

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Colin LaVie

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Standing Committee on Health and Social Development

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MEETING STATUS: PUBLIC

LOCATION: LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER, HON. GEORGE COLES BUILDING, CHARLOTTETOWN

SUBJECT: WORK PLAN

COMMITTEE:

Gordon McNeilly, MLA Charlottetown-West Royalty [Chair]
Trish Altass, MLA Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke
Hannah Bell, MLA Charlottetown-Belvedere
Hon. Jamie Fox, Minister of Fisheries and Communities
Sonny Gallant, MLA Evangeline-Miscouche
Natalie Jameson, MLA Charlottetown-Hillsborough Park (replaces Hon. Brad Trivers, Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning; Environment, Water and Climate Change)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Hon. Brad Trivers, Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning; Environment, Water and Climate Change

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

none

GUESTS:

none

STAFF:

Emily Doiron, Clerk Assistant (Journals, Committees and House Operations)

Edited by Hansard

The Committee met at 10:00 a.m.

Chair (McNeilly): Hello everybody, my name is Gord McNeilly and we'll bring this meeting to order.

This is an exciting new Standing Committee on Health and Social Development and there is a few exciting things happening today. I want to bring greetings to the guests who have come in to watch the proceedings and welcome. Also, want to bring greetings to Natalie Jameson and maybe I'll give her a couple of minutes – this is her first official function – not minutes, but seconds. This is her first official function, so maybe she would like to say hello.

Ms. Jameson: Hi everyone; thanks for coming and thanks for having me. I'm sitting here on behalf of Brad. It feels a bit surreal to be sitting in this room, no doubt. It's an honour and privilege as we all know.

Thanks for having me and I'm looking forward to sitting in on my first committee meeting here.

Chair: On behalf of this committee, welcome Natalie to her first official function.

The Standing Committee on Health and Social Development is charged with matters concerning health, social programs, sport, seniors, justice and public safety, emergency measures, Indigenous affairs, Francophone and Acadian affairs, Status of Women, persons with disabilities, housing, charities, the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission and other such matters relating to health and social development. So, we do have a lot to work on.

Today we're going to be working on a work plan and giving you all lots of time to contribute and find out a course of direction for this committee.

I'd just like to, maybe if I could, if you bear with me, I would like to maybe do a greeting in French.

This week is the *Congrès Mondiale Acadien*.

J'aimerais remarquer que la 6e édition du Congrès Mondiale Acadien se déroule pendant le 10 à 24 août en l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et le sud-est du Nouveau Brunswick. La 6e édition du Congrès marquera les 25 ans de l'évènement. Le but du Congrès, qui a lieu tous les 5 ans, est de raffermir les liens qui unissent les communautés acadiennes de partout, tout en démontrant la modernité et la réalité de l'identité acadienne. J'aimerais souhaiter à tout le monde la bienvenue à notre province!

I would like to point out that the sixth edition of the Congrès mondial acadien is being held in Prince Edward Island and Southeast New Brunswick from August 10–24. It marks the 25th anniversary of the event. The goal of the Congrès, which is held every five years, is to strengthen the ties that unite all Acadian communities throughout the world, all while showcasing a modern and authentic Acadian identity. I want to welcome everyone to our province!

Did everybody have a chance to look at the agenda or the – can I get a motion for the adoption of the agenda?

Mr. Gallant: (Indistinct)

Chair: Sonny Gallant has moved the motion. Everybody else so moved? Yes.

On the agenda or the committees work plan, we have Motion No. 1, which was discussed in the Legislative Assembly to refer wellness to the appropriate standing committee. So this is the appropriate standing committee.

Have all the members received copies of this motion?

Ms. Bell: Chair, (Indistinct) because I know this was your motion brought forward in the House and discussed in the House. I was wondering if you would be able to expand on what you were thinking, perhaps, or what you were hoping to bring forward in terms to discuss on that motion.

Chair: Sure. Thanks Hannah Bell.

Yes, so I brought forward this motion because in Prince Edward Island the health promotion is under-valued and I do believe that health promotion and the benefits of

health will be increased if we consider fighting illness and disease before it happens. A good way to do that would be, various activity programs, exercise and fitness, as well as, keeping people healthier so that we can take a proactive approach to fighting against illness. It's an ongoing battle; it's done in the communities.

There's been some pretty good research done – the children's report 2017, the chief public health officer had a report on that. The wellness strategy from the department level was also produced, but we have to do more. A lot of reports with little action over the last number of years, we need to focus on a better strategy, more concrete plan for our children, middle-aged working people, and as well as seniors.

If I may, we did a little bit of work on this motion as a beginning area. Emily will be passing out a copy on this. We just tried to break it down into three specific areas and give this committee a jumping off point.

