

President's Letter

March 17, 2023



Kris Luscombe
MD, FRCPC

New Family Medicine Retention Bonus

Dear Colleagues:

We are pleased to report today that the provincial government has announced a new retention bonus for family physicians. The retention bonus represents an important and timely investment in recognition of the past and ongoing commitment of family physicians practicing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Family physicians will receive a retention bonus of up to \$25,000 for committing to a one-year return-of-service agreement with the province. Family physicians who practiced full time for the 12 months prior to March 1, 2023, will qualify for the full bonus, and family physicians who worked part time during that 12-month period will qualify for a prorated bonus. An application process is currently being developed and will be administered by the new Provincial Health Authority. More details are available in the government's [news release](#), as well as the attached Q&As provided by the Department of Health and Community Services.

As you know, there are acute shortages within family medicine that broadly span the community and our rural hospitals. As a result, access to primary care has become increasingly difficult for more than 136,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We are also seeing rural emergency departments temporarily close their doors on a weekly basis.

In January, the NLMA and provincial government signed a Shared Agenda to make improvements in family medicine, including measures to improve recruitment and retention. We also advocated for measures to prevent further erosion within the existing family medicine workforce. Today's announcement is an important step toward improved retention rates and represents an important signal to prospective physicians.

We are also very close to finalizing a new Blended Capitation payment model, which will include incentives for those who choose to enroll. In addition, we are working with government to finalize a new annual retention bonus for salaried family physicians who practice in remote locations. More details about these initiatives will be released next week.

The NLMA is pleased with how far the province has come to make family medicine a priority. These initiatives are in addition to improved compensation for physicians covering Category B emergency departments, attractive signing bonuses, additional family medicine residency positions at Memorial, and improved pathways for international physicians to work in the province.

While these initiatives are all positive steps toward improving recruitment and retention within family medicine, we recognize that additional work remains to be done. The NLMA is committed to fulfilling all priorities of the Shared Agenda.

We also recognize that today's announcement is a partial success and that more needs to be done to improve retention of all physicians in the province. This will be a priority for the NLMA in the upcoming round of negotiations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Luscombe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kris Luscombe
President

Newfoundland &
Labrador Medical
Association
164 MacDonald Dr.
St. John's, NL
A1A 4B3
(709) 726-7424
Or 1-800-563-2003
Fax: (709) 726-7525
www.nlma.nl.ca
president@nlma.nl.ca