



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

New NLMA President Dr. Charlene Fitzgerald releases Virtual Care Strategy

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St. John's, NL – Dr. Charlene Fitzgerald is the new President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association (NLMA). Dr. Fitzgerald is a family physician practising in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. She was installed as the Association's 94th President, following its Annual General Meeting and Virtual Care Summit in St. John's on June 1, 2019.

During the Virtual Care Summit, NLMA Past President Dr. Tracey Bridger spoke to delegates about the NLMA's new Virtual Care Strategy and how emerging technologies have the potential to solve many of the challenges in delivering health care.

"We believe that Newfoundland and Labrador's unique health system characteristics and challenges offer an opportunity for this province to become a true Canadian leader in virtual care adoption," said Dr. Bridger.

During her inaugural speech, Dr. Charlene Fitzgerald spoke of her intent to advance the NLMA's priorities within its Virtual Care Strategy during her term as President.

"As a physician in Labrador, I am all too familiar with the challenges that patients living in rural and remote communities face when it comes to accessing services. As our population ages and the occurrence of complex chronic disease increases, new and innovative ways of meeting future health system demands are needed. We believe that the delivery of virtual care will emerge out of necessity to address these and other pressing challenges," said NLMA President Dr. Charlene Fitzgerald.

Evidence has demonstrated that virtual care technologies have the potential to improve access, medication adherence and health outcomes, while at the same time reducing hospital admissions, acute care utilization, ER visits, unnecessary referrals, the burden of travel for patients, and overall costs to the system.

"Our next steps will be engaging in collaboration with government partners and other health system stakeholders to ensure that virtual care policies unfold in a timely way and deliver the promise and potential that early evidence is suggesting," said Dr. Fitzgerald.

"The NLMA intends to be at the forefront of building a stronger, higher quality health care system. As we proceed to adopt new ways of delivering care virtually, we will strive to always ensure we are putting the needs of our patients first," she added.

DOCUMENT: [NLMA Virtual Care Strategy](#)

BACKGROUND: [Dr. Charlene Fitzgerald Bio](#)

PHOTO: [Dr. Charlene Fitzgerald](#)

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