



**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

October 18, 2018

Dr. Margaret Steele
Dean, Faculty of Medicine
Memorial University of Newfoundland
300 Prince Philip Drive
St. John's, NL
A1B 3V6

Dear Dr. Steele:

I am writing to inform you of the intention of the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association to represent academic physicians in negotiating with Memorial University a new model of compensation. Today we have notified all NLMA members who we know to be associated with the Faculty of Medicine of our intention, and we are initiating membership meetings to discuss how this process will unfold.

We believe NLMA representation is critical to any initiative aimed at replacing or modifying the current compensation scheme. Academic physicians are not adequately represented without a collective voice. They have no meaningful influence under individual contracts when Memorial decides to alter these arrangements, as was shown by the recent termination of the GFT model of compensation. The academic physicians have also been significantly impacted by government's recent action to unilaterally alter the payment in lieu of benefits for clinical work. These doctors need a greater degree of certainty about how their compensation will be affected in the future, and this can only occur through a binding agreement arrived at through a process of negotiation.

We recognize that Memorial has legitimate objectives in seeking a new model of compensation. The NLMA and academic physicians wish to be collaborative partners in ensuring an accountable, innovative and thriving medical school. This objective is advanced when physicians negotiate their compensation arrangements as partners.

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For your reference, the Medical Act authorizes the NLMA to “act on behalf of its members or a group or section or division of its members, and negotiate for, and on their behalf, with other persons or agencies, including government agencies.” We have advised MUNFA regarding our intentions so that it has a clear understanding this process remains separate from collective bargaining for other university faculty. Physicians in the Faculty of Medicine were not part of the certification order establishing academic labour relations at Memorial, and we do not propose to alter this situation. We have also notified Medical Practice Associates of our intentions and we will maintain an ongoing dialogue with them to ensure their interests are properly understood and incorporated into the process.

We wish to initiate a discussion with you and other representatives of Memorial University as appropriate to reach an agreement that contains the important and necessary components of academic compensation to replace the previous system of individual contracts. This process would be separate from the Memorandum of Agreement with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. However, we recognize the important level of coordination that must occur with the Eastern Regional Health Authority, and possibly other health authorities, as well as the fiscal environment in which the Faculty must operate, so we are open to unique arrangements that achieve the right balance of interest for all parties.

Our research shows that models for academic compensation vary in nature and scope across the country. We enter these discussions with an open mind as to how the new arrangements should operate, cognizant that our members must have a binding agreement covering essential broad components. It is recognized that Memorial requires flexibility to undertake the business of the Faculty and adjust work requirements from time to time in new directions. We have reviewed academic funding and compensation models in other provinces and are prepared to engage with Memorial on additional exploration. We hope that Memorial will recognize the benefits of an orderly and focused negotiation with a single organization.

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It is our intention that academic physicians will guide and participate in the negotiating process within a framework of support and assistance from the NLMA. A final agreement would, of course, be executed by the NLMA on behalf of the physicians. The NLMA does not seek to represent management positions within Memorial University, so it will be necessary to have a preliminary discussion about which positions are within the scope of these negotiations. It will also be necessary to define the full array of physician positions in the Faculty that are captured by negotiations, given that varying levels of work are performed by full time positions, specific task-oriented stipended positions, and non-compensated community teaching positions. As well, it will be necessary to determine whether Memorial wishes to transition existing compensation arrangements to the new compensation model, as such an intention will require consideration of a separate one-time agreement on fair arrangements to achieve this objective.

In the coming days and weeks we will be holding meetings with our members to explain our intentions and to seek input regarding the structure and process to implement a negotiations process with Memorial. In short order we will identify our single point of contact so that all communications can be channeled appropriately. We ask that you respect the relationship that we have with our members in this regard and direct your communication regarding new compensation arrangements to the NLMA. For the time being such communication should be directed to Robert Thompson, Executive Director.

Given that Memorial University is the legal entity with whom the NLMA will be negotiating, I am copying this letter to the President of the University. Also, given the significant intersection of interests with Eastern Health, I am copying its Chief Executive Officer. We would be pleased to hear from you regarding Memorial's single point of contact for these discussions.

Sincerely,



Tracey Bridger, M.D., FRCP(C)
President

cc *Dr. Gary Kachanoski*
Mr. David Diamond