



## Making Life More Affordable for Nova Scotians

Budget 2013 puts more money back into the hands of families, seniors, low-income Nova Scotians, and students.

Nova Scotians shared the challenge of getting the province back to balance. The province's fiscal discipline will generate a large enough surplus to allow government to reduce the HST by one percentage point in 2014 and another percentage point in 2015.

The province is committed to keeping the HST off home energy and other family essentials, fixing one of Canada's weakest student assistance programs, and helping thousands of people keep more of what they earn.

### Making Life Better for Children and Families

#### Budget 2013 will:

- fund insulin pumps for youth up to age 19 as well as supplies for insulin pumps for people under the age of 25—\$5.3 million
- expand dental coverage for children by four years by enhancing Nova Scotia's Oral Health Program, one of the most accessible dental coverage programs in the country. Starting in 2013–14, children aged 13 and under will be able to receive universal dental coverage for check-ups and treatment.
- expand newborn screening to include cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anemia, and eight additional conditions—\$1.3 million
- establish children's centres so families can access support services for their young kids and help them make a successful transition to elementary school—\$1.2 million
- continue to waive ambulance fees for Nova Scotia's most vulnerable citizens, allowing more Nova Scotians to have easier access to emergency health services—\$1 million
- continue to help Nova Scotians with the rising cost of home energy through the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (\$12.4 million) and Your Energy Rebate (\$104 million)
- maintain HST rebates for families purchasing children's clothing, children's footwear, children's diapers, books, and feminine hygiene products

### Making Life Better for Seniors

#### Budget 2013 will:

- ensure that seniors continue to pay less for generic drugs, and protect them against increases in Pharmacare premiums and copayments—\$4.5 million
- exempt more of the province's poorest seniors from paying provincial income tax and return a greater portion of income tax to more seniors. In the last four years, 17,000 low-income seniors receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement benefited from not having to pay provincial income

tax. This put an average of \$450 back into the hands of seniors who needed it most. Starting January 1, 2014, that number will increase to 25,000. An additional 4,000 seniors will also have a portion of their income tax returned to them through a new provincial \$1,000 non-refundable Age Amount tax credit. In total, 29,000 seniors will receive more income tax relief.

- help low-income seniors stay in their home by investing \$650,000 to increase the maximum property tax rebate by \$200, bringing the total rebate up to \$800. Of the 15,000 seniors already receiving this rebate, 4,000 will benefit from the increase.
- invest an additional \$2 million to allow seniors to hire the community support they need to stay in their homes, including help with transportation, meal preparation, errands, and yard work. This will bring our two-year investment in home care to \$24 million.

## **Making Life Better for Students**

### **Budget 2013 will:**

- invest an additional \$6 million in the Graduate Retention Rebate Program for new graduates
- invest an additional \$4.6 million in student assistance, for a total of \$45 million
  - increase the loan-to-grant ratio to 60/40—\$1.9 million
  - increase the maximum weekly student allowance to \$180—\$2.7 million
- encourage our advanced education institutions to become more innovative and competitive—\$25 million (over three years)
- maintain Nova Scotia's student bursary program to keep tuition at or below the national average in 2013–2014—\$28 million

## **Making Life Better for Those Most in Need**

### **Budget 2013 will:**

- increase the personal allowance rates for income assistance beneficiaries by \$17. With this increase, personal-use allowances have increased by \$47 a month over the past four years for a total increase of more than 22 per cent.
- provide more Nova Scotians with safe, affordable housing options through the province's first ever Housing Strategy
- minimum wage is now linked to the national Consumer Price Index, increasing by 20 per cent over the past four years to \$10.30/hour, as of April 1, 2013
- provide an additional \$24,000 in funding for Women's Centres, to assist with the increase in operating costs
- provide \$3 million per year to work with vulnerable communities to better understand flooding and reduce the risk of damages