The first thing we talked about was the departmental approach currently to wellness in the province. We do have a health promotion section within health. I would like to get more information from them to see what their working plan is, where they're going with their focus.

Early years; just to make it easier because it's a broad topic, we figured that we would start with kid's maybe, in Grade 1 to Grade 6. That's a very important time in children's development. How to engage youth and wellness, build a more active lifestyle in that area. How do we help kids combat wellness and get more exercise in the elementary school levels?

Workplace support; we were talking about – in Prince Edward Island we are so actively engaged in work and a lot of people – they're busy, they're stressed – do they have a whole lot of time for wellness. Is there things that the provincial government –

Hello, Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox: Good morning, Chair. I apologize for being late, however.

Chair: No problem.

Is there ways that we can support tired working Islanders to get more active.

Hannah Bell.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

I think it's great that you've got this preliminary work in (Indistinct) see a lot of questions in there.

One of the things that I think, when we talked about the different committee structures and we know that we have a different committee, for example, for education and another one for natural resources and there's always going to be crossovers.

But when we particularly look at the provincial chief public health officer report on children's wellness, a huge piece of the recommendations in that were actually around poverty and food insecurity. While wellness absolutely does include the piece that you'll see – really strong advocating for around activity and I absolutely recognize that. There's also a very strong discussion – important discussion to be had there around educational outcomes and health outcomes that are informed by poverty.

And so, we also have obviously a committee coming up that's looking at poverty. So I think we need to make sure that we recognize these things don't sit in isolation and it would be good to sort of keep in mind when we're looking at wellness, that we need to make sure we're looking at that broad scope. Perhaps that may mean that we refer some of this work to other committees as well, to do the deep dive on that particular piece, for example, on educational outcomes or on food or whatever that may be.

I just want to make sure that we have that aspect of the conversation, that wellness is not only about, that you said activities, but also about some of the core social determinates. And in terms of the context of this committee that makes sense.

Chair: Absolutely, yes. I think that's an amazing suggestion and it's an important point. I think wellness does move across committees and we will note that and try to work on that for sure. I think that's a great suggestion.

Would anybody else like to comment at this time on, on maybe that first section?

Trish Altass.

Ms. Altass: In terms of wellness, something that came up in the Legislature that I brought forward was the idea of social prescriptions. If we are going to be looking at wellness and approaches that can support the promotion of mental and physical health, social prescriptions might be an area that we could explore as well under wellness and what that might look like in PEI. I might add that to your preliminary plan here around wellness.

Chair: Duly noted and we will definitely add that.

Anybody else?

Just that section was just the beginning so we've added a couple of things to that. The final thing under this – and we can read all this later, I'm not going to take too much time – but is senior wellness. So the third tier would be focusing on keeping seniors healthy, hearth health. Falls prevention is becoming an increasingly important area with seniors. How can we promote falls prevention and keep them healthy in their homes and working out and being active at any stage of life?

Any other comments on that too?

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Chair, if I could. Correct me – maybe this isn't the appropriate time – but when you talk about the youth and the wellness and the health, could we also maybe explore childhood vaccinations and maybe have someone in to discuss that?

Chair: Absolutely.

Mr. Gallant: Probably have Dr. Heather Morrison in to give us a briefing on that, her importance of it.

Also, mental health crisis; we could have Dr. Heather Keizer in and we could have Reid Burke in to give us some insight on that and any questions and guidance the committee could take.

Chair: So we'll add to that about wellness, more specifically, we'll get into those. In the

work plan too, we'll make sure that that's referenced in wellness, but as well as in the work plan.

Thanks, Sonny Gallant

Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

One thing I'd be interested in knowing is what programs are available within our senior's part of the government, to keep our seniors active in our buildings and facilities that house seniors? One thing I've learned over the last number of years is we're great to provide them a place to stay and live in, but what actual outreach is there in a place, like Bedeque, where there is six people living there. In Kinkora we started a little project – maybe three years ago now – to have a garden for to get them outside and get them to do something. Maybe we could look at what actual supports are there for the department to promote active living to these people living in our facilities. I don't think facilities is the right word either (Indistinct) in their homes.

Chair: That's an excellent point and we'll add that, too. It's community-based wellness or activity levels; what can the province do to support their living and their healthy living within their communities (Indistinct)

We'll definitely add that on.

Sonny Gallant.

Mr. Gallant: (Indistinct) on to what Mr. Fox said.

I'm sure we've all heard in the past number of months when we talk about our seniors and we talk about activities and different things, maybe we should explore some of the needs of some of the seniors. Some of them have hearing impairment which affects their daily life and any activities they may partake in and there doesn't seem to be maybe – I guess the word I'm looking for is maybe we should explore if there is anything that could be done to assist in that way and eye testing and things like that. I just wanted to add that.

