



September 22, 2025

Dr. Cynthia Slade MD, FRCPC
President
Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association

Dear Dr. Slade,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association's request for our party's position on the most pressing priorities for physicians and patients. I value the leadership and expertise of the NLMA in helping shape the future of health care in our province.

For too long, access to care in Newfoundland and Labrador has meant a place on a waiting list instead of timely treatment. Rural communities in particular have been left behind, with closed emergency rooms, empty positions, and an exodus of doctors and nurses who have not felt supported. A Progressive Conservative government under my leadership will change this. Our vision is simple: everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador should have access to the right care, at the right time, without having to pay extra.

In preparing for this general election, my team and I have spoken with a number of doctors. Many of them have spoken of the administrative burden in our healthcare system. Physicians have also told us that increasing access to primary care would reduce emergency room wait times and provide better healthcare for all of us.

Protecting the Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre

The Janeway must remain a dedicated pediatric hospital, and I give you my clear commitment that adult services will not encroach on its specialized focus on children's health and rehabilitation. The Janeway is a cornerstone of care for families across the province, and its unique role must be preserved and strengthened. Our government will ensure the Janeway continues to deliver world-class pediatric care for generations to come.

Upholding National Standards to Attract and Retain Physicians

Recruitment and retention of physicians is a crisis that demands immediate action. Newfoundland and Labrador must remain competitive with other provinces, both in compensation and in working conditions. I commit to upholding national standards for physician services contracts and to ensuring our province is never left behind. We will create a comprehensive, publicly transparent Health Human Resource Plan that identifies which healthcare workers are needed, where they are needed, and when they are needed. This plan will be driven by accurate data and shaped with input from front-line physicians, so that it reflects not just headcounts but the reality of how many doctors are available to patients.

As a part of our plan, a PC government will refund tuition for graduates who stay and work in Newfoundland and Labrador. This will include doctors who graduate from University in Newfoundland and Labrador and stay in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our graduate tuition program will be designed to keep those trained in Newfoundland and Labrador here to help grow Newfoundland and Labrador - including growing the medical profession.

Improving the Work Environment within NL Health Services

Since the creation of a single health authority, too many physicians have raised serious concerns about morale, engagement, and fear of retaliation when speaking up. A Wakeham government will restore respect, transparency, and collaboration in our health care system. Physicians will be partners in leadership, not sidelined.

We will conduct a full review of MCP operations to reduce unnecessary paperwork so that physicians can do what they do best - helping patients. We will enable healthcare professionals to work to their full scope of practice to reduce wait times. Above all, we will listen to physicians and act on their advice.

Overhead Funding Support for Physicians in the Community

Community-based physicians play a critical role in the health care of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. They are often the first point of contact for residents.

We will support physicians with a full review of MCP operations to make sure that the MCP system is working.



To help new physicians set up community clinics, and to support physicians who already have community based family practices, a Wakeham government will introduce overhead funding support for physicians who provide services in the community.

We want to work with the NLMA and with family physicians to keep care close to home.

Commitment to Universal Access to Family Physicians

It is unacceptable that 163,000 people in Newfoundland and Labrador do not have a family doctor. Every person deserves access to a consistent primary care provider. Our plan will increase the number of medical school seats and bring home doctors currently practicing elsewhere.

We will support family physicians to set up practices in this province and give them the incentives and stability they need to stay.

Conclusion

In closing, I want to thank the NLMA for your tireless advocacy on behalf of both physicians and patients. Health care workers are the backbone of our system, and they deserve respect, fair treatment, and meaningful partnership in shaping the future. Under a Progressive Conservative government, decisions about health care will be based on consultation with front-line professionals, not dictated from St. John's. Together, we can rebuild a system where every person in this province has timely access to the care they need, and where physicians are supported to practice and to thrive.

Sincerely,

Tony Wakeham
Leader,
Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador