

Premier's Summit on Health Care



Purpose of the Discussion

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is asking residents to share their thoughts and experiences with respect to primary health care services. The information you provide to us will be used to set the agenda for the Premier's Health Summit on January 14th, 2015 and help guide the decisions government and regional health authorities make to improve our health care system.

What is Primary Health Care?

Primary health care is the day-to-day care 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 treatment received in a health care facility like a hospital or cancer clinic. Visiting a family doctor or nurse practitioner, discussing a prescription with a community pharmacist, or speaking with a registered nurse via the HealthLine are all examples of how Newfoundland and Labrador residents access primary health care every day.

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

- Chiropractors
- Counsellors
- Diabetes Educators
- Dietitians
- Family Doctors
- Mental Health and Addictions Counsellors
- 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.

There are many types of health care providers who deliver primary health care services. They provide services including: addictions and mental health counselling, dementia care, chronic disease prevention and management, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and support allowing us to remain in our own homes or communities as we age. In fact, these types of primary health care visits account for the majority of all contacts with our health care system. The effective delivery of primary health care services is critical to our health and the success of our entire 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 rather than waiting until people are so sick that they need to visit emergency rooms, have invasive surgeries, lose mobility, or require expensive medications.

Here 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 is most important to you.

Our health care system is always evolving and we know there are a variety of changes we can make to improve it. We want to find out how primary health care affects you and your family. What aspects of the current system work well for you? What do you think needs to change first? How do you want your services to be delivered?

We are asking you to help us identify the areas of primary health care that you think should be a priority for change. The questions in this discussion guide are designed to help you identify the changes that need to be made to improve primary health care in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Primary Health Care

Examples of Progress Made in Newfoundland and Labrador

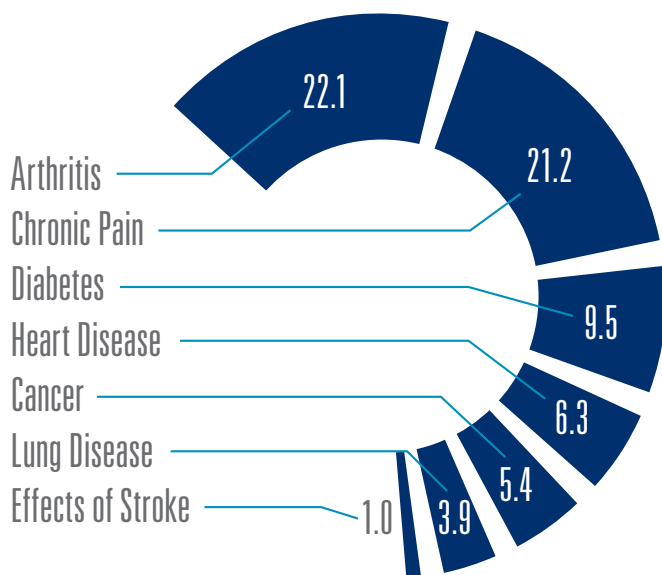
- The provincial Healthline is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, in every community. It allows residents to communicate with a registered nurse when they need health advice or information.
- The Province is working with the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association to introduce a program that 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 provider, 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 allowing 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 work together in the community to reduce wait times and provide greater access to a variety of services.

Topic 1: Access to services

Acceptable access to primary health care services could include being able to get services or communicate with providers over the phone, via email, videoconference, or visiting a provider in the evening or on the weekend. It could mean getting an appointment quickly when you have an urgent health issue or having regular appointments in a group setting.

Discussion Question:

What does acceptable access to primary health care mean to you?



Things to Consider:

- The variety of services available in or near your community
- How you can be made more aware of the services available to you
- The impact of access to primary health care services on your family
- The amount of time you wait to see a primary health care provider
- The distance you travel to see a primary health care provider



Primary health care is the day-to-day care needed to protect, maintain or restore our health. For most people, it is their first point of contact with the health system and the health services they use most.

Notes

Topic 2: Support to stay healthy and well

People who are actively involved in their health and health care also tend to have better health outcomes. Primary health care providers can support individuals in becoming better managers of their own health by helping them to set personal goals, identify potential barriers to achieving goals, and find solutions to overcome those barriers.

Discussion Question:

What kinds of supports or services do you need from primary health care providers to help you stay healthy?

Things to Consider:

- Your relationship with your providers and the things you and your providers talk about
- Types of programs and services available to you in your area
- Communication and coordination of services among health care providers and other supports and services in the community
- Your involvement in decision making and goal setting to maintain your health



Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease.

Wellness is an active process of becoming aware of and making choices towards a healthy and fulfilling life.

Notes

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Topic 3: Issues to focus on

Many provinces across Canada have made changes to primary health care to improve services for their residents. Newfoundland and Labrador has also made changes, but we can learn from the example of others as we continue to move forward. We want to know what key issues you think Newfoundland and Labrador should focus on.

Discussion Question:

What do you think needs to change in primary health care?

Things to Consider:

- How you find the different providers and services you need
- The way primary health care services are organized in your community
- Challenges you and your family have experienced
- The quality of services you have received
- The variety of primary health care providers available to you
- How you access the services you need to maintain and protect your health

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

Indicators of Quality Primary Health Care:

- Access to the services you need
- Continuity of providers and services
- Coordination between different providers and services
- Access to a mix of comprehensive services

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Topic 4: If it's not broken don't fix it

We know there are challenges in our primary health care system and there are ways to improve how your primary health care is delivered. However, as we move forward we want to make sure that we do not change things that are working well.

Discussion Question:

In what ways does primary health care work well for you?

Things to Consider:

- Your relationship with your providers
- Access to services in your community including the types of providers
- The types of services you currently use and value
- The quality of services you have accessed
- Positive experiences you and your family have had

Building a Relationship with Your Providers

Having regular primary health care providers who know you and your family's medical history can have a positive impact on your health. Building a relationship with a provider or a group of providers can also be beneficial because this allows them to know your history, when you've been sick, what lifestyle changes you've made to improve your health, when you've been to the hospital, what tests or blood work you've had done, what allergies or sensitivities you might have, and the types of medications you have been on and what goals you have for staying well.

Examples of Primary Health Care:

Addictions and mental health counselling, dementia care and chronic disease prevention and management from your nurse practitioner or family doctor, promotion of healthy lifestyles, talking to your pharmacist about the medication you take, and community supports allowing us to remain in our own homes as we age.

Notes

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Discussion Question:

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