LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORMS

For interviews

Research Project Title: Co-designing a community-informed social prescribing approach in Nova Scotia to improve health and well-being

Name of Principal Investigator:

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Name of Sponsor/Funder*:* New Health Investigator Grant, Research Nova Scotia

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

You are being invited to take part in this research because you:

- Work for a healthcare organization in Nova Scotia
- Work for a community organization in Nova Scotia
- Are a community member in Nova Scotia

All participants must be based in Nova Scotia, be at least 18 years of age or older, and be able to consent for themselves.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

The purpose of this project is to work with the Nova Scotian community to design a provincial, social prescribing approach for Primary Care that can support the needs of the community and investigate the impact of social prescribing on the health and well-being of Nova Scotians. Social prescribing is the act of identifying and referring people to community and social services to address social determinant of heath challenges (for example financial difficulties, food insecurity, social isolation, housing instability, and more). This design process will be done using a combination of research and community engagement activities. These interviews are one of the first steps of this community engagement and design process.

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO DO?

The research investigator will arrange a time to meet in a convenient and comfortable location (either in-person or online). Once you arrive, the researcher will review this invitation and the consent form with you and answer any questions. After you provide informed consent, you will be asked questions about yourself and questions about your experiences of social prescribing in Nova Scotia and potential ways it could grow or be supported in the future. Your responses will be recorded by the researcher. You may ask for clarification on any questions or pass on any questions that you prefer not to answer. You do not need to explain why you prefer not to answer any questions. The interview is expected to take around 60 minutes. You may take breaks throughout if you like. The total time commitment for this study is expected to be 60-90 minutes.

WILL ANYONE KNOW WHAT I SAID?

Only the research investigator will know what you said; however, your confidentiality will be respected and anything you say will not be shared. Any names will be removed from what you said. Any information resulting from this research study will be kept confidential. All documents, notes, sound recordings, and transcripts, will be identified only by a code number. We may use direct quotations from your interview when presenting the results (optional), however, you will not be named (unless you say that you would like to be named).

WHAT HAPPENS IF I CHANGE MY MIND AND WISH TO WITHDRAW?

Your participation in this study is voluntary and consenting does not waive any rights to legal protection. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. If you wish to withdraw, please inform the researcher that you have made the decision to stop participating in the study. You are free to pass on (i.e., not answer) any questions that you do not wish to answer. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you can decide whether you would like your data to be included in the analysis. Data collected up to the point of your withdrawal from the study will be kept for data analysis under strict confidentiality unless you notify us that you do not want your responses included in which case, all documents and files will be destroyed/deleted. If you wish to withdraw your data from the study, please inform us by October 1st 2025.

While they are not leading this work, the Primary Health Care and Chronic Disease Management Network at Nova Scotia Health is supportive of this study. Please know that if you work for, with, or interact with Nova Scotia Health in any capacity, your decision to participate or not participate will not affect any aspect of your relationship with Nova Scotia Health.

In the event that your responses during the interview don't match the eligibility criteria for this study, the interview will be stopped and your data will not be included in the analysis.

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL BENEFITS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There are no known benefits to participating in this research; however, the knowledge gained from this study may help to better understand how to best support a social prescribing approach in Primary Care in Nova Scotia. The approach that is designed from this project will inform the implementation of an approach across the province. You will be paid $75 for your time.

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL HARMS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

We do not anticipate any harms from this study. If you are uncomfortable answering any questions, you may pass on the question or withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences. All file names will include only your participant number.

WHERE AND HOW WILL MY DATA BE STORED?

All documents, notes, sound recordings, and transcripts, will be identified only by a code number and kept on a password secured SharePoint folder. You will not be identified by name in any reports or scientific publications. The data will be used to inform the design of a social prescribing approach for Nova Scotia Primary Care and for publication purposes only and will be kept for at least seven years after publication or completion of the study, after which time audio recordings and the master sheet linking your name to your participant number will be destroyed. The other information including the interview transcript (that will not be tied to your name anymore) and

interview analysis findings will be kept beyond the seven years for further analysis and combination with future study findings (optional).

COST TO PARTICIPANTS

The only cost to participants may be transportation to a comfortable and convenient interview location. The researcher will work with you to identify an appropriate location that is convenient to reduce the amount of travel needed. Alternatively, you can also participate virtually online. You will be compensated for any expenses you take on as a result of participating in this interview.

WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THE FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY?

We will present the grouped data to community partners to inform the design of a social prescribing approach for Nova Scotia Primary Care. We will also write a research paper which we hope to publish in an academic journal and present at a conference.

WHERE DO I GET MY QUESTIONS ANSWERED?

If you have any questions or would like further information about this study, you should contact:

Ellen McGarity-Shipley

Email: ellen.ms@dal.ca

You may also contact the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board with any questions or

concerns:

Dalhousie University Research Ethics Board

ethics@dal.ca

P.O Box 15000

Research Ethics, Office of Research Services, Halifax, NS, B3H 4R2

Tel: (902) 494-3423

Do you agree that you have received a copy of the Letter of Information for the research project *Co-designing a community-informed social prescribing approach in Nova Scotia to improve health and well-being*, have had an opportunity to read the information provided or have it explained to you, and have had all questions that you may have had answered?

Verbal consent to be given

Do you agree that you fit the criteria to participate in this research project? To participate, you need to be either be someone from a healthcare organization, someone from a community organization, or a community member. You must be based in Nova Scotia and be at least 18 years of age. to participate in this research project.

Verbal consent to be given

Do you agree to participate in this research project, understanding that you are doing so voluntarily, that confidentiality will be maintained, and that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point using the means outlined in the Letter of Information?

Verbal consent to be given

Do you agree to have your study data (with no personal identifying information) kept indefinitely for further analysis and combination with future study findings? (optional)

Verbal consent to be given

Do you agree to having any of your interview responses directly quoted for the purposes of presenting these results to community partners and the academic community? (optional)

Verbal consent to be given

Do you wish for your name to be presented with your quotations (if used)? (optional)

Verbal consent to be given