several categories, including governance, knowledge and competence, systems and processes, culture, and stakeholder engagement.

Governance

The NLCHP has established many foundational documents and processes that demonstrate good governance. The roles and responsibilities of council members, college board members, and staff are clearly articulated in documents such as Terms of Reference and role descriptions. Also, there is clear separation between the activities of the Council (who govern) and NLCHP staff (who execute), and the Council is updated on operations regularly through a regular CEO report.

Knowledge and Competence

The NLCHP has access to the knowledge and expertise that is required to meet their mandate and fulfill their mission. Notably, NLCHP staff have deep regulatory experience and knowledge and are governed by a multidisciplinary Council that includes practitioners and public representatives. Additionally, ad hoc committees and external resources have been effectively used to source advice or expertise on an as required basis.

Systems and Processes

Since 2012, the NLCHP has created a common online registration system and implemented many common processes across the core aspects of regulation, such as quality assurance, registration, discipline, and complaints. There were also opportunities to further improve systems and

processes, which are noted in the Weaknesses section that follows.

Culture

The Council is viewed as a collaborative and respectful environment where diverse perspectives are welcomed and valued. There is also strong alignment on the value of health professional regulation and the need for a common regulatory body for the ‘smaller’ health professions that NLCHP regulates.

Stakeholder Engagement

The NLCHP is engaged provincially and nationally with numerous stakeholders, including the NL Health Regulators Network, the Department of Health, individual College Chairs, and national networks of regulators and/or practitioners in the health professions regulated by NLCHP. There is direct communication to registrants through a quarterly newsletter. There are related opportunities to improve communication and stakeholder engagement as well, which are provided in the Weaknesses summary below.

5.2. WEAKNESSES SUMMARY.

Weaknesses are opportunities to improve internal practices and processes. For NLCHP, it is important to take Act and related regulations into account as there are opportunities for improvement that were recommended to the legislation itself, which are presented separately in the Opportunities and Threats Summary. The weaknesses presented in this section were improvements that could be addressed without changing the existing regulatory framework.

Weaknesses are presented within the same themes as the section above.

Governance

A key weakness that was discussed in detail was that, while the current governance framework is effective in overseeing the aspects of regulation that are assigned to NLCHP, it is not effective in demonstrating oversight of the aspects of regulation that are assigned to individual professional colleges. This has resulted in a strategic goal in the three-year plan dedicated to evolving into a better model of governance and operations that views the regulatory process as a connected and complete process that is overseen in its entirety by NLCHP’s Council and provides more support to colleges, who are entirely volunteer based.

The representation of the public interest is essential to fulfilling the NLCHP’s mission and yet, there are two public representative positions that are vacant on Council. These representatives are appointed by the government and as of the date of finalizing this plan, these critical seats remain vacant.

Knowledge and Competence

The most notable knowledge gap was that most college board members, outside of the Chair and any Council representatives who participate in NLCHP, are not given consistent information about how the colleges fit into the broader regulatory framework and what the specific regulatory responsibilities are of the colleges. In other jurisdictions, the responsibilities that are fragmented between the Council and Colleges are assigned to a one entity. In the context of ensuring effective and efficient regulation, it is essential that individuals who have regulatory responsibilities understand not just their own role, but all aspects of a cohesive, end to end regulatory process.

Systems and Processes

Building on the above opportunity, the Council could take a more active role in providing directives to colleges with respect to what needs to be demonstrated to comply with the Act and regulations. There is also an opportunity to establish forums and practices that facilitate interprofessional collaboration across the colleges for the purpose of identifying opportunities for them to deliver on their regulatory responsibilities in a more effective and efficient manner.

There were additional opportunities to improve policy management that were communicated in detail in the Current State Review final report.

Culture

Addressing the weaknesses raised above will develop a deeper understanding of the role of regulatory colleges versus associations in the context of the health professions regulated by NLCHP to ensure alignment.

Stakeholder Engagement

There were opportunities for the NLCHP to engage and support the colleges more directly as well as for the colleges to respond in a timely manner to registrants and/or the NLCHP which would require additional capacity to address.

5.3. OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS OVERVIEW.

Opportunities and threats are the external trends or factors that could positively or negatively impact on the organization. For NLCHP, the opportunities and threats largely relate to the legislative framework that the organization operates in.

For NLCHP, while certain internal weaknesses could be better addressed within the existing legislative framework, there may be amendments to the Act and regulations that would enable the

NLCHP to fulfill its mandate in a more sustainable and efficient manner and so, this presents an opportunity.

