

Premier's Summit on Health Care



Participant Workbook


**Newfoundland
Labrador**

Purpose of the Discussion

In keeping with the Premier's commitment to hold a Health Care Summit focused on primary health care and disease prevention, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has spent the last several months engaging citizens and other stakeholders across the province to hear their thoughts and experiences about primary health care services and supports. The information they have provided and the priorities they have highlighted have been used to set the agenda for the Premier's Summit on Health Care.

Today you are being asked to help us determine how to turn the concerns and suggestions identified by citizens and other stakeholders into tangible solutions that can be put into action by government, the health sector and communities.

What is Primary Health Care?

Primary health care is the day-to-day services and supports needed to protect, maintain or restore our health. For most people, it is both their first point of contact with the health care system and the health services they use most often. Primary health care is not the specialized medical services received in a health care facility like a hospital or a cancer clinic. Visiting a local family doctor or nurse practitioner, discussing a prescription with a community pharmacist, and learning about ways to become more physically active or better manage a chronic disease are all examples of how Newfoundland and Labrador citizens access primary health care services every day.

Some of the providers who deliver primary health care services include:

- Chiropractors
- Counsellors
- Diabetes Educators
- Dietitians
- Family Doctors
- Massage Therapists
- Nurse Practitioners
- Occupational Therapists
- Pharmacists
- Dentists
- Physiotherapists
- Registered Nurses
- Psychologists
- Public Health Nurses
- Social Workers
- Speech Language Pathologists
- Health Educators
- Paramedics

The NL government spends almost
\$3 Billion annually
on health care approximately **40%** of the provincial budget.
At **\$5,124** per person, that is **\$1,180 more** than the Canadian average.

Primary health care encompasses a wide variety of services and supports delivered by a multitude of individuals. These services and supports include: addictions and mental health counselling, dementia care, chronic disease prevention and self-management training, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and supports allowing us to remain in our own homes or communities as we age. In fact, primary health care services and supports account for the majority of all contacts with our health care system. Effective primary health care services and supports are critical to our health and to the success and sustainability of our health care system.

What We Know

Over the past 15 years, Canadian provinces and countries around the world have made changes to the way primary health care is delivered. Greater focus has been placed on preventative services delivered in the community.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, we have made some changes to the way we deliver primary health care services, such as allowing authorized pharmacists to deliver influenza vaccines, but we know there is more we can and should do. We will learn from the programs put in place in other parts of Canada, but to move forward we want to know what ideas you have about primary health care reform.

We are asking you to help us identify the areas of primary health care that you think should be a priority for change and to suggest tangible actions to improve the delivery of primary health care services and supports. The questions in this participant workbook are designed to help you identify the changes that will improve primary health care in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Primary Health Care

Examples of Progress Made in Newfoundland and Labrador

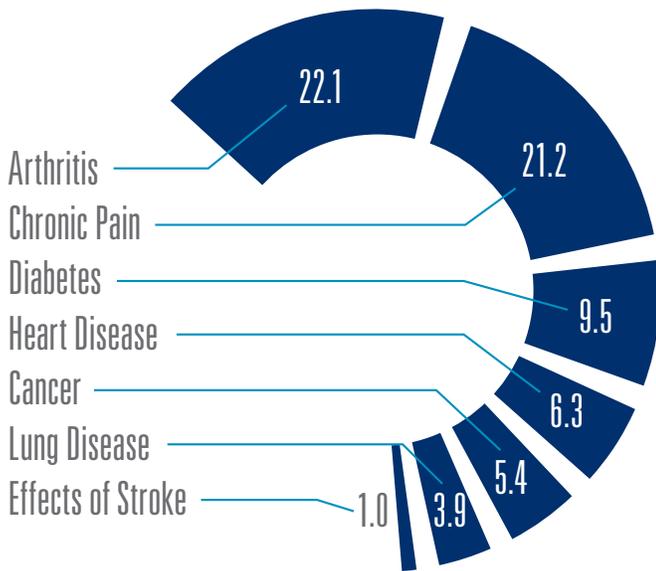
- The provincial Healthline is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, in every community. It allows residents to communicate with a registered nurse when they need health advice or information.
- The Province is working with the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association to introduce a program that will help family doctors reduce their wait times. The program will help to ensure patients are able to access urgent care when they need it.
- The Province's Chronic Disease Self-Management Program helps people learn how to better manage their chronic condition, communicate more effectively with their health care providers, and find ways to increase physical activity.



