



HIGHLIGHT

Changes to the Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition (ERWC) steering committee.

Networking in Nature

- St. Mary's
- Burin

Stronger Together - Article from Mental Health & Addictions

Well-being Week Activities

Wellness in Action

- Community Wellness Grant recipients
- One Community Cricket
- Community Garden in Port Rexton

Well-being Fair Marystown

Grant Q&A Session

March Nutrition Month Virtual Event

Tobacco and Your Heart

New! Meet A Member Monday

WISHES FOR A HAPPY RETIREMENT!



This edition is dedicated to our outgoing co-chair, Tammy Greening who retired on January 1, 2026 after leading the ERWC for over 20 years. During her time as co-chair, Tammy has fostered the growth of the Coalition to the amazing network that it is today. Tammy's background as a social worker, her ability to connect with others, her skill in community engagement, and her kind nature is what has made the Coalition a success.

We thank Tammy for all her hard work, dedication and commitment and wish her a wonderful retirement.



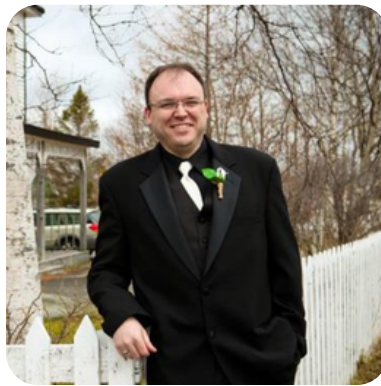
NETWORKING IN NATURE - ST. MARY'S

On September 23, 2026, we hosted a Networking in Nature session in beautiful St. Mary's. This event was unique, as it focused not only on strengthening connections among existing members but also on welcoming and recruiting new members to the Coalition.

Cont'd on page 4.

ERWC STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

We welcome Tracey Sharpe-Smith as the new co-chair of the ERWC. Tracey has been a part of the coalition for almost 7 years and is excited to step into this new role. As a social worker for over 20 years, Tracey comes to the position with the view that community is the expert in their strengths, abilities, and can find creative ways to create opportunities for growth through their skills, assets and knowledge. She has seen first hand the amazing things that can happen when we work with community and looks forward to supporting the ERWC members as they promote wellness where they live, work and play.



The ERWC extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to our out-going steering committee members Lorraine Brown, Executive Director with Mariner Resources Opportunities Network Inc. and Jim Miller of the Trinity Historical Society. Lorraine and Jim were members for many years and their contributions to the coalition are immeasurable. We thank you and wish you all the best in the future!

*Thank
You*



We also want to give a warm welcome to our newest steering committee member, Michael Cooper of the CLB in Port Rexton. Michael joined the steering committee this past year and we are grateful to have his experience and expertise in community based work on our committee.

MEET A STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER



I'm Michael Cooper, Commanding Officer of the Trinity East-Port Rexton CLB Company and the Regimental Programs Director. As of this year (2026) I have been involved with the CLB 40 years in various aspects with 20 of those years in Uniform. I currently hold the rank of Captain.

A little about me. I live in Trinity East (just outside Port Rexton) on the Bonavista Peninsula after growing up here as a teenager. I currently work for the town of Port Rexton as the Waste and Maintenance Manager. I am a Manager by trade holding the CIM designation (Certified in Management). My family has all been involved in the CLB in different roles (3 generations!). My work career has been interesting, from working in small communities of the high Arctic, the big cities, to even trade shows down in Las Vegas. I bring my unique "outside the box" thinking to the Steering Committee.

Who is the CLB? The CLB (Church Lads Brigade) is NL's oldest youth organization starting way back in 1892. My CLB Company itself was formed on September 4, 1912! Some interesting tidbits about the CLB... We are a totally volunteer based Organization and we are the only Organization left of the 5 that came together to form the NL Regiment in WW1. You can find out more interesting information about us by visiting our Archives and Museum in the CLB Armoury in St. John's or by our website www.theclb.ca

How did I get involved with ERWC? My first experience with the Wellness Coalition was meeting the former Co-Chair Tammy at the partner table for Physical Literacy for Communities-Port Rexton. Working on that program, we both realized our programs really match up well...with the CLB's "Be The Good" and "Fight The Good Fight" programs lining up extremely well with ERWC's.