The second related opportunity was to engage more directly and frequently with the CEOs of the other multidisciplinary professional health regulators operating across the country to inform ongoing dialogue at the Council about best practice, emerging trends or issues experienced by regulators with a similar mandate to that of the NLCHP.

The most relevant threat identified was the potential for “drift” from the core regulatory mission that could result from different interpretations of the intent of the legislation between NLCHP and the individual professional colleges that could result from the complexity of the existing structure.

6. VISION – 3 YEARS.

Given NLCHP’s purpose and the SWOT review, NLCHP’s three-year vision reflects a desire to shift to a model for operations and governance that supports and demonstrates a cohesive end to end regulatory process.

By 2027, NLCHP will be:

Positioned as a leading multidisciplinary healthcare regulator with high standards for governance and a cohesive operating model that is built to last.

The remainder of the plan outlines the goals and drivers that require focus if this vision is to be achieved.

7. STRATEGIC GOALS AND DRIVERS.

To get from NLCHP’s current state to a way of operating that aligns with the vision statement developed, there are three overarching strategic goals that will be the focus between now and 2027:

1. **Evolve the Governance Framework**
2. **Review the Operating Model**
3. **Develop a Unified Communication Plan**

The strategic drivers related to each goal are:

1. **Evolve the Governance Framework**
 - Evolve to manage and oversee an end-to-end, cohesive regulatory process
 - Review and update other policies, standards, and guidance documents
 - Identify and monitor high priority risks to the strategic plan
2. **Review the Operating Model**
 - Establish an ad-hoc committee of the Council with accountability for this goal
 - Develop an action plan and road map to advance quick wins and high priority recommendations from the Current State Review
3. **Develop a Unified Communication Plan**
 - Establish structured two-way communication between the Council and Colleges
 - Develop clear guidelines for communication with the public and to registrants

- Develop a cohesive communication and stakeholder engagement plan

In the following section, these goals and drivers are described in more detail with examples of the initiatives and actions that could be reflected in a more detailed operational plan.

NLCHP has achieved a lot in the 12 years since it was established and has a clear line of sight into what is working and what could be improved upon. The strategic goals and drivers reflect the priorities that were raised in the Current State Review and support the evolution of governance and operations to be sustainable, effective, and efficient as the organization continues to grow and onboard health professions.

7.I. EVOLVE GOVERNANCE.

7.1.1. Evolve to manage and oversee a cohesive, end-to-end regulatory process.

Regulating health professions involves establishing standards for education, licensure, and professional conduct to ensure public safety and quality care. It also includes accrediting educational programs, registering or licensing practitioners, monitoring ongoing competence, and enforcing disciplinary actions when necessary. In larger colleges, this process is managed and overseen within a single regulatory college. However, these responsibilities were divided through the Act between the NLCHP and the Colleges. This fragmentation has led to the current practice of the Council and individual colleges attempting to manage and oversee the regulatory responsibilities assigned to them, without necessarily considering that these activities are part of one cohesive process and that action, or inaction, creates risks and implications on interconnected processes.

Enabling a change in mindset to manage and oversee the regulatory process as one interrelated process opens opportunities for better use of resources, reduced administrative burden, and a consistent focus on public protection. This shift requires that all participants have a common understanding of the entire end-to-end regulatory process and what their role is within it, which will be communicated by the Council in the form of overarching policy and standard documents.

This means:

- Developing overarching policies and standards that provide an overview of all aspects of regulation and the roles and responsibilities of the Council and Colleges across these aspects, including activities outside the scope of the Act (e.g. those of a professional association),
- Requesting that the government make changes to the Act that would facilitate the management and oversight of an end-to-end regulatory process,
- Determining if changes are required to existing governance documents (e.g. Terms of Reference, NLCHP staff role descriptions) to align with the above, and scheduling any updates required, and

- Ensuring that the communication of 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 is reflected in the broader communication and stakeholder engagement plan.

7.1.2. Review and update other policies, standards, and guidance documents.

As noted in Section 7.1.1, one of the highest priorities for the Council will be to provide clarity to the colleges, through policy, with respect to their role in an end-to-end regulatory process.

A comprehensive review of other policies, standards, and guidance documents will follow, which is the focus of this goal. This will also provide opportunities to communicate best practice based on what we know about how regulation is achieved in other jurisdictions.

This means:

- Developing standards for key areas of responsibility (e.g. standards and scope of practice) that clarify specifically what is required to demonstrate compliance with the Act and Regulations,
- Reviewing operational and administrative policies, standards, or other guidance documents and prioritizing the documents that require updates, and
- Assigning accountability to the appropriate committee or resource for making the required updates and monitoring the completion of this work at Council.

