



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

**New poll shows 30% of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians
do not have a regular family doctor**

November 5, 2024

St. John's, NL – A new poll released by Narrative Research and commissioned by the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association, shows that 30% of people of the province do not have a family doctor. In a province with a population of 545,247 (as of July 2024), this represents approximately 163,000 people without a family doctor.

“The NLMA has been repeating this poll for the past ten years. In 2014, the percentage of NL residents without a family doctor was 11%. We recognize this is a sample survey and not a census, but it clearly demonstrates that we have had a persistent problem over the past decade,” said NLMA President Dr. Steve Major.

A new report released by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) on October 24, found that about 78 per cent of adults in Newfoundland and Labrador have access to a regular health care provider - the second-lowest among 10 provinces. The study defined “a regular health care provider” as “a family doctor or general practitioner, medical specialist, nurse practitioner or other health professional.”

In contrast, the Narrative Research poll specifically asked residents of the province if they have a family doctor. The Narrative Research poll also asked whether citizens have a family doctor they see regularly, excluding walk-in clinics and other types of episodic care where patients may see a different provider each visit (e.g. Teledoc, 811, Fonemned, etc.).

Earlier polling conducted by Narrative Research in May 2024, showed that 93% of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were concerned about the availability of family doctors in the province.

“The NLMA’s position has always been that every citizen of Newfoundland and Labrador who wants access to a family physician deserves to have that choice. Unfortunately, this is not an option for far too many people in our province,” said Dr. Major.

“We have been calling on the provincial government to release a provincial health human resource plan since 2018 to identify the appropriate number and placement of physicians and other health care providers in our health care system,” said Dr. Major.

“Until we have that plan in place and available to the public, our recruitment efforts will continue to be focused on filling gaps rather than planning for the long term.”

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Attachment: Polling Results

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NLMA

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TABLE NM1:

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

	NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR %	REGION			GENDER		AGE		
		Avalon	Central/ Eastern	Western/ Labrador	M	W	18- 34	35- 54	55+
Yes, have family doctor	70	80	67	49	69	72	57	71	76
No, do not have family doctor	30	20	33	50	30	28	42	29	24
Don't know/No answer		0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
WEIGHTED SAMPLE SIZE (#)	353	187	97	70	169	179	75	109	168
UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE SIZE (#)	353	200	91	62	154	194	61	119	173

Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probability telephone survey
Data Collection Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 3-7, 2024
Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Random sample of 400 adults in Newfoundland and Labrador aged 18+ years
Margin of Error	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall results are accurate to within ± 4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Margins of error for sub-samples vary by size and are available upon request.

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NLMA

TABLE NM11a-d: % TOP 4 BOX SUMMARY

To what extent are you concerned about each of the following in the province. Please use a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all concerned and 10 is extremely concerned.

	NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR %	REGION			GENDER		HH INCOME			AGE			EDUCATION	
		Avalon	Central/Eastern	Western/Labrador	M	W	L.T. \$50K	\$50- <\$100K	\$100K+	18- 34	35- 54	55+	High school (or less)	Post secondary (completed)
Availability of family doctors	93	93	92	94	89	97	88	94	95	92	98	90	90	94
Wait times to see a specialist	92	91	93	92	87	97	91	95	92	96	88	87	94	
Surgical backlog	87	86	86	90	84	90	78	91	92	74	93	88	90	
Emergency department wait times	86	86	86	86	83	90	76	91	89	78	88	88	81	88

TABLE NM11d:

To what extent are you concerned about each of the following in the province. Please use a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all concerned and 10 is extremely concerned.

Availability of family doctors

	NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR %	REGION			GENDER		HH INCOME			AGE			EDUCATION	
		Avalon	Central/Eastern	Western/Labrador	M	W	L.T. \$50K	\$50- <\$100K	\$100K+	18- 34	35- 54	55+	High school (or less)	Post secondary (completed)
10 - Extremely concerned	66	62	77	61	58	74	69	67	65	57	68	68	67	66
9	11	13	7	11	14	8	10	11	11	15	10	10	11	11
8	11	12	8	12	11	11	7	12	13	12	14	9	10	11
7	5	5	1	9	6	4	2	4	6	8	5	3	3	6
6	1	2	0	2	1	1	3	1	0	1	0	2	1	2
5	3	3	3	2	4	1	3	2	3	2	2	4	3	3
4	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0
3	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
2		0	0	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0
1 - Not at all concerned	1	1	2	0	2		1	2	1	0	1	2	1	1
Don't know/No answer	1	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	
WEIGHTED SAMPLE SIZE (#)	350	186	96	68	168	179	96	107	126	73	108	169	114	229
UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE SIZE (#)	350	183	90	77	171	176	94	106	127	67	111	172	111	231
TOP 4 BOX (7-10)	93	93	92	94	89	97	88	94	95	92	98	90	90	94
MIDDLE 2 BOX (5-6)	4	5	3	4	5	3	6	3	3	3	2	6	4	4
BOTTOM 4 BOX (1-4)	3	3	3	3	4		4	3	2	3	1	4	5	2
MEAN	9.1	9.0	9.4	9.0	8.9	9.4	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.0	9.3	9.0	9.1	9.1

*** Don't know/No answer' responses are excluded from mean score calculations

Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association Commissioned Results, Spring (Q2) 2024, Atlantic Quarterly Key Highlights

Methodology: Probability telephone survey with 350 adults in NL aged 18+ years | Results accurate to within +/- 5.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20 | Data

Collection Dates: May 14 - 25, 2024