Our Current Programs... Thanks to the ERWC Wellness Grant, we took over an abandoned Community Garden and repaired/upgraded it. It is now a youth teaching Garden and all items grown are donated to those in need. 2025, we grew enough to create 124 soup kit bags with fresh grown vegetables! Our other big projects...The Little Free Pantry program which is expanding on the Bonavista Peninsula and just recently get listed on NL's 211 system in the area of Food Insecurity. Also, we do a program with other youth and Seniors groups called Generations United where the youth and seniors teach each other all kinds of things with great social interaction and lots of laughs!

Why join ERWC? ERWC for its members has amazing networking and support programs, that's what really got me personally involved. Once involved, you become part of a big Community Family and as Henry Ford said "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

NETWORKING IN NATURE IN ST. MARY'S BAY

Our Steering Committee members, David and Michelle Fagan of the Battery Restoration Park Committee, welcomed us to St. Mary's in September for a day of networking. The event brought together a wonderful mix of current Coalition members from the area, programs such as Food First NL, NL Smokers' Helpline, and Communities Against Violence, as well as local groups and organizations interested in learning more about the Coalition. It was a great day of sharing and connection, and we were pleased to welcome several new groups into the network as a result.

Networking in Nature

Join us for a day of networking and sharing in the community of St. Mary's - located on the "Irish Loop" and home of Diver Davey Dobbin.

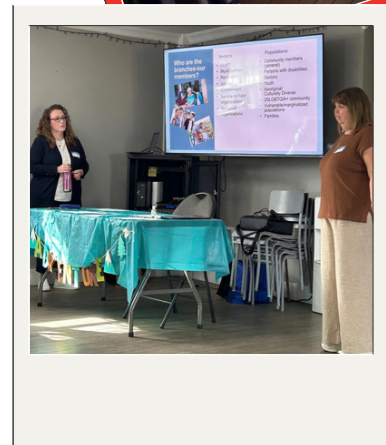
- Take a visit to the Battery Restoration Park
wear comfortable footwear
- Hear about other Community stories!
- Network with other community groups
- Learn more about Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition

EVENT DATE
September 23rd, 2025
10:30AM - 2:00PM

Register by 12:00PM Sept. 18th
by emailing leslie.clark@easternhealth.ca
or calling 752-4907

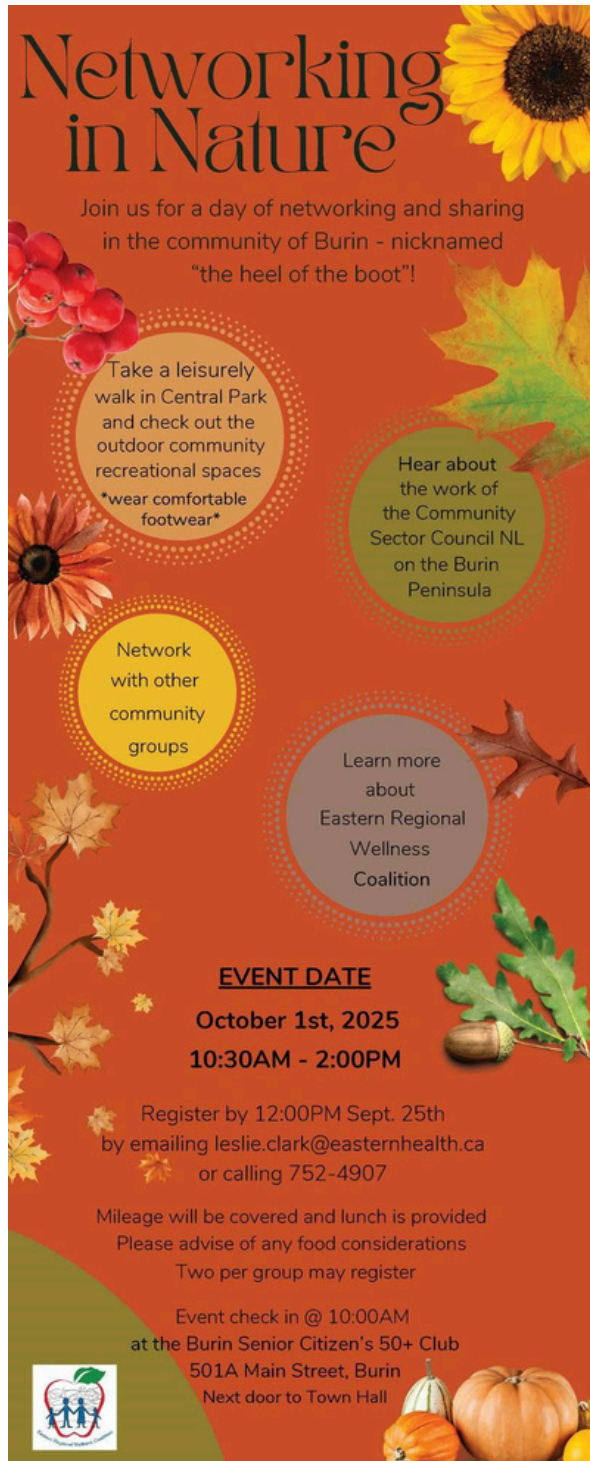
Mileage will be covered and lunch is provided
Please advise of any food considerations
Two per group may register