7.1.3. Identify and monitor high priority risks to the strategic plan.

This strategic plan is developed at a point in time and there will be unforeseen events that will challenge execution. For example, a high volume of complaints or investigations can consume Council and staff resources, potentially impacting progress on planned initiatives. A critical aspect of an effective governance body is being able to identify risks (or issues) to progressing the plan and then provide clear direction with respect to how the organization is to respond.

This means:

- Reporting from NLCHP staff and colleges to the Council include any risks or issues and the actions taken in response, and
- Supporting templates are developed to capture risks and issues in a consistent manner and to ensure that any impacts on strategic goals or initiatives are fully captured and discussed.

7.2. REVIEW THE OPERATING MODEL.

7.2.1. Establish an ad-hoc committee of the Council with accountability for this goal.

We will build on the NLCHP Current State Review by assigning resources to continue the advancement of operations and governance frameworks to be more cohesive and streamlined. This is a critical strategic initiative which will require engagement with the Colleges and, as such, it is appropriate that a team be assembled to work on developing a comprehensive future state operating model.

This means:

- Establishing the role, authorities, composition, and key responsibilities of this ad-hoc committee in a Terms of Reference document that is approved by the Council, and
- Working with NLCHP staff to identify, select, and oversee advisory or professional service resources engaged in developing future state operational and/or governance frameworks.

7.2.2. Develop an action plan and roadmap to advance quick wins and high priority recommendations from the Current State Review.

It will be a priority to action quick wins and high priority actions where there was a high level of alignment across Council relating to the recommendations from the Current State Review. There is considerable momentum going into 2025 following the high levels of engagement that resulted from the Current State Review that the Council would like to capitalize on.

This means:

- Identifying operational ‘quick wins’ from the NLCHP Current State Review, establishing an action plan for advancement, and monitoring it to completion, and
- Ensuring that high priority actions are reflected in the annual budget and planning process and updating the Council regularly on progress.

7.3. DEVELOP A UNIFIED COMMUNICATION PLAN.

7.3.1. Establish regular two-way communication between the Council and colleges.

An important consideration in shifting to manage and oversee a cohesive regulatory process is regular reporting in both directions is an important way of ‘codifying’ the cohesion we are seeking.

This means:

- Establishing a schedule and supporting templates to enable regular reports from the colleges to the Council regarding operations, risks, issues, or needs, and
- Establishing a practice of having a NLCHP representative attending at least one board meeting per college annually to reinforce key messages and provide a comprehensive update.

7.3.2. Develop clear guidelines for communication with the public and to registrants.

There is an opportunity to coordinate and streamline communication with the public and to registrants and this coordination will be essential to ensure the NLCHP is a unified voice on regulatory matters.

This means:

- Establishing clear communication protocol that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the NLCHP staff and college boards with respect to communication,
- Ensuring that these protocols are communicated in onboarding and orientation activities for the Council and college boards, and
- Ensuring that the Council has established processes for communication that may occur that is contrary to these standards.

7.3.3. Develop a cohesive communication and stakeholder engagement plan.

The vision for 2027 will drive change within the NLCHP and colleges and clear, effective, timely, and thoughtful communication will be a key success factor. The development of a comprehensive plan that considers all the moving parts of this plan, the information needs of various stakeholders, and the most efficient and effective way to meet these needs.

This means:

- Developing and communicating a common orientation for college board and council members that defines roles, responsibilities, and the end-to-end regulatory process, and
- Building a comprehensive communication and stakeholder engagement plan, ensuring that stakeholders referenced in the Current State Review are reflected and that the Council is regularly updated on progress.

8. THE STRATEGIC PLAN IN ACTION.

These strategic drivers are the guidelines for each annual operating plan. In 2025, NLCHP will establish a detailed operating plan that breaks down the progress against these goals that the organization is targeting in the next three years.

It will need to be iterative and dynamic and, if that can be achieved, at the end of this three-year plan, the next update to the strategic plan will be a less intensive process. Ensuring that the plan remains the focus of the Council, and that risks, issues, and opportunities are regularly discussed will be key. The operating plan will include detailed actions, timelines, and will link to the budget as that is built out as well, identifying more detailed accountabilities and resources for each of the initiatives that are referenced in Section 7.

As the team learns and conditions change, activities may be amended or added to the annual operational plan – these decisions will be made in regular review sessions with the Council and/or the NLCHP leadership team. In this way, the Strategic Plan Report and the associated annual operating plans will remain a dynamic tool creating value for the organization.