



5161 George Street
Royal Centre, Suite 400
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 1M7

Office of the Auditor General

Nova Scotia

AUDITOR GENERAL – April 2016 Report Released

In his April 2016 Report, released today, April 26, Auditor General Michael Pickup said there is little improvement over prior years in government getting recommendations from previous audits completed.

"A low completion rate, which is largely unchanged from last year, is disappointing."

Of the 400 recommendations followed up from 23 audits in 2012 and 2013 there are still 161 recommendations to be dealt with.

"While a 60 per cent completion rate is little improvement from last year's 58 per cent, it is encouraging to see six organizations have rates between 80 and 100 per cent," Mr. Pickup said. "These organizations should be recognized for this achievement."

Those organizations doing poorly on completion are keeping numbers unsatisfactorily low. For example, the Nova Scotia Health Authority and IWK Health Centre have completion rates of only 20 and 24 per cent related to recommendations to improve controls over Nova Scotians' personal health information. This audit was done in 2012 and plenty of time has passed to fix these issues.

Of the 23 audits followed up, five organizations had rates below 50 per cent.

"After more than two years to complete action, these organizations should have fixed more of the problems they know exist. They should also be held to account by government, the public accounts committee and all Nova Scotians for these unsatisfactory results," said Mr. Pickup.

Weaknesses which have not been fixed include:

- prescription monitoring to prevent abuse and misuse
- protection of health information
- hospital planning
- inventory controls at Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's mechanical branches
- oversight of occupational health and safety at Labour and Advanced Education
- child welfare management at Community Services

Although 93 per cent of recommendations made in 2012 and 2013 continue to be accepted, the auditor general disagrees with government's reasons for not completing 28 recommendations.

"The Department of Education and Early Child Development indicated it will not implement six recommendations from our 2012 home schooling audit," Mr. Pickup said. "



"Not improving oversight over home schooling means the department does not know if these children are getting a solid education."

The auditor general believes recommendations made to Economic and Rural Development and Tourism's Nova Scotia Jobs Fund are still relevant for the Invest Nova Scotia Fund now administered by the Department of Business.

"The recommendations to have sufficient controls over funding programs are relevant to the new fund, and are essential to any funding program," Mr. Pickup said.

For the first time, the results of the follow-up of recommendations from prior performance audits and financial reporting have been presented in a separate report. This is intended to highlight the importance of holding government accountable for fixing problems it knows exist in programs and entities.

"I will continue to provide a separate report on follow-up of prior recommendations," Mr. Pickup said.

The 69 page report is available at www.oag-ns.ca

FOR BROADCAST USE:

In his April follow-up report, Auditor General Michael Pickup says government's 60 per cent rate for completing 2012 and 2013 audit recommendations is unsatisfactory.

Government has had more than two years to fix the issues.

These include weaknesses in health care, education and financial matters.

Of the 400 recommendations followed up from 23 audits in 2012 and 2013 there are still 161 recommendations to be dealt with. Five organizations had rates below 50 per cent.

-30-

Media Contact: Darleen Langille
902-424-4108
Email: darleen.langille@novascotia.ca