Event check in @ 10:00AM
at St. Mary's Town Hall
25 Main Road



NETWORKING IN NATURE IN BURIN

In October we went on the road again seeking opportunities for connection in the Burin Peninsula. Our two steering committee members, Brenda Sheppard with Brighter Futures and Stephanie Janes with the Community Sector Council helped facilitate a beautiful networking event which saw local community groups, the Town of Burin and local NLHS staff come together to learn about the programs and services available in their area as well as the opportunities to connect through the Coalition. Brenda opened our day by sharing with us Indigenous learnings of smudging and drumming, setting a meaningful and reflective tone for a day of connection and learning.



Networking in Nature

Join us for a day of networking and sharing in the community of Burin - nicknamed "the heel of the boot"!


- Take a leisurely walk in Central Park and check out the outdoor community recreational spaces
wear comfortable footwear
- Hear about the work of the Community Sector Council NL on the Burin Peninsula
- Network with other community groups
- Learn more about Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition

EVENT DATE
October 1st, 2025
10:30AM - 2:00PM

Register by 12:00PM Sept. 25th by emailing leslie.clark@easternhealth.ca or calling 752-4907

Mileage will be covered and lunch is provided
Please advise of any food considerations
Two per group may register

Event check in @ 10:00AM at the Burin Senior Citizen's 50+ Club
501A Main Street, Burin
Next door to Town Hall



STRONGER TOGETHER: COMMUNITY ACTIONS THAT SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND PREVENT SUBSTANCE USE HARMS

The Ripple Effect

When Jean first joined the community walking group, she thought she was simply looking for a bit of exercise. What she didn't expect was how much it would change her week.

Each Wednesday morning, a small group gathers at the recreation center — neighbors, retirees, and a few people who had never met before. They walk, talk, laugh, and check in on one another.

For some, it's exercise. For others, it's the one time that week they leave the house and connect with others.

What may seem like a simple activity can have a powerful ripple effect on mental health and well-being. Sometimes the most meaningful support for mental health don't come from formal services — they come from simple opportunities for people to connect.



What is Addictions Prevention & Mental Health Promotion?

When people hear the term mental health promotion, they sometimes think about counselling or clinical services. In reality, mental health promotion happens every day in our communities through the ways we connect, support one another, and create environments where people feel valued and included.

Mental health promotion and substance use prevention often go hand in hand. When communities create opportunities for connection, belonging, and skill-building, they strengthen mental health while also helping prevent substance use harms.

Communities can support well-being in many ways, including:

- Walking groups and outdoor recreation activities
- Community meals and social gatherings
- Volunteer opportunities
- Community gardens and shared projects

These activities help reduce isolation, build relationships, and strengthen a sense of belonging.