63% of NL residents over the age of 12 have at least one

Chronic Disease

Percent of Adult Population Affected in NL



Obesity 

	Newfoundland and Labrador	Canada
Normal	30%	47%
Overweight	42%	34%
Obese	28%	19%

100,000 people in NL live with a **mental illness**
70% of mental illnesses develop during childhood and most go undiagnosed

Interesting Approaches in Other Parts of Canada

- Ontario has encouraged family doctors to work together with other health care providers such as nurses, physiotherapists, social workers, and diabetes educators. Patients can access services conveniently in one location, and primary health care providers work as a team sharing information and coordinating care to meet the needs of their patients.
- British Columbia is encouraging patients to communicate with their family doctor using mobile devices and via telephone or email. The province’s health authorities have also teamed up with family doctors to move providers such as dietitians and diabetes educators from hospitals into community-based family doctors’ offices to improve access for patients.
- Nova Scotia’s Family Practice Nursing program is encouraging and helping registered nurses and family doctors to work together in the community to reduce wait times and provide greater access to a variety of services.

Topic 1: Access to Quality Primary Health Care Services and Supports

Discussion Question:

What actions should be taken to improve access to quality primary health care services and supports in our province?

What We Heard:

At our Regional Forums access to quality services and supports was a topic underlying many of the comments we heard. *Access to Quality Services and Supports* encompasses the following themes:

- **Coordination and Continuity:** Participants suggested coordination of care was lacking and provider turnover was often too high, leaving them unsure of how or where to access the full scope of primary health care services and supports.
- **Awareness of Services:** We heard that many people are unaware of available services, resulting in decreased access.
- **Proximity to Services:** Travel can create access barriers for citizens who are mobility impaired or for those who do not live close to required services and supports.
- **Wait Times and Hours of Access:** Wait times and inconvenient office hours emerged as an important access issue. Individuals frequently reported waiting too long to see a family physician.
- **Compensation Models:** Participants felt compensation models encouraged 'rushed' care and compromised the comprehensiveness of care.
- **Expanded Access to Nurse Practitioners:** Many participants would like improved access to nurse practitioners and other health professionals.

Topic 2: Collaboration and Coordination

Discussion Question:

What actions are needed to improve the collaboration and coordination of primary health care services?

What We Heard:

At the Regional Forums participants often focused on the need for increased collaboration and coordination. Collaboration and Coordination encompasses the following themes:

- **Coordination of Care:** We heard that there is a need for increased coordination of care, including a team-based approach to care which involves good communication and collaboration between different members of a client's care team.
- **Continuity of Care:** Participants emphasized the importance of developing long-term relationships with care providers.
- **Awareness of Services:** Participants suggested hiring patient navigators or care coordinators and ensuring providers have better awareness of available services .
- **Compensation Models:** Many participants felt the fee-for-service payment model does not encourage collaboration.
- **Proximity to Services:** Increased collaboration and coordination could help address issues of proximity – one suggestion, for example, to improve collaboration included developing a 'one stop shop' where all services could be located in one place.

Topic 3: Prevention and Promotion

NL Residents 12 Years+

76%

Don't eat enough
fruit and vegetables

50%

are not
physically active

20%

are current
smokers

27%

Consume 5+ units
of alcohol at least
once per month

Discussion Question:

What actions are needed to improve prevention and promotion?

What We Heard:

Prevention and Promotion was a clear priority of Regional Forum participants, with the following themes emerging:

- **Prevention and Promotion:** People emphasized the need to refocus on the social determinants of health, education, recreation, and affordable access to housing and healthy food.
- **Awareness of Services:** Participants expressed a need for increased awareness of disease prevention and health promotion services.
- **Community Services and Supports:** Participants lauded the accomplishments of Healthy Baby Clubs and Kids Eat Smart. They felt there was a need for more affordable recreation and physical activity opportunities, particularly for youth and seniors. There was significant support for the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and a desire for the addition of similar programs.

