

Partnership between Province and 211 will Enhance Services for Seniors.

Nova Scotia seniors will soon find it easier to locate services through a new partnership between the Department of Seniors and 211 Nova Scotia, a not-for-profit association that assists people of all ages in finding services to meet their needs.

Starting January 15, the two Department of Seniors phone lines that assist seniors with inquiries about senior abuse and provincial programs will become part of the 211 Nova Scotia service.

211 Nova Scotia is a province-wide confidential information and referral service for community, non-profit, and government services. They have information about thousands of services and are available 24/7, with interpretation services for over 100 languages. Seniors can dial 2-1-1 for information on what to do about senior abuse, or for information on programs that help people stay in their homes, among many other things.

“We know that sometimes reaching out for help, especially when you’ve always enjoyed a relatively independent lifestyle, is not easy,” says Mike Myette, executive director of 211 Nova Scotia. “If we know that there is a particular document you need to have on hand, or an important piece of information to mention, we will tell you up front, so when you do make the call to reach out for assistance, the experience can be as positive and as stress-free as possible.”

Staff at 211 Nova Scotia have received specialized training from the department, particularly around senior abuse, to make sure they have a full understanding and appreciation of the particular types of challenges seniors face. The department will continue to act as a resource to 211, ensuring that the needs of seniors are met.

“This partnership is a great example of how government and community can work together using existing resources to offer high quality service to Nova Scotians, “ says Minister of Seniors, Leo Glavine. “The Department of Seniors is showing great leadership in making Nova Scotia more age-friendly by ensuring seniors have 24/7 access to the information and services they need, including such serious issues as senior abuse.”

Nova Scotia offers hundreds of programs to residents but knowing what they are and where to find help is not easy for people of any age. 211 Nova Scotia has been dedicated in helping citizens discover and access the services available to them in Nova Scotia.

“This announcement is very good news,” says Bill VanGorder, Chair of the Group of IX Seniors' Advisory Council of Nova Scotia. “Now seniors will have similar access to the specific information through the 211 line to help them to easily navigate the supports and services they need.”

In addition to supporting seniors in finding services, 211 will continuously provide data to the Department of Seniors regarding the needs of seniors as demonstrated by calls, available services, and needs that couldn't be met. This information will be used to better inform the department's decision making ability when it comes to funding the right programs and services that provide the greatest value to citizens.

“Throughout the transition, which is expected to take several months, there will be various initiatives taking place with the objective of creating awareness throughout Nova Scotia's senior population,” says Myette. “Our goal is that seniors will recognize that 211 is the number to call when seeking information on services and programs to meet their needs.”

The two Department of Senior information and referral lines are currently accessed through a 1-800 toll free service. People who call these numbers will be automatically re-directed to 211 for a period of time during the transition process.

211 is the latest addition to a comprehensive list of province-wide three-digit phone numbers that make it easier for people to reach out for help when the need arises.

Here is the complete list:

911 Someone's health, safety or property is threatened and help is needed right away

211 Non-profit, community and government services

411 Local directory assistance

511 Road conditions information service

611 Telephone repair service

711 Message relay service (MRS) for individuals who are hearing and/or speech impaired

811 Non-urgent health care, call to talk to a nurse