Communities can also help people build resilience and healthy coping skills through programs such as:

- Parenting workshops and family programs
- Youth leadership initiatives
- Creative arts programs
- Stress-management or wellness activities

When people develop healthy ways to cope with stress and life's challenges, they are less likely to turn to substances as a way to manage difficult emotions.

Promoting mental health and preventing substance use harms does not always require large programs or specialized services. Often, it begins with simple actions that help people connect, build skills, and feel supported within their communities.

By investing in opportunities that foster connection, resilience, and belonging, communities can play a powerful role in supporting mental health and well-being for everyone.

Melissa Cormier, BSW, RSW, is a Mental Health Promotion and Addictions Prevention Consultant with NL Health Services supporting communities across the Eastern Rural region. She works collaboratively with schools, municipalities, and community organizations to build capacity, promote mental wellness, and prevent substance use harms.

✉ melissa.cormier@nlhealthservices.ca

Learn More or Access Support

If you are interested in learning more about mental health promotion, addictions prevention, or available supports in Newfoundland and Labrador, the following resources may be helpful:

- **Bridge the Gapp** – An online mental health and addictions resource that connects people in Newfoundland and Labrador to self-help tools, local services, and wellness information. <https://nl.bridgethegapp.ca>
- **BreathingRoom™** – A free online program designed to help youth and young adults learn practical strategies to manage stress, anxiety, and depression. <https://nl.bridgethegapp.ca>
- **811 HealthLine** – Provides access to mental health and addictions information and can help connect individuals to appropriate services and supports across the province. <https://www.811healthline.ca> or dial 811

WELL-BEING WEEK ACTIVITIES

The ERWC sponsored 5 micro grants for Well-Being week 2025. Recipients included the Earhart's 50+ Club, Bellevue Silver Belles 50+ Club, Town of Rencontre East, Town of Marystown and Marysvalle Conception Bay 50+ Seniors Group. Check out the article below from the Town of Marystown on how they celebrated Well-Being Week with their micro grant.

As part of last year's Well-Being Week, our Recreation Department hosted a community walk along the scenic Jane's Pond Walking Trail on September 24, 2025. The walk brought together participants of all ages, including members of a daycare centre and other community members. Following the walk, the participants gathered to enjoy light snacks and refreshments, creating an opportunity for connection and conversation. The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive. Many attendees shared how much they appreciated the chance to get outside, enjoy some fresh air, and engage in meaningful social interaction.

Some expressed that it helped brighten what had otherwise been a lonely day. The children from the daycare especially enjoyed the experience. Their teachers noted that the group spent the afternoon talking about the fun they had, as well as the things they observed and learned along the trail. It was a heartwarming and successful event that highlighted the importance of community connection, outdoor activity and overall well-being.

Submitted by: Debbie Fitzpatrick

Director of Facilities, Recreation and
Community Services
Town of Marystown

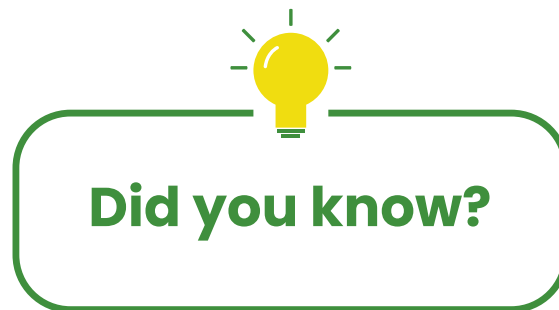


WELLNESS IN ACTION - COMMUNITY GRANTS

The EWRC funded 16 community wellness grants between October 2025 and February 2026. You can read about all the projects on our website at <https://easternwellnesscoalition.com/awarded-grants>.