Topic 4: Mental Health and Addictions

Discussion Question:

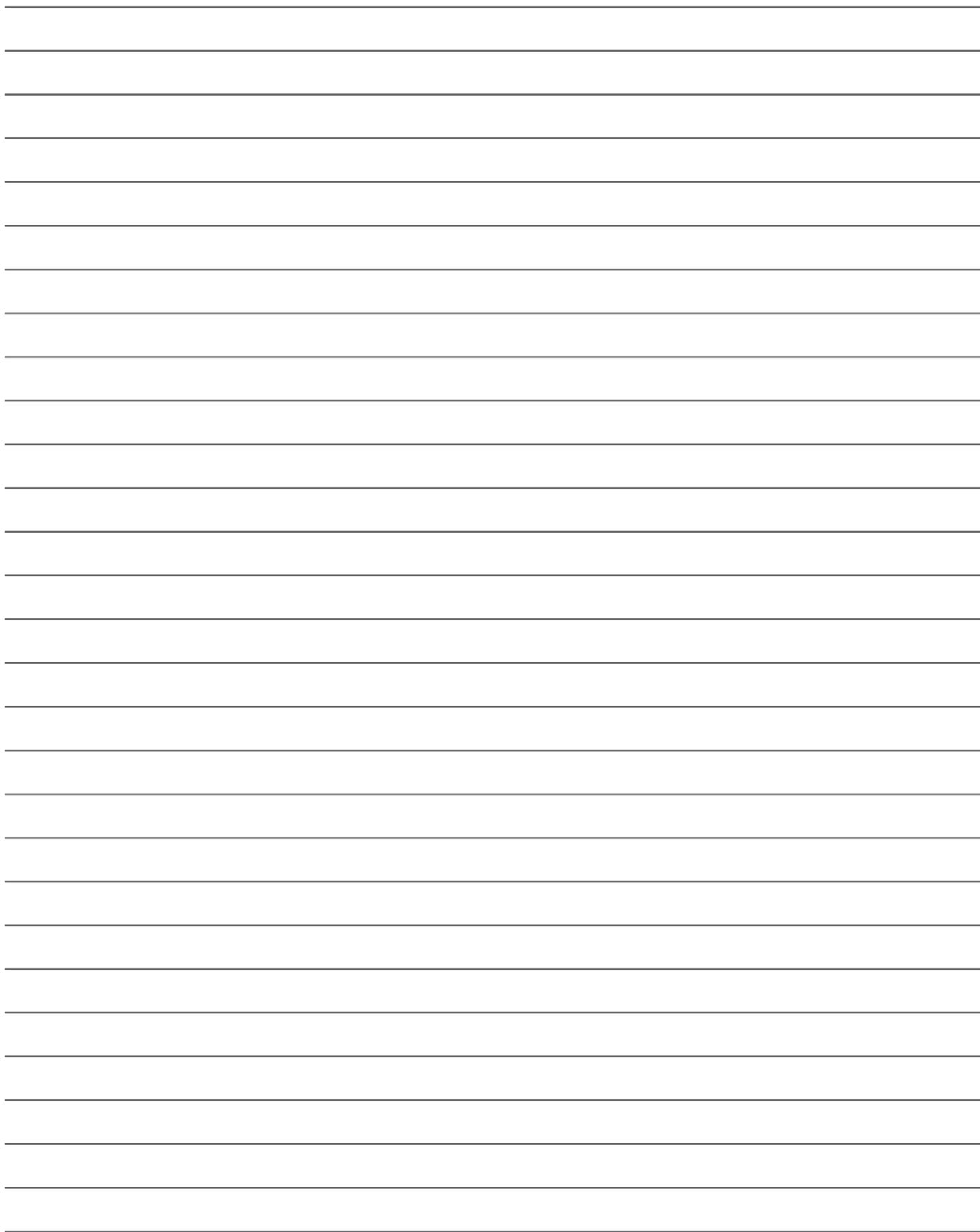
What actions could improve the delivery of Mental Health and Addictions Services in this province?

What We Heard:

During the Regional Forums, mental health arose as a key area of concern for many individuals. They felt that current access to mental health services is inadequate. Mental health was singled out by many participants as an area of primary health care delivery where there is room for significant improvement. Comments and concerns about mental health crossed many themes:

- **Coordination and Continuity:** Participants pointed to the importance of team management of mental health conditions.
- **Awareness:** Some participants noted a need for more education around mental illness and more open discussion of mental health issues.
- **Wait Times:** We heard that people want more services close to where they live and that the wait times for available services are often too long.
- **Prevention and Promotion:** Participants pointed to the need for more preventative services and supports for mental health particularly among youth and within the school system.





Phone: 1-844-729-6310

Email: healthsummit@gov.nl.ca

Web: www.health.gov.nl.ca/summit

PO Box 8700, St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

#HealthNL