Chair: Excellent.

Mr. Gallant: Some of those things (Indistinct) activities if they can't hear what's happening or they have vision issues.

Chair: Question to the committee: Would we want to bring in an expert to talk about that plan with –

Mr. Fox: I would suggest somebody from the actual department of social services.

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct) what you had brought forward on this, which is what is the goal in terms of recommendation. We have the opportunity to bring forward recommendations that can be further discussed in the House or recommendations that could inform next steps or whatever, but it's also about the public discussion as well, so I think that having the members from the department itself just kind of give us information about what's there now.

But then it would be good to be able to sort find the spaces where the gaps are because that's definitely what we're hearing, is that there are significant gaps in core delivery and there are places where we can do better and if we don't raise that as a discussion here – we have to start from what do we know so it would be really good to have the department and to give that, but also then somebody external to that who can talk about how we can push that.

Chair: Excellent.

These are all great suggestions and I do believe we're getting to a great jumping off start here under wellness and – we're going to get Emily to just summarize what she's heard at this time and then as a plan moving forward.

Clerk Assistant: Okay, so –

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct) to come?

Chair: Hannah Bell?

Ms. Bell: Sorry, yeah.

Chair: Yes, well we're not even at the work plan yet –

Ms. Bell: Oh okay.

Chair: We're just at the first motion. So we're at Motion No. 1, so what I will do after Emily summarizes, we'll go through Motion No. 1 and then after this I'll talk to you about the Human Rights Commission, which we need to get done which is going to be (b) – and then in new business, continue with these great ideas because the new business in (c), we'll be having a further expansion of discussion.

So I'll pass it to Emily.

Clerk Assistant: Well perhaps, Chair, I could wait until the end when we get to the new business part. When the committee fully forms their plan, I'll give a summarization of what I've heard from the committee at that point overall, if that works with everybody.

Chair: Perfect.

Clerk Assistant: If you want to move onto the next item.

Chair: Yeah, I would like to move onto the next item.

This committee is entitled to look at the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission and I'll just read: The Standing Committee on Health and Social Development is charged with matters relating to the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission pursuant to Section 16 of the *Human Rights Act*.

The committee is responsible for recommending to the Legislative Assembly the appointments of members to the commission.

From the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission, Mr. John Rogers, chair, and Ms. Brenda Picard, Executive Director, have offered to meet with the committee to give an overview of the work of the Human Rights Commission.

Currently, there are six commissioners appointed to the commission. Two appointments have expired, although they have continued in their role until the committee can make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly regarding the appointments of the members of the commission.

The committee will have to decide how it would work and like to proceed on this.

What I want to do is – we need to schedule some time to bring them in and to figure out how we're going to help make their appointments, if they would like to figure out what their plan is, this committee will be charged with working with them too, as well.

I'd just like to say – is there anything else you should say about that?

Clerk Assistant: I guess just to note on that is that the chair and executive director of the Human Rights Commission have offered to come into the committee to brief them on the work that they do at the commission and how things run, how the process is, and if that's something that the committee is interested in, they agree they would like to have them in, then I would coordinate with them and we would have them in at a meeting for the committee to meet with them.

Mr. Fox: Chair?

Chair: Yes? Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: I agree with that.

Something else I'd also be very interested in is the fact that is there anything they think that could be brought forward that would help modernize, or in the act that needs review? They might have some suggestions that –

Chair: Looking at the legislation?

Mr. Fox: Looking at the legislation, is there any way we can modernize it further than what it is, or is there something that should be reviewed that other provinces are doing?

Chair: Yeah, that's a good point.

I think that's something the committee would – we'll formulate a letter to them and suggest that to have a look at that before entering into the Chamber to discuss that.

Is there anything else – any other suggestions from the committee that we could send to the human rights committee before they come in?

Clerk Assistant: This committee will have to make recommendations at some point to the Legislative Assembly regarding the appointments to the commission. So, perhaps after they've been in, the committee can formulate its process for that as well, so kind of once we've heard from them.

Chair: Exactly.

So, we should look for a meeting probably within the first two or three meetings to bring them in?

Clerk Assistant: Sure.

Chair: So look for that on the schedule.

Moving on at this point to new business.

This is some time – oh sorry, Hannah Bell.

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct)

Chair: Oh okay.

So, new business, I'd like to spend – just open up the floor to the committee. This is an incredibly large committee that we will have a lot of work to do this fall and into the spring session as well, so I don't want this section to be rushed at all. I want you to feel free to talk and to be open and honest about ideas that you have that will be all-encompassing of our scope.

I don't want to leave out any of the groups that we're supporting here as well, and try to find a way that we can connect the list of things up top and I think we already did that with wellness, connecting it to social development as well.