Congrats to:

- The Association for New Canadians, Clarendville Chapter – “One Community Cricket”
- Carbonear Academy – “Utopia Club Expansion”
- Discovery Collegiate – “Fall Fitness”
- Freshwater Community Centre – “Oaks & Acorns”
- Holy Name of Mary Academy – “Wellness for All”
- Point May Recreation – “Re-Start Softball”
- Town of Harbour Grace – “Zumba & Yoga for Seniors”
- Bishop White School - “Room to Grow Sensory Update”
- Port Blandford Horticultural Society - “The Zen Zone”
- The Loft Clarendville - “The Nourish and Flourish Cafe”
- The Town of Clarendville - “Clarendville Community Collective”
- Town of Southern Harbour - “Ageless Grace”
- Roncalli Central High - “Growing Food, Communities and Well-Being”
- Town of South River - “South River Community Garden”
- Tricentia Academy - “A Community Feast”



The Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition has an active Facebook group! Any member of a group/organization that is a member of the Coalition is welcomed to join the group. Simply search for the coalition on Facebook and answer a couple of questions.

The group is a great way to get timely information on the activities of the coalition, funding information, and we even have fun contests where you can win prizes!

As of April 2026, we have **231** members in our group!

One Community Cricket

Association for New Canadians (ANC) – Clarenville, in partnership with The Loft: Community Youth Network, Cricket NL, and ERWC, was proud to host a recent community event for the Clarenville area, bringing residents together for a day of connection, engagement, and shared experiences. The event saw a great turnout, with community members of all ages participating in activities that celebrated local spirit and strengthened relationships. Participants traveled from Clarenville and surrounding areas, including St. John's and Grand Falls-Windsor, to take part in the event. Newcomers from India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka also joined in, sharing their love of cricket with local residents and adding to the event's vibrant cultural exchange.

Thanks to ERWC funding, ANC was able to enhance the experience by bringing in instructors from Cricket NL, providing healthy snacks, and purchasing cricket equipment suitable for all ages. These additions created a fun, active environment and introduced many participants to a new sport. As a result of the event, cricket enthusiasts and beginners in the community came together to form a cricket group to continue playing the sport and stay active throughout the year. ANC Clarenville is proud to support this initiative moving forward by providing the purchased equipment to the cricket group and local community organizations, helping keep residents active and engaged in the community.

ANC Clarenville extends sincere thanks to all volunteers, partners, and attendees who contributed to the success of this event. We look forward to continuing to create opportunities that enrich and support the Clarenville community.

Submitted by: Niyanta Wall
Executive Director
ANC (Clarenville Chapter)



How a Wellness Grant becomes a direct route to help those in need!

In late 2023/early 2024, our CLB Company approached the Town of Port Rexton about restoring the abandoned Community Garden, which had been unused for nearly ten years. With the Town's approval and support, we applied for our first Wellness Grant in February 2024 in partnership with Vista Family Resource Centre and Bishop White School. The grant allowed us to repair garden beds, purchase tools, soil, seeds, and supplies, and begin revitalizing the space. Town support included two compost bins, and K-5 students helped paint the garden and signage, transforming the site into a 10-bed Youth Teaching Garden. In Fall 2024, the garden produced its first harvest, which was shared with participating families, the local food bank, and our newly launched Little Free Pantry Program. That same fall, a Community Award from TradesNL and fundraising efforts enabled us to add a greenhouse. In February 2025, a second Wellness Grant supported garden expansion, including new raised beds, a teaching bed, greenhouse shelving, and additional soil and seeds.



Despite an extremely dry summer in 2025, support from the Port Rexton Fire Department ensured consistent watering, resulting in an excellent harvest. During a time when most food banks on the Bonavista Peninsula were closed, the Little Free Pantry Program became a critical food access point. All 2025 garden produce was turned into 124 soup kits, which were distributed through Little Free Pantries and directly to individuals and families in need. The Wellness Grants helped transform an abandoned space into a thriving Youth Teaching Garden, strengthened youth engagement, and played a vital role in addressing food insecurity in our region. We are deeply grateful to the Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition for their support.

