

Auditor General's Comments



Our 2025 Volume II report includes four sections:

- Emergency Health Services
- Implementation of *Weaving Our Voices Together*
- Highway Safety
- Status of the Implementation of Performance Report Recommendations

Emergency Health Services

Since 2020 there were over 400,000 visits annually to emergency departments throughout New Brunswick. We found that 66% of patients are not seen within national wait time benchmarks. We highlighted a lack of strategy to address these excessive wait times and data monitoring to analyze gaps and risk areas was not undertaken by the Department of Health. Recommendations have been made to enhance data monitoring activities and to evaluate and implement strategies to address excessive wait times.

Implementation of *Weaving Our Voices Together*

The Department of Women's Equality is responsible for coordinating the provincial plan *Weaving Our Voices Together*. This plan is in place to reduce violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. We found there has been a lack of accountability and urgency resulting in no more than 10% of the 39 planned actions being reported as completed within the two-year timeframe set by the plan. Recommendations have been made to Women's Equality to ensure adequate oversight, implementation, monitoring and reporting on progress of the plan's desired outcomes.

Highway Safety

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure is responsible for providing adequate highway infrastructure to ensure public safety. Transport Canada collision statistics indicate that in 2023, New Brunswick recorded the highest rate of collision fatalities per capita among Canadian provinces. We identified gaps in the department's oversight of highways, including those managed by public-private partnership operators. Recommendations have been made to improve planning, monitoring and maintenance processes to ensure safety risks are effectively addressed.

Status of the Implementation of Performance Report Recommendations

Our office performs follow-up work on prior years' reports to determine the level of implementation of our recommendations. We obtained confirmations from entities for years 2021, 2022 and 2023 and have noted 100%, 83% and 32% of our recommendations have been reported as implemented, respectively by year.

It is important to note that less than one third of our recommendations from 2023 have been implemented. The majority of the unimplemented recommendations pertain to the COVID-19 pandemic response. We encourage government to fulfill its commitment to implement these important changes to help ensure New Brunswickers are protected in the event of future unexpected emergencies.

Recognition

We would like to recognize departmental staff for their assistance as we completed our work for this report. I also want to thank my audit team for their dedication and professionalism in fulfilling the mandate of the Office of the Auditor General of New Brunswick.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" and last name "Martin" clearly distinguishable.

Paul Martin, FCPA, FCA
Auditor General