For the fall sitting, what we can do is, that if everybody brings two or three, or three or free different suggestions, we will then look at prioritizing them. I think Emily and I spoke about it before; we will have 10 meetings, perhaps, in the fall or somewhere along those lines and that's a lot of time, but it's also not a lot of time and we've got to kind of look at this section.

At this time, I'm going to open it up to the floor to come up with suggestions.

Ms. Bell: Chair?

Hannah Bell.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

I would like to request that we add to our potential priorities a request to bring in the housing director, Clifford Lee, to review the work of the housing hub to-date, to ask for updates on housing projects and the implementation of the housing action plan.

I would like to see that as a priority. I'll say that now.

I'll let you know my second one as well and then I can provide the floor to everyone else –

Chair: Sure, take as much time as you want.

Ms. Bell: – and just make them quick and move on.

My second one would be I would also – I think it cross references to something we spoke about earlier, which is to get an update from both department staff on the disability accessibility support program and the proposed persons with disabilities act legislation because both incorporate, or don't incorporate, supports particularly for those with disabilities, which also includes seniors. So it's very much about wellness of people in our community.

Perhaps, once we've done priorities then we can liaise with you and the Clerk around who may be people that we could call for those particular pieces.

Chair: Excellent.

Ms. Bell: I have others, but I'll leave that for now, because I'm sure we're going to cross over on what everybody else has, Chair, so thank you.

Chair: Sonny Gallant.

Mr. Gallant: I guess I kind of jumped the queue, but you have my first two, the mental health crisis issues and the childhood vaccine –

Chair: (Indistinct)

Mr. Gallant: Okay.

But I feel those are important topics we need to discuss so I just wanted to make sure they're on our work plan.

Also, organ donation; could we have someone in to explain that and give us a better overview of it? You know, 79% of Island residents support the introduction of some kind of legislation. There was a survey done, so I mean we should have an expert in to explain that to us and give us some insight on it.

The national pharmacare program; our example of it here is the senior's drug program and it would be good to have somebody come in and give us an overview of all that. It's becoming quite a topic and it would be good to have some more information on that.

Chair: Those are great suggestions.

Mr. Gallant: And I have one more.

It was discussed – and I mentioned it on the floor of the Legislature – the shingles vaccine. When we have the health officer in, if we could – the importance of it – it's not a cheap vaccination and if you have coverage you can have it done, but some seniors may not be able to afford it. It's something we should discuss and have a look at.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gallant.

Trish Altass.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

Doctor recruitment and retention, one of the major issues we're facing in health care and I think it would be very helpful to have someone from the medical society. Perhaps the president, Dr. David Bannon could come in and share how we can work more effectively with doctors, what they would like to see in terms of recruitment and retention, as well as models of doctor remuneration I think can fall under that as well and what's possible. Right now we have fee-for-service and we have salary, but there are a lot of other models out there that we could be looking at.

We also have shortages in nursing and some issues that nurses face around safety in the workplace. So I think it would be very helpful to have the nurses union come in – so, Mona O’Shea – as well as perhaps the dean of the faculty of nursing, to talk about what can be done to help train more nurses and then retain them so that they don’t face burnout in those early years, which is something that we’ve seen many new nurses struggle with. So, how do we mentor, how do we create a model that’s going to keep nurses healthy and well, as well, as they work in that system.

I think those are key priorities areas connected with all of that and we’ve talked about scope of practice; I would love to see us start really breaking down areas where we can make some progress around scope of practice.

We had a few things happen around pharmacists and the work that they can do on the Island, but it was my understanding that was sort of scratching the surface. So, having Erin MacKenzie of the pharmacy association come in and share what’s possible in terms of the current training and experience the pharmacist, where we might grow and expand their work to help take some of the pressure off of the system. That’s just one area; there’s so many other areas. Neurology, ERs, can we really start breaking down some of those pieces and come up with some practical solutions to move that forward.

I won’t take all the floor; those are some key things to start with. As Hannah had said as well, we have others and I’ll leave that there for now and we’ll see what others say.

Chair: What we’ll do, is we’ll do maybe one round and then we’ll just make sure that we’ll do maybe another round and make it available for everybody.

Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: Thanks, Chair.

I’m sort of wondering from listening to the conversation and I look at the definition on front of the agenda. We already talked about how many broad issues this covers and you mentioned it. I’m almost wondering if we shouldn’t take that definition and look at

what is a top priority within that. Because we’re sort of – we’re talking about – which these are all good ideas, talking about pharmacists and Mona O’Shea and all these people, but I’m almost wondering if we shouldn’t set a priority list of what is the big issue right now, the top priority issue in PEI and then go down from that. Because we know that poverty is an issue, low income housing is an issue, the lack of housing is an issue. We do have a medical situation also going on, but instead of jumping all around, I’m sort of wondering if we shouldn’t – what are the priorities of the committee?

Chair: It’s a great suggestion.

Trish Altass.

Ms. Altass: Yes, it’s my understanding and of course, I’m new to this. But if we sort of come up with a list across – the group here what are some of our priorities – individually or from our caucuses and then we can prioritize from there. So attempt to triage it down at that point, that’s my understanding of the process, I think.

Chair: Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox: I just don’t want to see us, Chair, going out reaching for a whole bunch of people to bring before a committee without actually having no direction that it’s taking us.

Chair: I’ll just add to that. I think this is what this section is for, the committee is aware of that. The next 10 minutes or so will feel very overwhelming. We’re going to get a lot on there.

When it comes to witnesses, I don’t know, I think that we will work on topics first and then we’ll figure out who to bring in or who’s the best witness to bring in in accordance with – to make things smooth. I think that’s where we might be getting a little bit of a gap.

We’re just looking at topics based on – as the Chair; I need to know what is important to the members in front here. You guys will be very much this committee, so I appreciate the comments and we’ll take those into consideration, for sure, Mr. Fox. –

Chair: – that’s where we might be getting a little bit of a gap.

We’re just looking at topics based on – as the Chair; I need to know what is important to the members in front here. You guys will be very much this committee, so I appreciate the comments and we’ll take those into consideration, for sure, Mr. Fox.

Natalie Jameson.

Ms. Jameson: All right, I’m going to add to the overwhelming need to this conversation with a couple of work plan items here.

So, breast density screening; patients and health advocates have called for improved reporting and notification of risks from breast density is part of regular screening programs. Government has committed to improve screening for breast density and funding for follow-up mammogram tests, a platform commitment that was reaffirmed in the throne speech.

The committee could hear from patients and advocates on the need for improved screening and notification as well from the department officials on current services and updates on timelines and implementation. The result in conversation would regenerate increased public awareness and health benefits of breast cancer screening. It’s near and dear to my heart.

Diabetes; lots of conversations around diabetes at the door. Previously, the committee planned to look into the provincial diabetes strategy as work is underway between government and stakeholders in updating the strategy. There have also been some calls for improved coverage for insulin pumps.

I think definitely we could invite some individuals living with diabetes, or stakeholders, government, Islanders, whoever it may be, just to present on current needs and current programming that’s available.

Again, do you want me to keep adding to this?

Chair: Take your time.

Ms. Jameson: All right.

Vaping; I’m getting up to date on vaping. Never – it’s an area that’s still new to me, and anyway, exploring how to limit youth access and interest in vaping. Obviously, representatives from the Tobacco Free PEI have previously presented on various aspects of tobacco reduction, including restrictions on vape juice. Discussed under smoking cessation topic on December 26th, 2017, which was presented by Ian Reid, a member of the tobacco control committee; there was discussion on restricting vape juice altogether. I think we need to have further conversations around that.

Concussion protocols; some provinces have a combination in policy and legislation around best practices for concussion protocols, either in schools, long-term care and minor sports, what is the current framework on Prince Edward Island around concussion protocols.

And finally, continue adding to the list. So the Kings County Memorial Hospital, which we all know is a primary health facility in King’s county. Obviously, there are some recurring issues around ER access and ability of an aging facility to enable collaborative health services for residents. It might be good for a committee to learn about the facility, its services and potential gaps that exist. Awesome.

Chair: Great job.

So those will all be noted. So those are all great suggestions.

Hannah Bell.

Ms. Bell: I will add a couple more.

So underneath our social programming aspects of the committee, I would like to call for an update on the grandparent’s program. So we know that there have been some significant challenges with that in terms of the initial roll out and then the additional phases that didn’t come. And we have both, sort of representatives from the grandparent’s program itself, the PEI Senior Citizens’ Federation and also, sort of an internal as well. But again, it connects in some ways back to wellness again. In this case, you have multigenerational impacts, impacts into child and family services. It’s complex, but I think it would be – just even

to get an idea sort of what the current status is and what the plans are in terms of how that program can be expanded and why it needs to be expanded.

On that same basis is programming for at-risk youth, which is currently quite ad hoc – and being done primarily by non-profit organizations in the community. So it's again, to get a better idea of what programming is available, how that's impacting our youth.

And I think back to your point originally, Chair, about wellness and activities, we know some of the most effective programs are on that: how are those being delivered and how can we better provide those as part of our social programming.

I will stop there with those two for now.

Thank you. (Indistinct) any other ones –

Chair: Trish Altass.

Ms. Altass: Great, thank you.

So I think there are a couple of key reports that have been produced. It would be wonderful to have someone come in and kind of flesh that out a little bit more and what we can do to – based on those reports – what we can really do to move forward the recommendations.

It's my understanding there was an analysis of patient flow conducted in 2018, so looking at sort of a processed mapping approach to our health care system from a patient's perspective and what we can do to improve. That's a very effective strategy to really understand each stage of the process and where we might be able to make some improvements. It would be wonderful to have some more details on that and some practical recommendations based on that report.

As well, there was a review conducted of the issues that happened around the renovations at TOSH. We still don't have the complete report from that review. So I think it would be very useful to have someone come in to speak from who had worked on that review – whoever wrote it is still a little unclear – but to have the details of that come forward,

particularly around the issues that happened in that case.

But also, what do we need to do moving forward to make sure that there's no risk? Because clearly, there was a risk here in the way that the renovations were conducted. Whether or not there was harm is still in question, but the risk was there; and we do need to, I believe, change our legislation to minimize that risk or remove it in the future so that we're not renovating schools where students are there when we're removing things like asbestos that can be quite dangerous.

So those are two areas I think we need to explore.

Chair: Excellent. These are all great discussion topics.

Anything else? I want the committee to have ample time to –

Ms. Bell: Chair? (Indistinct)

Chair: Sure, Hannah Bell.

Ms. Bell: Just thinking about timing and about that we're looking at potential recommendations for the fall sitting.

Something that was mentioned as ongoing at the end of the last sitting was that there was a needs analysis being conducted on emergency and transitional shelters; and given that winter is coming, it would be very good to get an update on that analysis before the snow starts. So it is part of the housing story, but also part of our emergency social services. I believe that would need to come from the department.

Chair: Yeah.

Ms. Bell: Yeah.

Chair: That would be a time sensitive –

Ms. Bell: Yes.

Chair: So that might be a priority due to time sensitivity and winter's coming.

Ms. Bell: Well, as my honourable colleague mentioned, in the committee we have a very broad section of topics. Then it's a matter of

are there things that we need to have discussed prior to the sitting so that we can then do something about them in the sittings through recommendations.

Chair: Yeah, excellent.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Anybody else?

Yes, (Indistinct)

Ms. Altass: So midwifery would be an area that would be very useful to explore further. We have this sort of initial funding to get things off the ground, but what are the next steps? How do we actually bring this to a place where it's going to be accessible for all those who choose to access midwifery services? It was mentioned briefly, the idea of a fee-for-service model, that we should be engaging with the PEI midwives association and perhaps other experts. That's not a model that's used in other provinces, and for very good reason, because it's exclusionary and would prevent access. So looking at, you know, what really do we need to do to make sure this is accessible for all women who choose to access the service moving forward.

Chair: Great, thank you.

It's with the committee's – is it okay if I just say a few things to add to it? Yeah, I don't know how to ask permission.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Chair: I would just –

Mr. Fox: That's the advantage of being Chair; you can talk whenever you want.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Ms. Bell: Don't tell him that.

Chair: I would just add that there was – recently over the last year, we've had some issues with physiotherapy recruitment, retention, so I would just maybe add that to the list and perhaps bring that back to the physiotherapy association.

The only other thing I would add is maybe catastrophic drugs, making sure that the price is attainable for Prince Edward Island residents when they're going through difficult times.

And I think other than that, I would just – wellness is a big focus, and that Motion No. I would be important, and we can work a lot into that, I do believe, and come back with something great.

So maybe moving on from new business, as I say that, you can feel free to email me any suggestions and they'd become – they just won't be on the record, but we will duly note them and Emily will receive them and we'll add them to the list moving forward.

With that, the reason why we wanted to schedule this during Old Home Week is because we knew that there will be a lot out of this committee; and I just want you to keep in mind as you go back and read our mandate, is that make sure that all of these groups that are under us get ample time. When you're out in the community, Indigenous affairs is under this, Francophone affairs, Status of Women, persons with disability, charities; all these things are very important to our committee, and they need to have their respected time as we move forward as well.

Just moving on about a few little things about – moving on to the next item, discussion of scheduling. Just for the committee, there's going to be quite a few committees this fall. I just want to have an open discussion about timing of when this committee can sit.

Mr. Fox: So can I suggest –

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

So can I suggest that we all go back and figure if our caucus meetings or our Cabinet meetings or whatever are on certain dates and times and get that information in to Emily so that we can try to pick a time when we can all be available?

Chair: We do have a tentative – is it tentative? Yeah?

It would be up to the committee, obviously, if it would work. If you could go back, if the committee were to ask you to go back and see if Wednesday afternoons, 1:30 p.m. start time, and then that could be our kind of set time for this committee.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: Our caucus is Wednesday afternoons at 1:00 p.m.

Chair: Anybody else have anything to add to that time?

Ms. Bell: We had done a quick exercise to sort of identify where the blocked times were because of Cabinet meetings and so on. Are there any other time blocks that were available other than the Wednesday afternoon?

Clerk Assistant: So we have tried to coordinate around executive Cabinet committee meetings which are on the schedule as well, and there's not a lot of options really that are left for a chunk of time that's consistent every week.

I know that there's currently nothing scheduled on Mondays, Tuesday mornings or Friday mornings, Friday afternoons; but the other time slots have kind of been – other committees are trying to coordinate with those other time slots, so it's kind of based on availability and what this committee is – what time they are wanting to meet.

We can certainly look at the calendar and try to make whatever work. It might just take a little more coordination with availability for committee members.

Ms. Bell: Chair, this is [audio malfunction] and certainly from our caucus we had advised the Clerk of availability and we're also flexible to – and this is a priority for our caucus because of the scale of the committee. So we were – I think I can speak on behalf of colleagues that we would prefer to see something on a regular basis, particularly given the scope of stuff we've just dumped onto the work plan.

Chair: Yeah. As Chair, it's my intention for this committee to meet once a week, any available time we have. There's a lot that we need to discuss and talk about. So this will be – in my mind, this will be a very active committee. We have a lot to talk about.

Tuesday mornings might be an option. We'll consider that. I will liaise with Emily, and we will talk about that. We tried to sit – this committee does not particularly want to look too much at Mondays, because Mondays is often a constituency day, but we'll have to prioritize that at that time. So –

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct)

Chair: Hannah Bell?

Ms. Bell: – substitutions in the event that there is a one-off scheduling conflict. But we want to see consistency as much as possible.

Chair: Would the committee entertain moving a start time back from 1:30 p.m. on a Wednesday to potentially 2:00 p.m. or 2:30 p.m.?

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct) Wednesday –

Chair: On Wednesday?

Yeah, let the record show that Jamie Fox is saying 'yes.' We will take that into consideration, and we will just have that as another option.

The other thing that I should mention is that as the Chair, I would like the opportunity – we had mentioned the Kings County Hospital – I very much think that this is a province-wide committee and we will have 10 sessions in the fall, hopefully, and in the spring as well.

What discussion point, jumping off point right now is, I would like to do four sessions on the road during that time; two in the fall and two in the spring to cover the Island. So it's up to the committee to decide where those sessions would be. I would just maybe like to get some feedback there if it would be okay. We would do two in the fall at various points. It's up to the committee, and then two in the spring.

Could I get some discussion on that topic?

Mr. Fox: The only thing I would recommend, Chair, is that we make sure we space across the whole Island.

Chair: So we will definitely – and it would be up to the committee, I guess. We will not make a decision without the committee’s input.

Mr. Fox: One more thing, Chair.

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: I have to leave. I have to be somewhere at 11:00 a.m. exactly.

Chair: Thank you for participating today, Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox: I apologize.

Chair: Great, no worries.

(Indistinct) discussion on potential different locations of the committee.

Ms. Altass: Chair?

Chair: Yeah, Trish?

Ms. Altass: One thing that comes to mind would be the health centre in Tignish. I’ve heard they are doing a lot of innovative work out there. It might be a really interesting spot – it’s a little far, but I think it would be wonderful to get out there and really see what they’re up to there and get some ideas.

[audio malfunction]

Ms. Bell: And just from a scheduling perspective, the road trip pieces may be ones where we are not on our regular day. It’s just if it may work better, particularly if we’re doing a further afield or we have to collect people from various locations. Some flexibility from the committee would be perhaps expected if we’re going to do something like a road trip.

Chair: Upon chatting with this committee, we had discussed, too, it could possibly be in an evening time to allow the public to attend and to bring up issues. So those road trips for the committee might just be in the evenings and we would come to a time and a date and a place together.

Ms. Bell: Chair, just for consideration that a number of us on the committee have young children. That again, sort of advanced notice for committee members to ensure that we are able to coordinate child care and things appropriately would be much appreciated.

Chair: Excellent, duly noted.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

Clerk Assistant: If I could just – on that, especially if we’re on the road, we’ll have lots of advanced notice because we’ll be booking things in advance. I would be in contact with the committee very early on about availability and what works for everybody. I just wanted to let everyone know that’s definitely on the radar for me in terms of coordinating on our end.

Ms. Bell: Thank you very much, Emily.

Chair: Perfect and as we’re getting ready to finish up, I’m just going to ask Emily to summarize the list which she was able to compile today. Obviously she was typing very quickly. But I do believe everything will be noted and she will go back and listen to the record and add any additional things, so I’ll pass it over to her.

Clerk Assistant: I did keep track of the priorities that came up under the new business. But I did hear when we were talking about the first piece on Motion No. 1, some good suggestions and if the committee was open to it, I could begin coordinating those pieces early on.