Submitted by: Captain Michael Cooper
Commanding Officer, Trinity East-Port
Rexton CLB Company # 3805
Regimental Programs Director

Wellness Day in Marystown

On November 17, 2025, the ERWC attended a Well-Being Fair held at St. Gabriel's Hall in Marystown. The event was coordinated through Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services programs in partnership with the Community Sector Council NL, with funding support from the Burin Peninsula Health Care Foundation. The day brought together a wide range of health services and community partners. It began with presentations focused on well-being and ways to support wellness at both the individual and community levels. Participants were also invited to take part in a meaningful cultural experience facilitated by Burin Peninsula Indigenous Cultural Connections, followed by a light lunch. Following the presentations, attendees had the opportunity to visit information booths to learn more about local programs and services, as well as provincial organizations available to provide support within the region.



Grant Q&A Virtual Session

The Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition and sister coalition, Wellness Coalition Avalon East, hosted a virtual Community Grant Q&A session on January 20th 2026. This was an opportunity for groups to learn about the grant program, get ideas on the types of projects and initiatives we fund and answers to the the commonly asked questions. We will host another session again in the Fall of 2026 before our next grant round.

Join Us For a Q&A!

Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition and Avalon East Wellness Coalition are hosting a virtual Question & Answers (Q&A) session on the Grant Program

Question

Hello, I am applying for a grant and looking for help and more information on the coalition grants.

Answer

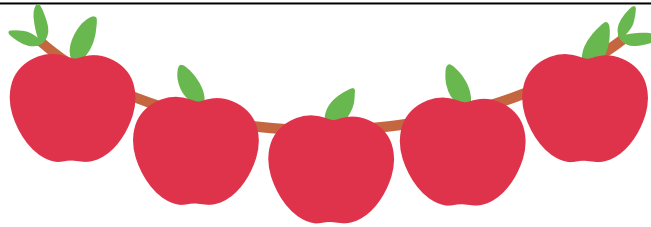
Hello, thank you for reaching out. This is great timing. We are hosting a virtual Q&A for the coalition grant program on Tuesday January 20th 2026 between 6:00-7:30pm.

Register by January 16th via email at EasternRWC@nlhealthservices.ca. Please provide your name, group, the coalition you are a member of and contact email.



Winter Wellness Warm-Up

The Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition engaged members in a Winter Wellness Warm-Up contest whereby we asked members to download our wellness calendar for the month of March, check off the activities they did and submit their completed calendar to have their name entered to win a prize pack. Thanks to everyone that took part, and congrats to the winner, Rosemarie Hiller of Fortune.



On March 19, 2026, we hosted a virtual meet & greet for members to meet the new co-chair person and 10 people joined live and the video and has since had over 200 views! Thanks to those that attended!

A vertical graphic for a Facebook Live event. On the left is a circular portrait of Tracey Sharpe-Smith, a woman with long, wavy brown hair. To the right of the portrait is a Facebook 'f' logo. Further right, the text reads "YOU'RE INVITED" in blue, "MEET & GREET THE NEW GO-CHAIR" in bold blue, and the Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition logo. Below this, three dark blue rectangular boxes contain the text: "TRACEY SHARPE-SMITH", "MARCH 19, 2026", and "12:00 - 12:30 PM FACEBOOK LIVE". At the bottom left, it says "Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition". The right side of the graphic has a decorative pattern of blue dots.

March Nutrition Month Virtual Event

March is Nutrition month

The Provincial Wellness Coalitions invite you to a virtual session on :

“GOOD FOOD, GREAT GATHERINGS”

Join us to learn how to make choosing foods for your events easy, nourishing and affordable. The session will be lead by Registered Dietitians.

March 26, 2026

2:00 - 3:30 pm EST
Zoom (link will be emailed)

Click [here](#) to register by March 23, 2026.



In March, the ERWC along with the five other provincial coalitions hosted a virtual session in March for Nutrition month. The session focused on helping community groups understand ways to provide healthy and nutritious food at community hosted events. Thanks to our Regional Nutritionist, Jill Wheaton of NL Health Services and Marissa Park of Eat Great & Participate for presenting!

Approximately 30 people participated across the province and overall the feedback showed that the session lead to an increase in confidence in being able to choose nutritious and affordable snacks and foods for community events as well as in increase in knowledge of the community and provincial resources available.

Please email EasternRWC@nlhealthservices.ca if you would like a copy of the presentation.

