



**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

**Number of NL residents without a family doctor approaches 99,000**

**For immediate release – September 14, 2021**

**St. John's, NL** – A new poll released by Narrative Research and commissioned by the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association, shows that 19 per cent of the province's population do not have a family doctor. In a province of 520,286 people, this equates to 98,854 residents without a family doctor. Previous polling suggested there were about 90,000 unattached patients in the province.

“The polling numbers are alarming and reveal a growing number of people without access to a family doctor. The numbers also confirm stories we are hearing on the ground from physicians and members of the public,” said NLMA President Dr. Susan MacDonald.

Narrative Research conducted the poll between August 9-29, 2021 using a representative random sample of 400 adults in Newfoundland and Labrador. The results are accurate to within  $\pm 4.9$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The polling shows the number of citizens without a family doctor is higher in rural areas of the province with 23 per cent in Central/Eastern and 25 per cent in Western/Labrador reporting having no family doctor, compared to 14 per cent on the Avalon.

The burden of not having regular access to a family physician also falls disproportionately on people with lower incomes. Among residents surveyed, 22% of those with annual household incomes less than \$50,000 had no family doctor. In comparison, 16% of those with annual household incomes above \$100,000 reported having no family doctor.

“Every citizen of Newfoundland and Labrador who wants access to a family physician deserves to have that choice. They should not be forced to settle for walk-in style care, which is episodic and provides no continuity over the course of their lives. Unfortunately, too many people in our province simply don't have that choice,” said Dr. MacDonald.

“It's time for government to address the problems that have led to our physician shortage. We need a physician human resource plan that is based on the needs of our population. We also need a recruitment and retention strategy that is focused on keeping our own medical graduates in our province. If government does not act now, the number of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians without a family doctor will soon be in the 6 digits.”

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**Attachment:** Narrative Research polling results

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TABLE NM4:

A family doctor is the doctor you go to regularly for your general health care needs. This would exclude walk in clinics where you may see different doctors each time you visit. Do you currently have a family doctor?

	NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR %	REGION			GENDER		HH INCOME			AGE			EDUCATION	
		Avalon	Central/Eastern	Western/Labrador	M	F	L.T. \$50K	\$50- <\$100K	\$100K+	18- 34	35- 54	55+	High school (or less)	Post secondary (completed)
Yes, have family doctor	81	86	77	73	78	84	78	82	83	72	81	86	78	82
No, do not have family doctor	19	14	23	25	21	16	22	18	16	28	18	14	22	17
Don't know/No answer	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	1
<b>WEIGHTED SAMPLE SIZE (#)</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE SIZE (#)</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>247</b>