

**Shared Agenda for Family Medicine
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the
Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association
January 2023**

Family medicine in Newfoundland and Labrador is challenged by the number of patients without family doctors, closures of rural emergency departments, and a physician workforce under stress, all issues that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Together the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (GNL) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association (NLMA) are committed to protecting and building the practice of comprehensive family medicine.

The 2017-2023 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between GNL and NLMA was signed on May 3, 2022 and brought forward a number of improvements. This includes renewed support for the Family Practice Renewal Program (FPRP), which we value as a key partnership supporting innovation in family medicine. The provincial government has also launched several recruitment and retention initiatives, an expansion of physician training capacity, and incentives to keep rural ER physicians in place while longer-term solutions are found.

Strategic changes to the health system are coming in the form of one provincial health authority with the implementation of the Health Accord.

Within this complex environment, the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) and the NLMA have agreed to publish this set of shared priorities in this multi-year Shared Agenda for Family Medicine. The Shared Agenda focuses our collective energies on high priority issues and projects that will result in permanent and sustainable improvements to family medicine in Newfoundland and Labrador. We believe the Shared Agenda will not only address critical issues related to the recruitment of new family physicians but will also contribute to the retention of our existing physician workforce.

HCS and the NLMA agree that select projects and activities have associated timelines, which we are striving to complete within the next year, including those associated with the new MOA. Remaining items require further analysis. Work to implement will commence at an appropriate time upon completion of this analysis.

Human Resource Forecast and Plan

- Complete the Request for Proposals process and work with the successful applicant to ensure realistic estimates of HR shortages, and strategies to address them, are included in the Health Human Resources Plan. **Target Date for completion of the plan: October 2023**

Collaborative Community Care Teams

- Establish a Blended Capitation model of payment as a new Schedule to the Memorandum of Agreement. **Target Date: November 3, 2022; Currently in Mediation.**
- The Department and the NLMA will negotiate a provincial template “affiliation agreement” which will be used by RHAs and community-based family practices, customized by the RHAs as appropriate for local circumstances, when establishing the Collaborative Care Teams. **Target Date: March 31, 2023.**

Recruitment and Retention

- Establish an Office of Recruitment and Retention, with a dedicated Assistant Deputy Minister, within the Department of Health and Community Services (completed); and ensure that the office is adequately staffed and resourced (ongoing), including a physician recruiter located within the Faculty of Medicine (September 30, 2022). **Target Date: Substantially Completed.**
- Ensure that incentive programs for family physicians will consider the balance of work between community practices and RHA-related commitments. **Target Date: Ongoing.**
- Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing program focused on physician recruitment and based on the brand “Extraordinary Every Day”. **Target Date: Ongoing.**
- Establish and resource a provincial physician locum recruitment program. **Target Date: January 31, 2023**

Administrative Burden

- The Department and the NLMA will inventory and take action on administrative burdens that can be removed from family physicians in order to improve workplace satisfaction, reduce stress and potentially help improve capacity. **Target Date: Inventory of Target Projects by February 28, 2023; projects completed by December 31, 2023.**

Competitiveness

- Finalize development of a new remoteness index for allocation of additional funding to salaried physicians in remote sites as committed to in the 2017-2023 MOA. **Target Date: January 31, 2023.**
- Complete a review of the methodology used to calculate Atlantic Parity to ensure physician groups in Newfoundland and Labrador are competitively positioned to attract and retain physicians. **Target Date: June 30, 2023.**

- Jointly fund and engage an external consultant to review and provide advice regarding an updated hospitalist model, including compensation, that considers the unique needs of individual facilities and the utilization of both RHA and non-RHA based providers. **Target Date: June 30, 2023.**
- Develop principles to guide compensation practices for family physicians who divide their time between providing primary care from their own community based practice in addition to working with the Regional Health Authority, to ensure that one part of the health system does not draw physician human resources away from the other part of the system. **Target Date: February 28, 2023.**
- GNL and NLMA recognize the value and importance of adjudication of MCP claims and the importance of compensating doctors for the insured service they provide to patients. GNL will ensure that physicians receive clear and plain language reasons for decisions to adjust or reject claims, and guidance for physicians on how to avoid future adjustments. **Target Date: May 31, 2023.**
- Finalize a permanent set of virtual care fee codes. **Target Date: February 28, 2023.**

Provision of Emergency Medicine Services

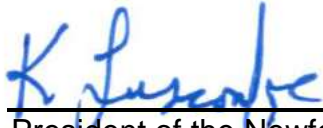
- HCS will continue to work with the NLMA on securing the sustainability of emergency medicine **Target Date: Ongoing.**
- As a measure to expand capacity in Category B health centres, develop a "short-stay" program to encourage physicians to come to Newfoundland and Labrador for temporary rotations. **Target Date: December 31, 2022.**

Unattached Patients

- Establish a virtual "primary care" program for patients without a regular family doctor or nurse practitioner. **Target Date: In Progress.**
- Expand the current pilot project of the Collaborative Services Committee of Eastern Health and RE-Boot FPN in which the Health Authority uses Patient Connect NL to assist new family practices to develop a roster of patients. **Target Date: March 31, 2023.**



January 4, 2023



President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association

January 4, 2023

Date