

Research Summary

COPD and Frailty

There are a limited number of places in Nova Scotia where breathing tests are done and as a result, Nova Scotians face long wait times. Without a breathing test it is difficult to get a correct diagnosis of lung disease, and most importantly to get started on the right treatments. It need not be this way. Elsewhere in Canada and around the world breathing tests are done in the community by trained personnel. This year, the INSPIRED program started a pilot project to see whether respiratory therapists could perform breathing tests in the community. In this study, the team aims to gather information from the pilot project and elsewhere to inform how breathing tests can be widely implemented in the community. Their goal is to develop a clear protocol to make community testing accessible and efficient.

To better understand how we can implement breathing tests in the community, the team will 1) summarize who is waiting for a breathing test, why they are waiting for a test, and how long they have been waiting for; 2) confirm that community testing being done as a pilot study is being done correctly, reassuring policy makers that the quality of test is not compromised if done outside the hospital; 3) count the number of people that were correctly diagnosed in the INSPIRED pilot program; and 4) determine how many people in the pilot project were prescribed the correct treatment before and after they did a breathing test. For each step of the study, the team will speak to people with lived experience, doctors, nurses, pharmacists and policy makers to ensure that all voices are heard and incorporated.

Performing breathing tests in the community can help to reduce wait times and ensure that Nova Scotians receive a diagnosis and treatment promptly. In turn, this work can lead to better outcomes and reduced healthcare costs.