Below are the link to the resources that were shared that day:

- Health Information (HI) NL Health Services: <https://hi.easternhealth.ca/healthy-communities/capacity-building-resources-and-toolkits/healthy-eating-resources-and-toolkits/>
- Canada's Food Guide: [Canada's Food Guide](#)
- Free food safety course-[Register for Online Program](#)
- Eat Great and Participate: [Eat Great & Participate - Recreation NL](#)

Tobacco and Your Heart: Quitting Matters at Any Age

In Newfoundland and Labrador, tobacco continues to take a serious toll. About 1,000 people die each year from preventable tobacco-related illnesses, many involving heart disease and stroke. These losses affect families and communities across the province. February 2026 was Heart Month in Canada, which reminded us to focus on protecting and strengthening our hearts.

Smoking is a leading cause of heart disease. It damages blood vessels, raises blood pressure, reduces oxygen in the blood, and increases the risk of heart attack and stroke. Over time, arteries harden and the heart must work harder to do its job. However, this is preventable and some damage can be reversed. If you smoke, quitting is the most important thing you can do to protect your heart.

The good news is that your heart begins to recover after quitting. Within 20 minutes, heart rate and blood pressure return to normal. Over time, circulation and breathing get better, and within one year the risk of heart attack is about half that of someone who continues to smoke.

You don't have to quit alone. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about quit options or contact the Smokers' Helpline at www.smokershelp.net.

Every step towards quitting is a step towards a longer, healthier life.

Submitted by: Tanya Matthews
Health Promotion and Well-being
Consultant - WZ, NL Health Services

Recovery After Quitting Smoking

— What Happens and When —



20 Minutes

- Blood pressure and pulse normalize
- Hands and feet warm up



8 Hours

- Oxygen and carbon monoxide levels return to normal



24 Hours

- Risk of heart attack begins to drop



48 Hours

- Sense of smell and taste improve



2-3 Weeks

- Circulation and lung function increase



1-9 Months

- Coughing and shortness of breath decrease



1 Year

- Risk of heart disease is cut in half



5-10 Years

- Reduced risk of cancers and stroke



15 Years

- Heart disease risk is like a non-smoker's





Meet a Member Monday

Starting the first week of June 2026, we'll feature one coalition member each Monday on our Facebook page, with bios also shared in our monthly e-bulletins.

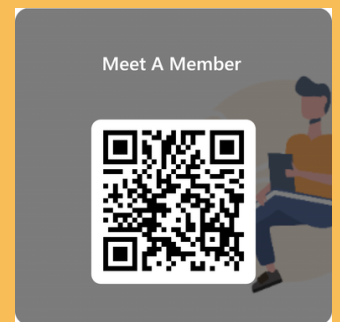
This is a great way to get to know our members and connect virtually.

Participating groups will be entered twice a year to win \$250 in discretionary funding.

How to take part...

We invite all members interested in introducing themselves to the other coalition members, to complete the Microsoft Form, which can be found by clicking [here](#) or visiting <https://forms.office.com/r/qPbeXPNSas> or using the QR Scan code:

You can also email EasternRWC@nlhealthservices.ca for a link to the form



WAYS TO CONNECT



New email

The ERWC has a NEW email address:
EasternRWC@nlhealthservices.ca

Phone

Tracey Sharpe-Smith
 (709)945-6531

Mail or Fax

Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition c/o Health Promotion Division NL Health Services -Eastern Rural Zone
 P.O. Box 70
 Holyrood, NL
 A0A 2R0

Fax: (709) 229-1591



Website

The ERWC website is great way to access our grant information, find a members, meet the steering committee and more.

www.easternwellnesscoalition.com

Thank you

Thank you to all that contributed to this edition of the ERWC Newsletter, *On The Road to Wellness*. If your group would like to highlight a wellness initiative that was supported by the coalition, please reach out to discuss your idea. The newsletter is a great way to demonstrate the creativity, ingenuity, and passion for promoting wellness in the communities in the Eastern Rural region.

Tracey Sharpe-Smith (she/her)
 Co-Chair, Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition