



**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

Doctors release vision for tackling problems in Family Medicine

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St. John's, NL – Today, leaders of the three organizations that represent family doctors in Newfoundland and Labrador released a 10-year vision that sets out solutions for the problems facing family medicine in the province.

“Family medicine in this province is at a crossroads. Our health care system is not prepared to meet the increasing demands of an aging, sick population with complex medical needs. More than 50,000 people in this province have no family doctor and many of those who do are experiencing long wait times. We also have an aging physician workforce and we are not retaining enough of our own medical graduates in family medicine to meet the needs of the population,” said NLMA President Dr. Lynn Dwyer.

“We need a plan for family medicine to meet the growing demand for services and to ensure our graduates want to stay and work here. Right now, the health system has no plan and more and more family doctors are feeling a lack of respect and support from government,” said Dr. Dwyer.

The NLMA, the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Family Physicians (NLCFP) and Memorial University's Discipline of Family Medicine issued their joint report *Family Medicine in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Ten Year Vision* to coincide with World Family Doctor Day that was celebrated on Saturday, May 19th.

“At Memorial, we focus on training family medicine students and residents in a distributed manner to assist with the recruitment and retention of comprehensive family physicians serving the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The best outcomes for patients occur when they have long-term relationships with their family physicians. We want to build a better health system in which our graduates can practice as they have been trained and every citizen will have access to a family physician as part of the primary care team they require,” said Dr. Katherine Stringer, Chair of the Discipline of Family Medicine at Memorial University.

The three organizations released their shared vision as part of a provincial Family Medicine Awareness Day that included presentations to each of the province's political parties, as well as medical students and family medicine residents at Memorial University.

“Family physicians are the foundation of primary health care. They must feel supported as they strive to provide the best possible patient care to all citizens of the province. This is the core mandate of the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Family Physicians, through advocacy, research, leadership and education,” said NLCFP President Dr. Nicole Stockley.

“We are proud to present this vision paper in partnership with both the NLMA and the Discipline of Family Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland. We are confident that it outlines many of the issues confronting our family physicians, and provides a roadmap for the future of patient-centred primary care in Newfoundland and Labrador,” said Dr. Stockley.

The 10-year vision calls for a respectful relationship between government and family physicians, as well as the creation of an entirely new payment model that recognizes the needs of patients and the nature of delivering comprehensive family medicine. It also calls for increased use of primary health care teams, increased availability of technology, better use of resources, physician human resource planning, and the continued development of family practice medical education.

NEWS RELEASE

“The three organizations representing family medicine in Newfoundland and Labrador have come together with one message – the time has come for a plan to transform the delivery of family medicine in Newfoundland and Labrador,” said Dr. Lynn Dwyer.

“We want government to know that we are ready and willing to work together to achieve solutions that will ensure our patients receive the highest-quality health care possible. Patients deserve an accessible and sustainable primary health care system. They need to be assured that family doctors will be there when they need them.”

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[*Family Medicine in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Ten Year Vision*](#) (PDF)

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