What I would do following the meeting is summarize everything that was brought up today and then maybe that could be our work plan list moving forward so that when other items are wrapped up, we’ll know where we can follow-up after.

What I heard on the wellness piece to start, maybe have someone from the department in to talk about their wellness strategy and also relating to what’s going on regarding senior’s wellness. It was brought up about vision and hearing testing, so maybe they could kind of do those two topics combined with the overall umbrella of wellness.

I also heard that the committee might be interested in having in Dr. Heather Morrison

on the topic of wellness and more-so related to vaccinations for children and adults. It also was brought up relating to mental health and how that affects wellness, to have the Canadian Mental Health Association in. So those are kind of a couple of groups that sounds like the committee might be interested in hearing from. If that is the case, then I can certainly coordinate with the Chair to start those meetings early in September.

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct)

Chair: Hannah Bell?

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

If I can just reiterate that in terms of sort of timing of things that are going to be relevant for the fall sitting, the disabilities piece which is around legislation that's already been tabled and will be likely coming forward, and that would be something to have that discussion prior to the fall sitting. Also, see the piece around the needs assessment and an update on the housing strategy overall are both time sensitive and obviously important to the public as well.

Minister Fox did raise, in terms of how we find priorities – and while everything is a priority in terms of the topics that we're hearing most often about right now in the public, then certainly the housing crisis is top of the list; and so the sooner we can have a fulsome conversation in this space on that and then advance before we get into the fall, that would be very helpful, Chair, and there are a number of people who we can bring to speak to that that I think will cross over into a lot of the other sections.

Chair: Would anybody like to speak on that? Right now, would the committee be in agreement to prioritize that as our priority need? That's kind of the question I'm getting at.

Sonny Gallant?

Mr. Gallant: Chair, in all due respect, are we not dealing with the housing crisis on another committee?

Ms. Bell: No.

Mr. Gallant: No?

Ms. Bell: No.

There's, I believe –

Chair: Hannah Bell.

Ms. Bell: Chair, I believe that there was discussion about a very specific aspect of it in Public Accounts; but it was recognized that because of the changing in the committee structure, that it is now specifically mentioned in this committee and this is the place for this to happen.

I would be happy if the Clerk would clarify, that my understanding is the Public Accounts chair is on our caucus and she had mentioned there was an audit aspect to it to be discussed, but not the policy aspect.

Mr. Gallant: Okay.

Chair: And that's good. I'm glad we're talking about that. Because I would have that same question. What is the – because the poverty committee is new, what would be the definition of the – but they haven't met yet, so –

Ms. Bell: Yeah, Chair –

Chair: Hannah Bell.

Ms. Bell: – the mandate of the poverty committee is actually about definitions of poverty in terms of the data that we collect and how we use that data to inform policy as well as the basic income guarantee discussion. Housing is likely going to show up in there, too, but not to the extent of what is the department doing, what are they delivering on and what update can they provide us.

I would be happy, though for us to have clarification outside the committee, but my understanding is, given the mandate, that this is the place for this. It sits under social development as a portfolio as well, and that is the aspect of this committee.

Chair: Yeah, excellent.

What we might do is we might invite the members of the poverty committee to – if we tackle that issue with housing, we would invite them to attend our meetings and be up to date on the things that we're discussing

here, because it's an important issue. We're just trying to figure out which committee was going to be responsible for that.

Does anybody have any other input on that as a priority?

So I might – do I make a motion?

Clerk Assistant: (Indistinct)

Chair: (Indistinct) in agreement, we can make that a priority. Is the committee in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Clerk Assistant: Another note is that regarding the PEI Human Rights Commission, we'll also coordinate with them to have them in to brief the committee on their work as well. So that's another piece that can happen in September.

Chair: Perfect, great.

Clerk Assistant: That's all from me.

Does the committee want me to read the whole list now, or I can circulate a summary after the meeting?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Clerk Assistant: Yeah, perfect.

Ms. Bell: Chair, would you like us to forward –

Chair: Hannah Bell.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Would you like us to forward any particular contacts or things for that list to yourself and the Clerk if we have specific people we would like to see called?

Chair: Yes.

Ms. Bell: Okay.

Chair: Yeah, any suggestions, and the committee will be the first to get any kind of

report on our scheduling and our priority. It's up to the committee to fill in the gaps and we will do our best to put the right witnesses on the floor and have an incredibly productive meeting and tackle some pretty important issues right off the bat.

So at this point, if everybody – this is your final call for speaking before the meeting is adjourned.

I'd like to thank all the visitors who came in today and the guests who came in and listened. I think it was a very productive meeting.

I'll look for a motion to adjourn at this point.

Ms. Bell: So moved.

Chair: Hannah Bell.

This meeting is adjourned.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Chair.

Ms. Bell: Good job, Chair.

The Committee adjourned