



**NL Health
Services**

NL Health Services'

2026-29 Strategic Plan



Meet Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services Board of Trustees

NL Health Services is governed by a Board of Trustees. Board members bring different skills and experience and help ensure people throughout the province receive safe, high-quality care. Below is NL Health Services' Board of Trustees for the 2025-26 fiscal year as of March 31, 2026.



Ross Wiseman
(interim
chairperson)



**Lloyd
Walters**
(vice chair)



**Michelle
Baikie**



**Dr. Catherine
Bradbury**



**Sharon
Forsey**



**Edward
Goudie**



**Beverly
Griffiths**



**Dr. Colleen
Hanrahan**



**Tara
Laing**



**Dr. Francine
Lemire**



**David
Oxford**



**Hon. David
Peddle**



**Goronwy
Price**



**Dr. David
Sutherland**



**David
Thornhill**

Message from the Board Chair

It is my pleasure, with the endorsement of my fellow trustees, to present the 2026–29 Strategic Plan for NL Health Services in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, covering the period from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2029. This plan outlines our vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities as a category one entity and supports the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador’s strategic directions. NL Health Services’ 2026-29 Strategic Plan represents the next stage in our evolution as a provincial health authority.

Over the past several years, health care in Newfoundland and Labrador has gone through significant changes. NL Health Services brought together five legacy organizations, introduced new provincial structures, and made improvements across services. With this work now in place, we are beginning our first full three-year strategic plan as NL Health Services. This moment gives us a chance to focus on long-term goals that strengthen our health system, support our workforce, and improve the health and well-being of people and communities throughout the province.

Our employees, physicians, and volunteers have shown great dedication, adaptability, and commitment to patient care throughout this period of change. Their insight and collaboration continue to guide our efforts as we seek to deliver high-quality, consistent health services within a province that is geographically vast, culturally rich, and diverse in its needs.

We work closely with Community Advisory Committees, Patient and Family Experience Advisors (PFEAs), Indigenous governments and organizations, and many other partners. Their input helps guide our decisions and shape how care is delivered. We are committed to a health system that is inclusive, respectful, and fair for everyone. We know that people and communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador face different health challenges, and we aim to respond to their needs. As part of this work, we are building a culture of equity and inclusion across our organization. This includes how our employees, physicians, and volunteers act, communicate, and provide care. We are also focusing on improving health earlier, before small issues become bigger problems. Regional Health Councils continue to provide valuable local advice, and we thank them for their ongoing support.

I’m pleased to welcome Ron Johnson as Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NL Health Services, effective January 22, 2026. Ron brings a strong background in health care leadership. Most recently, he served as vice president of digital health, innovation and research, and as chief information officer, where he oversaw the introduction of the new CorCare health information system (HIS).



He has also served as Chief Operating Officer in both the urban and rural Eastern Zones.

I would also like to thank Dr. Pat Parfrey for his leadership as CEO in 2025. He brought more than 40 years of experience in health care, including his work as co-chair of Health Accord NL and Deputy Minister of Health Transformation. In addition, I thank Robert B. Andrews for his service as the inaugural board chair.

Our vision, “**Health and Well-being – Every Person – Every Community,**” is supported by the core values of **Innovation, Compassion, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence (I CARE)**. These values define how we work, how we support one another, and how we serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This message and my signature below affirm the Board of Trustees’ accountability for the preparation of this Strategic Plan and for achieving the objectives set out within.



Ross Wiseman
Board Chair

The strategic priorities outlined in this plan — **Timely Access to Quality Care; System Sustainability, Performance & Integration; Health Equity; Workforce Stability, and Indigenous Health & Wellness** — represent the areas that will guide our work over the next three years.

Table of Contents

Acronyms Used in this Document	6
Overview	7
Mandate and Lines of Business	9
Values	11
Vision and Mission	12
Planning Process and Engagement	13
Partnerships and Primary Clients	15
Strategic Issues	16
STRATEGIC ISSUE ONE: Timely Access to Quality Care	17
STRATEGIC ISSUE TWO: System Sustainability, Performance and Integration	20
STRATEGIC ISSUE THREE: Health Equity	23
STRATEGIC ISSUE FOUR: Workforce Stability	26
STRATEGIC ISSUE FIVE: Indigenous Health and Wellness	30
Appendix A: Mandate	34
Appendix B: Lines of Business	37
Appendix C: The Planning Process	45

Acronyms Used in this Document

Acronym	Full Term
ACE	Acute Care of the Elderly
ALC	Alternate Level of Care
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CT	Computed Tomography
ER	Emergency Room
FCT	Family Care Team
HIS	Health Information System
I CARE	Innovation, Compassion, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence
LTC	Long-term Care
MCR	Mobile Crisis Response
NL Health Services	Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services
NP	Nurse Practitioner
PCC	People-Centred Care
PCP	Primary Care Provider
PFEA	Patient and Family Experience Advisor
PHC	Primary Health Care



Overview

NL Health Services is the provincial health authority that provides health and community services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We offer a wide range of services, from public health and community supports to long-term care (LTC) and hospital care, through facilities, clinics, and community programs throughout the province.

Guided by our vision and Health Accord NL, we are working to make care easier to access, better connected, and more responsive to the needs of individuals and communities. Services are delivered across five health zones (Central, Eastern-Rural, Eastern-Urban, Labrador-Grenfell, and Western), so care can meet local needs while following consistent standards throughout the province.

For more information, visit: <https://nlhealthservices.ca/about/>



Approximately
24,291 employees,
1,399 physicians, and
2,432 volunteers



Delivering health
services
to more than **556,019**
Newfoundlanders
and Labradorians



Approximate operational
expenditures **\$4.0 billion**

*As of March 31, 2026



Operating in **five**
geographic zones
throughout
Newfoundland and
Labrador

NL Health Services Executive Team

as of March 31, 2026



Ron Johnson,
Chief Executive
Officer (I)



Cassie Chisholm,
Vice President and Chief
Operating Officer – Labrador-
Grenfell Zone



Craig Davis,
Vice President and Chief
Operating
Officer – Central



Darla King,
Vice President – Population
Health, Well-Being and
Provincial Health Systems



Debbie Molloy,
Vice President –
Human Resources



Dr. Gena Bugden,
Vice President –
Medical Services
and Academic Affairs, and
Chief of Staff



Glenda Webber,
Vice President – Mental
Health and Addictions and
Correctional Health Services
and Chief Operating Officer –
Eastern (I)



Jason Cole,
Vice President –
Financial Services
and Chief Financial
Officer (I)



Joanne Pelley,
Vice President – Quality and
Learning Health Systems,
Chief Nurse and Chief
Nursing Information Officer



Lynette Oates,
Chief – Public
Engagement and
Communications



Steven Lockyer,
Vice President – Digital
Health and Chief Information
Officer (I)



Teara Freake,
Vice President and
Chief Operating Officer
– Western



Brian O'Neill,
Chief Audit Officer



Mandate and Lines of Business

NL Health Services is responsible for the delivery and administration of health services and community services in Newfoundland and Labrador, in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations. The **Provincial Health Authority Act** outlines the responsibility of health authorities as the following under sections 19 and 20 of the Act. See Appendix A for mandate and detailed responsibilities.

NL Health Services accomplishes its mandate through four lines of business:

- **Promoting Health and Well-Being:** NL Health Services works to improve the health and well-being of people and communities by promoting healthy living, preventing disease and injury, supporting healthy child development, and responding to public health risks. This work is guided by health data and includes programs and services that help people stay healthy, prevent illness, and improve overall well-being.
- **Providing Supportive Care and Rehabilitative Services:** NL Health Services provides a wide range of support services to help people live safely and independently at home and in their communities. These services include individual, family, and community supportive services, long-term care and residential services, and rehabilitative services.
- **Treating Illness and Injury:** NL Health Services provides care for people with illness or injury across all stages of life, from newborn care to palliative care. Key service areas include Primary Health Care, Ambulatory Care, Emergency Care, Medical Services, Mental Health and Addictions Services, Surgical Services, and Tertiary Hospital Services.
- **Advancing Knowledge and Transforming Health Systems:** NL Health Services

supports continuous improvement in health care through education, research and innovation, planning and performance, data and information services, and digital health. These services help strengthen the health system, support informed decision-making, improve access to care, and prepare future healthcare professionals.

The Strategic Plan is aligned with the Lines of Business of NL Health Services. We reviewed all key areas of work and focused this plan on those that need the most attention over the next three years. Other areas will continue to be managed through regular program and operational planning. See Appendix A for NL Health Services mandate and Appendix B for full lines of business.



Values

The core values of NL Health Services: Innovation, Compassion, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence (I CARE) guide the work of all employees, physicians, volunteers, and leaders.

These values help us put people and families at the centre of all we do. They guide our decisions and actions as we work to provide high-quality care and support the health and well-being of people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.



▶ Innovation

We are creative and collaborative. We use the talent and ideas of our employees and partners in seeking solutions.

▶ Compassion

We are kind, caring and committed to people-centred care (PCC).

▶ Accountability

We are honest, transparent, responsible and serve with integrity. We build relationships based on open communication.

▶ Respect

We are inclusive, embrace diversity and advance reconciliation. We provide equitable care in ways that are fair and reflective of the knowledge, values, beliefs, cultural safety, and dignity of the people we serve.

▶ Excellence

We deliver safe high-quality care and measure our performance in pursuit of continuous improvement.



Vision and Mission

▶ Vision

Health and Well-Being. Every Person. Every Community.

▶ Mission

Working together to improve health outcomes through an innovative, integrated, and sustainable health system.

NL Health Services works with residents, communities, and partners throughout the province to support people-centered care. Their contributions help us achieve our vision and mission. Our work is guided by the strategic direction of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Planning Process and Engagement



NL Health Services undertook a planning and engagement process to inform the development of its 2026–29 Strategic Plan.

Thousands of voices throughout Newfoundland and Labrador helped shape the plan, ensuring it reflects the needs, priorities, and experiences of the people and communities we serve.

Our planning process was guided by the Quintuple Aim, a framework that focuses on five key areas: improving patient experience, improving overall health, promoting health equity, supporting care team well-being, and using resources wisely.

To ensure the Strategic Plan remains relevant in a rapidly evolving health care environment, NL Health Services drew on evidence, system trends, and meaningful engagement with patients, communities, employees, partners, and Indigenous Peoples. The organization is committed to continued engagement throughout the life of the plan.

As priorities and themes emerged, PFEAs, Executive Leadership, and the Board of Trustees were engaged to review and validate findings. This ensured that the Strategic Plan reflects public needs, system realities, and organizational accountability.

Planning Inputs



Health Accord NL

The Health Accord NL, released in 2022, continues to guide the strategic direction of NL Health Services. Now in Phase Two of implementation, its Calls to Action informed the development of the 2026–29 Strategic Plan, with a continued focus on integrated, patient-centred care across the province.



▶ **Environmental Scan**

An environmental scan was completed to ensure the 2026-29 Strategic Plan was grounded in evidence and best practices. This included looking at internal and external factors, community health trends, changing health care needs, and pressures on the system such as an aging population and advances in technology.

▶ **Employee, Physician, Volunteer, and Program Engagement**

Employees, physicians, and volunteers across NL Health Services were engaged to ensure the Strategic Plan reflected frontline experience and operational realities. A total of 2,013 responses were received. Program leadership also reviewed and validated findings to ensure accuracy, inclusivity, and relevance. Results helped inform organizational values, priorities, and areas of focus.

▶ **Patient and Community Engagement**

Improving patient experience is a priority for NL Health Services. Nearly 4,000 residents took part in the Community Health Needs Assessment Survey, helping us gather input from people throughout the province. PFEAs also shared their experiences through engagement sessions to help validate findings and share lived experiences. We gathered additional input through online feedback and sessions with groups representing those who face barriers to care due to discrimination, disadvantage, or past injustices.

NL Health Services engaged with nine Indigenous partners: Mushua Innu First Nation, Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, Qalipu, Nunatsiavut Government, NunatuKavut Community Council, Miawpukek First Nation, Innu Round Table, First Light Friendship Centre, and the Journey of Collaboration Steering Committee. Engagement focused on strengthening relationships, building trust, supporting cultural safety, and advancing shared goals to improve health outcomes for Indigenous communities.

▶ **Partner Engagement**

Engagement extended to 37 external partners, including innovation partners, unions, and academic institutions. Themes from this engagement, along with all others, were collected and used to inform strategic plan development.



Partnerships and Primary Clients

Partnerships are fundamental to NL Health Services' ability to deliver high-quality, equitable care and to improve health outcomes throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

NL Health Services works closely with employees, physicians, volunteers, unions, educational institutions, innovation partners, communities, and other organizations to deliver services, strengthen the health system, and support continuous improvement.

NL Health Services' primary clients are the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We provide care and services across the full life span and continuum of care, from prenatal and early childhood through adulthood, senior, and end-of-life care. Our clients include the general population as well as individuals with acute, chronic, or complex health needs. We are committed to addressing the needs of equity deserving groups to support fair and equitable access to high-quality care. NL Health Services also delivers specialized services to residents of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon and others who travel to the province for care.

NL Health Services is also committed to advancing Indigenous health and strengthening respectful, collaborative relationships with Indigenous partners and governments throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Indigenous partners and governments require healthcare that is culturally safe, trauma-informed, respectful, and responsive to the needs, priorities, and rights of Indigenous communities. NL Health Services is committed to increasing Indigenous participation in planning and decision-making, recognizing the central role Indigenous partners play in guiding healthcare direction and delivery. These partnerships are essential to addressing health inequities and advancing reconciliation through meaningful, measurable action.

Strategic Issues

This Strategic Plan follows Provincial Guidelines for Multi-year Performance-based Planning and sets out three-year goal indicators (longer-term measures of progress) and first-year objective indicators (short-term actions and results).

Progress is tracked each year using these indicators. First-year objective indicators are reported annually, while overall progress toward the three-year goal indicators is reported at the end of the planning cycle.



1

Timely Access to Quality Care



2

System Sustainability, Performance and Integration



3

Health Equity



4

Workforce Stability



5

Indigenous Health and Wellness



STRATEGIC ISSUE ONE:

Timely Access to Quality Care



Timely access and high-quality care are fundamental to a high-performing health system.



People in Newfoundland and Labrador are not always able to get medical care within the recommended timelines. This means some residents are waiting too long to access the services they need. When people cannot get care on time, their health can get worse. Delays can lead to more serious illness or injury and put more pressure on hospitals, especially emergency departments.

Some people are going to emergency departments for issues that could be treated in primary care (like a family doctor or nurse practitioner). About 15 per cent of emergency visits in Canada fall into this category. At the same time, the population is aging, which means it is important to make sure seniors receive timely and appropriate care.

This creates an opportunity to:

- Improve access to primary care throughout the province
- Provide better access to urgent care for serious but non-life-threatening conditions
- Help people get care closer to home

When people can get the right care in the right place, fewer will need to go to the emergency department unnecessarily. This helps ensure emergency services are available for those who need them most.

Tools such as the Clinical Frailty Scale¹ can also help care teams better understand the needs of seniors and plan the right care for them.

NL Health Services is working to make sure people get the right care, at the right time, in the right place, from the right team. This will help improve health outcomes and make the system work better for everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Timely Access to Quality Care Goal Statement

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will improve the quality of care by strengthening primary care, improving timely access to services, and supporting care closer to home.

¹ The Clinical Frailty Scale is an evidence-based tool used by healthcare professionals to evaluate the overall fitness, health, and cognitive function of older adults, helping to predict the vulnerability of patients to illness and stress.

Goal Indicators

- ▶ Increased access to quality primary care services
- ▶ Improved quality and access for diagnostics and surgeries in select priority areas
- ▶ Increased access and quality of urgent and emergent care services
- ▶ Increased access to quality Mental Health and Addictions Services
- ▶ Improved access to high-quality seniors' care
- ▶ Increased system capacity to provide quality paramedicine and medical transport services
- ▶ Improved patient reported experience and patient safety outcomes in priority areas

Objective Year One (2026-2027):

By March 31, 2027, NL Health Services will have strengthened timely access to quality care throughout the province.

Indicators:

- ▶ Increased the number of patients assigned to family physician or nurse practitioner through family care team by five per cent (up from the current 68 per cent)
- ▶ Increased the volume of patients accessing urgent care by 10 per cent
- ▶ Increased access to select community-based services including mental health and addiction services by 10 per cent as an alternative to hospital-based care
- ▶ Improved quality of care for seniors through increased implementation of the Clinical Frailty Scale in select areas

Objective Year Two (2027-2028):

By March 31, 2028, NL Health Services will have achieved measurable progress in implementation of identified priority initiatives to improve timely access to quality care

Objective Year Three (2028-2029):

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will have finalized the implementation and evaluated priority initiatives to ensure timely access to quality care.



STRATEGIC ISSUE TWO:

System Sustainability, Performance and Integration



Health system sustainability, performance, and integration are essential as Newfoundland and Labrador faces long-standing health challenges, including demographic shifts and growing pressure on limited resources.



The Health Accord NL highlighted the need for a more connected, efficient, and sustainable healthcare system. This will help address challenges such as shorter life expectancy, high rates of chronic disease, staff shortages, and growing demand for services, while ensuring we make the best use of available funds.

As demand for care increases, hospitals throughout the province are often over capacity. Some patients stay in hospital longer than needed because they are waiting to move to a more appropriate place for care. This is called Alternative Level of Care (ALC). These delays take up hospital beds, slow down patient flow, put added pressure on staff, and make it harder for people to get timely and appropriate care.

There are opportunities to improve how the system works, including:

- Improving patient flow and hospital capacity
- Better coordination and connecting services across the system
- Making better use of healthcare resources and funding

One way to address these opportunities is through CorCare, the new provincial health information system. CorCare will replace outdated systems with one connected platform. This will allow patient information to be shared safely and more easily across the healthcare system.

NL Health Services is working to strengthen how the healthcare system performs, how services are connected, and how financially sustainable the system is. This will support more coordinated care and help ensure people receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

System Sustainability, Performance and Integration Goal Statement

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will have strengthened system performance and financial sustainability by improving access to health data and supporting greater clinical efficiency.

Goal Indicators

- ▶ Improved system integration, standardization, and efficiency through the establishment and adoption of provincial standards
- ▶ Improved acute care flow to ensure timely access to appropriate care and length of stays
- ▶ Improved patient access to personal health information
- ▶ Improve transparency and monitoring of financial performance
- ▶ Increased innovative and value-driven solutions

Objective Year One (2026-2027):

By March 31, 2027, NL Health Services will have implemented technology solutions to support system performance and financial sustainability.

Indicators:

- ▶ Increased usage of MyHealthNL (MyChart app) by 10 per cent from a baseline of 160,000 enrollments
- ▶ Improved patient care coordination from referral to discharge
- ▶ Reduce patient no shows by three per cent by implementing patient reminders and options for rescheduling
- ▶ Implemented a new budget variance reporting tool and introduced mandatory training for all staff with budget responsibilities, achieving at least 80 per cent completion

Objective Year Two (2027-2028):

By March 31, 2028, NL Health Services will have achieved measurable progress in implementation of priority initiatives to strengthen system performance and financial sustainability.

Objective Year Three (2028-2029):

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will have completed and evaluated initiatives to strengthen system performance and financial sustainability.





STRATEGIC ISSUE THREE:

Health Equity



Throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, people's opportunities to be healthy are shaped by more than hospitals, clinics, and prescriptions.



Health is influenced by factors such as income, housing, education, food security, transportation, social connection, and employment. In Newfoundland and Labrador, these factors can affect whether care is accessible, affordable, and timely.

People can also face barriers within the healthcare system. Racism and discrimination, stigma related to mental health or substance use, language barriers, disability, and past harms or trauma can make it more difficult for individuals to seek care or feel safe and respected when receiving it.

These barriers do not affect everyone equally. Equity-deserving populations are more likely to experience obstacles to accessing care and poorer health outcomes because of longstanding social and systemic inequities. Indigenous peoples also experience inequities related to the impacts of racism and colonization.

This creates an opportunity to:

- Remove barriers to care
- Reduce gaps in health outcomes and care experiences
- Strengthen culturally safe and inclusive approaches
- Better understand health inequities through data

NL Health Services will work with communities and partners to advance health equity and strengthen culturally safe and equitable approaches to care. This will support improved access and better health outcomes throughout the province.

Health Equity Goal Statement

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will have made progress towards health equity by engaging diverse groups, using inclusive approaches in programs and services, and implementing better processes for tracking and reporting gaps in health and health service equity.

Goal Indicators

- ▶ Improved engagement with equity deserving populations
- ▶ Increased workforce knowledge to provide equity-informed care and address racism and discrimination
- ▶ Increased services that promote well-being and address the social determinants of health
- ▶ Improved access to care for equity deserving populations
- ▶ Improved health equity measurement and reporting to guide planning and improvement

Objective Year One (2026-2027):

By March 31, 2027, NL Health Services will have started implementing initiatives to strengthen engagement with equity-deserving groups and improved use of equity-informed data in service delivery.

Indicators:

- ▶ Established an engagement approach to partner with equity-deserving communities
- ▶ Established a health equity framework to guide planning and delivery across NL Health Services
- ▶ Improved interpretation services for people whose preferred language is not English
- ▶ Developed an interactive health equity tool that shows key information and helps measure data for initial priority population groups

Objective Year Two (2027-2028):

By March 31, 2028, NL Health Services will have completed implementation and achieved measurable progress of initiatives to strengthen engagement with groups who have experienced inequities and continued to use equity-informed data in health care service delivery

Objective Year Three (2028-2029):

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will have evaluated initiatives implemented and identified new priority areas including beginning actions that support well-being and address the social determinants of health.



STRATEGIC ISSUE FOUR:

Workforce Stability



NL Health Services *is* its people. throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, thousands of dedicated employees, physicians, and volunteers work together every day to deliver safe, high-quality care.



Building a strong and sustainable healthcare workforce goes beyond hiring staff. It includes supporting employee well-being, developing strong leadership, providing opportunities for learning and growth, and promoting open, respectful communication.

When staff feel valued and supported, they are better able to provide safe, high-quality care. A positive work environment also helps attract and retain employees while improving how the healthcare system functions. This benefits patients, families, and communities throughout the province.

The healthcare system continues to face challenges in retaining experienced staff and recruiting new employees and physicians to meet the changing needs of communities. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen workplace culture and create more inclusive and supportive environments.

This highlights the need to:

- Strengthening leadership and workplace culture
- Create inclusive, supportive, and engaging work environments
- Improve workforce planning through better use of data

Focusing on these areas will help build a stronger and more resilient workforce.

NL Health Services is committed to creating healthier, safer workplaces where people want to work and can succeed. By supporting staff well-being, strengthening leadership, and improving planning, the healthcare system will be better positioned to meet current and future needs.

Workforce Stability Goal Statement

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will improve workforce stability through recruitment and fostering a more engaged, supported and inclusive workforce.

Goal Indicators

- ▶ Improved workforce stability in priority employee and physician groups
- ▶ Advanced employee retention strategies
- ▶ Advanced leadership development and training
- ▶ Advanced Just Culture²
- ▶ Increased access to mental health–related supports for employees and physicians
- ▶ Enhanced workforce planning and reporting aligned with provincial recommendations for targeted healthcare professions

Objective Year One (2026-2027):

By March 31, 2027, NL Health Services will have improved recruitment and retention by implementing targeted hiring strategies and implemented initiatives that support staff well-being, engagement, and inclusion.

Indicators:

- ▶ Increased nurse staffing to reduce reliance on agency nurses and decrease the cost of agency nurses by 30 per cent (from a baseline of \$73.6 million)
- ▶ Increased the number of employees who have completed leadership development training by five per cent
- ▶ Improve employee awareness and access to wellness resources to available within NL Health Services including online training and Employee Family Assistance Program
- ▶ Increased the number of Licensed Practical Nurses (137 vacancies) and Pharmacists (20 vacancies) by five per cent

Objective Year Two (2027-2028):

By March 31, 2028, NL Health Services will have achieved measurable progress in recruitment and retention initiatives that support staff well-being, engagement, and inclusion

² Just Culture is the concept of creating and supporting a fair learning culture within an organization. It involves managing behavioral choices and designing safer systems to prevent errors. Just Culture training includes teaching leaders about the principles of Just Culture to help them create an environment where everyone is physically and psychologically safe, encouraged, and allowed to discuss and report concerns.



Objective Year Three (2028-2029):

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will have completed initiatives to advance retention and recruitment initiatives designed to strengthen the workforce and ensure NL Health Services is well-positioned to meet current and future health care needs.





STRATEGIC ISSUE FIVE:

Indigenous Health and Wellness



Indigenous peoples and communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador bring enduring strengths to health and wellness, including strong cultural identities, land-based knowledge, leadership, and holistic approaches.



Indigenous peoples continue to experience inequities in health outcomes, influenced by historical and ongoing factors.

NL Health Services is committed to strengthening respectful, collaborative relationships with Indigenous governments, organizations, and communities, and to working in partnership to co-develop health policies and processes.

Advancing health equity and reconciliation is an ongoing, system-wide responsibility that requires partnership, mutual accountability, and shared learning. A braided accountability approach, where Indigenous governments, communities, and the health system each bring distinct roles, perspectives, and responsibilities, supports meaningful collaboration in addressing the social determinants of Indigenous health.

This creates an opportunity to:

- Strengthen relationships with Indigenous partners
- Respect and value Indigenous ways of knowing
- Co-develop policies, programs, and services that are culturally safe, responsive, and inclusive
- Improve health equity and outcomes for Indigenous Peoples

By working together, NL Health Services can continue to build a more inclusive and responsive health system.

Through this shared commitment, NL Health Services can build on existing strengths and continue evolving the health system to support equity, dignity, and wellbeing for Indigenous peoples and communities.

Indigenous Health and Wellness Goal Statement

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will work with Indigenous partners to improve Indigenous health and wellness through shared accountability, leadership, decision-making, and working together to design services, programs and policies that are safe, respectful, and led by Indigenous people

Goal Indicators

- ▶ Improved Indigenous-identified health priorities through co-design of programs and services and shared decision making
- ▶ Integrated Indigenous knowledge systems, languages, values, and lived experience into health planning and service delivery
- ▶ Strengthened trust and long-term relationships between Indigenous governments, communities, and NL Health Services
- ▶ Identified and addressed systemic barriers such as geographic isolation, workforce challenges, and colonial impacts, that affect access and quality of care
- ▶ Increased alignment with Indigenous rights, reconciliation commitments, and existing agreements
- ▶ Monitored progress and outcomes related to Indigenous health priorities and promoted continuous learning

Objective Year One (2026-2027):

By March 31, 2027, NL Health Services will have begun implementation of initiatives to advance co-design with Indigenous partners and embed foundational anti-racism and culturally safe approaches.

Indicators:

- ▶ Developed engagement approaches tailored to the distinct needs and priorities of Indigenous Governments and Organizations
- ▶ Established a process for Indigenous language interpretation
- ▶ Implemented a culturally safe, accessible complaints intake, follow up, response and reporting process co-designed with Indigenous partners
- ▶ Implemented mandatory Indigenous education (introductory e-learning module and Towards Reconciliation: Indigenous Histories in Canada) for new and current employees
- ▶ Established a standardized process to engage Indigenous partners when developing and posting positions that primarily serve Indigenous communities.
- ▶ Completed an Organizational Cultural Safety Assessment³ and established baseline measures to inform future improvement actions

³ An organization Indigenous Cultural Safety assessment is a comprehensive review of policies, practices, services and workplace culture to determine how effectively the organization supports culturally safe, equitable, and respectful care for Indigenous peoples.

Objective Year Two (2027-2028):

By March 31, 2028, NL Health Services will have achieved measurable progress in implementation of co-designed initiatives with Indigenous partners and embedded foundational anti-racism and culturally safe approaches.

Objective Year Three (2028-2029):

By March 31, 2029, NL Health Services will have begun review of implemented initiatives and identified new opportunities for co-design with Indigenous partners.



Appendix A: Mandate

The NL Health Services mandate is derived from the **Provincial Health Authority Act** and its regulations. NL Health Services is responsible for the delivery and administration of health services and community services in Newfoundland and Labrador, in accordance with the above-referenced legislation and other relevant legislation and regulations. The Provincial Health Authority Act outlines the responsibility of health authorities as the following under sections 19 and 20:

Responsibilities of authority re: health and community services

1. The authority is responsible for the delivery and administration of health and community services in the province in accordance with this Act and the regulations.
2. In carrying out its responsibilities, the authority shall
 - a. promote and protect the health and well-being of persons in the province and develop and implement measures for the prevention of disease and injury and the advancement of health and well-being
 - b. assess health and community services needs on an ongoing basis;
 - c. develop objectives and priorities for the provision of health and community services which meet the needs of the province, and which are consistent with the objectives and priorities established by the minister;
 - d. manage and allocate resources, including funds provided by the government for health and community services, in accordance with this Act;
 - e. ensure that services are provided in a manner that coordinates and integrates health and community services;
 - f. collaborate with other persons and organizations, including federal, provincial and municipal governments and agencies, to coordinate health and community services in the province and to achieve provincial objectives and priorities;
 - g. collect and analyze health and community services information for use in the development and implementation of health and community services policies and programs for the province;
 - h. provide information to the residents of the province respecting
 - i. the services provided by the authority,
 - ii. how they may gain access to those services, and
 - iii. how they may communicate with the authority respecting the provision of those services by the authority;
 - i. monitor and evaluate the delivery of health and community services and compliance with
 - i. standards,
 - ii. objectives, and
 - iii. guidelines established or adopted under paragraph 5(1)(b)

- j. develop and maintain standards of care for the delivery of provincial programs;
- k. oversee accountability for health outcomes through monitoring and reporting on quality, safety and performance;
- l. in conjunction with the minister, implement a provincial strategy for recruitment and retention of health professionals;
- m. comply with the direction for the delivery and administration of health and community services set by the minister;
- n. report to the minister on matters related to the delivery of health and community services when requested; and
- o. comply with directions the minister may provide.

Responsibilities of authority re: information management

1. The authority is responsible for:
 - a. providing assistance and support to individuals, communities, other health service providers and policy makers at federal, provincial and regional levels to enhance the health and well-being of persons in the province through the planning and delivery of health and community services by
 - i. developing, operating, and managing a comprehensive and aligned information system that fully integrates and uses data and health information from all components of the health and community services system for the delivery of health-care and health system planning,
 - ii. developing data and technical standards and keeping them up-to-date,
 - iii. managing provincial health data and information assets,
 - iv. preparing health reports and conducting applied health research and evaluation, and
 - v. providing health analytics and decision support services;
 - b. protecting the privacy of individuals whose personal information or personal health information is collected, used, disclosed, stored or disposed of by the authority in accordance with the **Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015** and the **Personal Health Information Act**;
 - c. monitoring and evaluating the development, operation and management of an information system and compliance with
 - i. standards,
 - ii. objectives, and
 - iii. guidelines established or adopted under paragraph 5(1)(b);
 - d. providing the minister with information, when requested, to enhance the health and well-being of persons in the province through the planning and delivery of health and community services; and
 - e. carrying out other responsibilities prescribed by the regulations.
2. The information system referred to in subparagraph (1)(a)(i) shall



- a. protect the confidentiality and security of personal information and personal health information that is collected, used, disclosed, stored or disposed of by the authority;
 - b. provide accurate and current information;
 - c. be efficient and cost-effective; and
 - d. be flexible and responsive to the changing requirements of the system.
- 3. In carrying out its responsibilities the authority shall comply with directions the minister may provide.



Appendix B: Lines of Business

NL Health Services provides a continuum of programs and services for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. These programs and services are based on acute care, long-term care, and community settings. Inherent in all lines of business is the need for learning and education in its broadest context. An interdisciplinary team of health professionals, support team and partners provide the care and services required to meet the mandate of NL Health Services.

NL Health Services accomplishes its mandate through four lines of business:

- Promoting Health and Well-Being
- Providing Supportive Care and Rehabilitative Services
- Treating Illness and Injury
- Advancing Knowledge and Transforming Health Systems

It is important to note that programs and services may fall under one or more headings above. Provincial programs and services will work collaboratively across all zones to support the delivery of integrated, high-quality health-care services. It is recognized that there may be further realignment of programs and services within NL Health Services during the life of this Strategic Plan. Lines of business are delivered within the context of current legislation, where applicable. The lines of business are outlined in detail below.

Promoting Health and Well-Being

NL Health Services implements measures that promote and protect population health and help prevent disease and injury. The primary initiatives in this line of business include population health assessment, surveillance and epidemiology; growth and development in the early years; health promotion; health protection; and disease and injury prevention.

► Population Health Assessment, Surveillance and Epidemiology

Population health assessment, surveillance and epidemiology ensure programs and services are informed by population health data and respond effectively to current and evolving conditions that contribute to the public's health and well-being. Population health assessment is the process of assessing the changing strengths, vulnerabilities, and needs of communities. Surveillance is the process of collecting health data to track diseases, the health status of populations, the determinants of health, and differences among populations. Assessment and health surveillance include the information collected to inform all public health work. They rely on the science of epidemiology, which focuses on describing health and disease in populations rather than in individuals.

Epidemiology contributes information essential for understanding the determinants of health and for developing and evaluating public health programs.

Growth and Development in the Early Years

Supporting growth and development in the early years incorporates programs and services to optimize the well-being of children, youth and families in a variety of settings (home, school, community) through the creation and reinforcement of supportive environments and practices during the preconception to early years of children's development.

The major categories of service include but are not limited to:

- Maternal child health care
- Services to families of infants, preschool and school age children who have or are at risk of delayed development

Health Promotion

Health promotion is the process of implementing a range of social and environmental interventions that enable people and communities to increase control over and to improve their health. Health promotion programs and services involve the work of many internal and external partners working together to focus on:

- Building healthy public policy (e.g., smoke-free policies)
- Strengthening community action (e.g., Regional Wellness Coalitions)
- Creating supportive environments (e.g., safe walking routes within communities)
- Supporting development of personal skills (e.g., child and family health programs)
- Re-orienting health services to focus on prevention and early intervention (e.g., through engaging the public and partnerships with community agencies, such as self-management programs and youth outreach services)
- Re-orienting health services to focus on population health as well as individual health outcomes (e.g., addressing the determinants of health and health inequities)
- Supporting health service delivery (e.g., Healthy Baby Clubs, Child Health Clinics)

Health promotion activities are integrated throughout all lines of business within NL Health Services.

Health Protection

Health Protection involves the protection of individuals, groups and populations through expert advice and effective collaboration to prevent and mitigate the impact of infectious disease, environmental, chemical and radiological threats.

Health protection involves using the latest evidence to advance knowledge and guide practice and uses surveillance data to monitor the health of the population. Health protection includes the regulatory framework, programs and services for the control of diseases and protection from public health threats. Health protection is delivered within the context of current legislation, where applicable.

The major categories of service include but are not limited to:

- Communicable disease prevention and control
- Environmental public health support
- Emergency preparedness and response

► **Disease and Injury Prevention**

Many illnesses can either be prevented or delayed and injuries avoided. Prevention services offer early intervention and best available information to members of the public to prevent the onset of disease, illness and injury, and/or the deterioration of well-being. Actions include programs and services that are focused on eradicating, eliminating or minimizing the impacts of disease and disability. Programs and services vary depending on the incidence or potential for disease, illness or injury identified in specific areas.

The major categories of service include but are not limited to:

- Health surveillance
- Screening (e.g., breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate)
- Noncommunicable disease and injury prevention
- Chronic disease prevention and management

Providing Supportive Care and Rehabilitative Services

NL Health Services provides a broad range of supportive care services across the continuum of care and lifespan within legislation, provincial guidelines, organizational policies, and resources. This includes the provision of residential care options, community-based support, special assistance and continuing care, home support, personal care home, and nursing home care for individuals based on assessed needs. These services are provided in select locations and in some cases may be subject to clinical and/or financial assessment. There is occasionally a relationship with other Provincial Government agencies for subsidized funding to supplement programs. Supportive care promotes the safety, health and well-being of the individual by supporting the existing strengths of the individual, family and community. The main categories within this area are listed below:

► **Individual, Family and Community Supportive Services**

Individual, family and community supportive services make up a considerable component of the work of the organization. These include:

- Services to clients with physical/development disabilities or other cognitive impairments
- Services to clients experiencing psychosocial concerns (e.g., disruption of family functioning, lack of social support, mental health or substance use concerns, violence)
- Adult protection services
- Home support services
- Health-care supplies and equipment (e.g., oxygen, ostomy supplies, bathing supports, and drug cards)
- Home care, respite, convalescent, and palliative/end-of-life care

▶ **Long-Term Care and Residential Services**

Long-term care and residential services encompass an extensive range of the organization's supports and partnerships including:

- Long-term care homes
- Seniors' cottages and congregate living
- Protective community residences
- Personal care homes
- Alternate family care
- Cooperative Living
- Therapeutic residences
- Hostel accommodations

▶ **Rehabilitative Services**

The organization offers a variety of rehabilitative services for individuals following illness or injury. These services are offered in selected locations through a referral process and include:

- Post-acute nursing services both in clinic and home settings
- Rehabilitation services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, audiology and social work
- Rehabilitation centres and inpatient programs
- Restorative care (inpatient post-acute) program

Treating Illness and Injury

NL Health Services investigates, treats, rehabilitates, and cares for individuals with illness or injury. The clinical intent is to apply interventions that will reduce the severity of an illness or injury, preserve and improve the health of the individual, provide comfort measures, and educate and inform patients. Additionally, we provide care at the beginning of life (newborn care) and at the end of life (palliative care). Services are offered in a variety of locations throughout the province, depending on factors such as the level of care required (primary,

secondary or tertiary), access to health professionals, and access to appropriate facilities. Certain services are self-referred, while others require a referral from a health professional. These services are provided by multidisciplinary teams of health professionals, through a variety of inpatient and outpatient settings. The main categories within this area are listed below:

▶ **Primary Health Care**

Primary health care (PHC) is typically an individual's first point of contact with the health-care system and can encompass a range of community-based services essential to maintaining and improving health and well-being throughout an individual's lifespan. Both salaried and fee-for-service physicians and salaried nurse practitioners (NPs) work within one of the organization's facilities or operate their own independent offices to provide PHC. There are also a growing number of primary health-care projects in which physicians, NPs, and other health professionals work in a coordinated manner to offer care.

▶ **Ambulatory Care**

Services include day procedures, surgical day care, endoscopic services, diagnostic and laboratory services, specialist clinics both regular (e.g., medical and surgical) and visiting (e.g., nephrology), diabetes education, cardio-pulmonary services, nutritional services and a variety of clinical support services.

▶ **Emergency Care**

Services consist of hospital emergency services including emergency room (ER) services and the monitoring of community-based, private provider and hospital-based emergency medical services. In addition, patient transport provides both ground and air transport of patients, conducted by both public and private operators and includes ambulance and client transport for medical services.

▶ **Medical Services**

Services include internal medicine, family medicine, psychiatry, pediatrics, obstetrics, nephrology, neurology, dermatology, medical oncology including chemotherapy, physiatry, gastroenterology, cardiology, intensive care, renal dialysis, and palliative care.

▶ **Mental Health & Addiction Services**

Services range from health promotion-based programs to diagnosis and treatment (inpatient, outpatient and residential) to follow-up services. There are strong links with community-based partners such as advocacy groups, self-help groups, employment and housing. Services are offered to those who are experiencing mental health problems, mental illness or difficulties with alcohol, drugs, gambling, or are affected by someone else's use.

► **Surgical Services**

Services include anesthesiology, general surgery, orthopedics, urology, ophthalmology, otolaryngology, obstetrics and gynecology, colposcopy, vascular, and dental.

► **Tertiary Hospitals**

Tertiary hospitals provide primary-, secondary- and tertiary-level services. These hospitals are academic health-care facilities that accept referrals and transfers from all parts of the province for both inpatient and outpatient services. The majority of these specialty services are: Medical, surgical and radiation oncology; cardiac and critical care; specialized diagnostics – laboratory medicine, imaging, nuclear medicine, pathology; children and women’s health – specialty pediatrics, gynecology, obstetrics, pediatric critical care, perinatology; medicine – allergy & immunology, emergency medicine, endocrinology & metabolism, family medicine, gastroenterology, general internal medicine, geriatrics, hematology, nephrology, pharmacy, respiratory, rheumatology; surgery – anesthesia and perioperative medicine, cardiac surgery, dentistry, general surgery, neurosurgery, ophthalmology, orthopedics, otolaryngology, plastic surgery, thoracic surgery, urology, vascular surgery; psychiatry - child/adolescent psychiatry, geriatric psychiatry, adult and general psychiatry, forensic psychiatry.

Advancing Knowledge and Transforming Health

NL Health Services is dedicated to advancing research, education and knowledge dissemination. The organization will continue to utilize evidence-based practices to transform the health system into an efficient and effective model of service that positions NL Health Services as a leading Canadian health-care organization. The main categories within this area are listed below:

► **Education**

The organization plays a key role in ensuring that the next generation of health professionals has opportunities to gain relevant educational experience. Education of the next generation of health-care providers is offered through affiliation agreements with numerous educational institutions within the province, across the country and further abroad. These arrangements enable students to study and participate in fieldwork experiences. Employees and physicians are encouraged to seek the best information and knowledge from multiple sources and to incorporate evidence into their practice. Continuing education for NL Health Services’ employees, physicians, volunteers, and advisors is offered throughout the organization in various formats. NL Health Services also partners with other government departments and community agencies to offer training to health professionals and the public. In addition, the Centre for Nursing Studies and Western Regional School of Nursing offer Practical Nursing, Bachelor of Science in Nursing and various continuing education programs.

Research and Innovation

NL Health Services is committed to ensuring that the issues faced in daily practice bring about research and innovation to find creative health-care solutions. The Patient Research Centre provides for the coordination and implementation of clinical trials and all zones support applied health research projects. Research and innovation are collaborative endeavours, and overall success depends upon partnerships with patients, employees, suppliers, the academic community, funding agencies, private enterprise, the technology sector, and many others that wish to improve the health and well-being of people in this province.

Planning and Performance

The organization regularly assesses its performance as part of the strategic planning and accreditation processes, as well as through an array of planning, evaluation, and quality improvement frameworks and practices. By employing an integrated approach to quality and using data to measure outcomes, the organization is able to determine where to focus its efforts to transform service delivery and provide exemplary high quality care experiences and best possible outcomes for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Data and Information Services

Includes the delivery of a full range of information products and services in support of health system management including health analytics, data access, applied health research, evaluation, performance improvement, clinical efficiency, data and information management, business intelligence (using data to understand what is happening and help leaders make better decisions), decision support, and data quality and standards. Data and information services support health system management and transformation through information, obtained through health analytics, evaluation and business intelligence, as part of a comprehensive approach to supporting system transformation that also includes an emphasis on building capacity in the system for continuous quality improvement.

Digital Health Services

Services include the delivery of information technology and eHealth services applied in the health-care system to provide quality care. A key area of service, eHealth, refers to all of the electronic, communication and technology tools used to share health and administrative information provided across NL Health Services. eHealth tools provide more accurate and reliable data and are designed to facilitate better sharing and interpretation of health information among health professionals involved in a person's care regardless of location. In turn, improved access to this information supports improved health-care delivery, decision-making and policy development.

Major programs include but are not limited to:

- HEALThe NL, the provincial electronic health record

- eDOCSNL, a program that supports the implementation, adoption and use of the provincial electronic medical record solution in participating health-care provider offices throughout the province
- Virtual care, a suite of services used to connect individuals to health-care providers who are not located in the same community, as well as to overcome other barriers to accessing in-person care. Services include telehealth, home-based telehealth, remote patient monitoring, telepathology, and virtual ER services, among others.



Appendix C: The Planning Process

The planning process included the following phases:

1. Establish the Context: Jurisdictional Scanning and Engagement Activities:

- a. Sources reviewed - general:
 - i. Health Accord NL recommendations
 - ii. Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program research prioritization
 - iii. Strategic directions of government
 - iv. Quintuple aim for health-care improvement
- b. Environmental Scan – Review conducted of internal and external factors affecting NL Health Services
- c. Engagement:
 - i. Community Health Assessment
 - ii. Indigenous partner engagement
 - iii. Employee, Physician and Volunteer engagement
 - iv. Program Engagement with leadership
 - v. Key Partner engagement
 - vi. Board of Trustees survey and planning retreat
 - vii. Input from the Strategic Planning Working Group
 - viii. Input from PFEAs

2. Validate Strategic Priorities:

All engagement groups validated findings through review of information received. The Strategic Planning Board Retreat provided validation and strategic direction and included the following groups:

- a. Strategic Planning Working Group
- b. Executive management
- c. Board of Trustees
- d. PFEAs

3. Reporting Process / Implementation (2026-29)

- a. Communicate Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision and Values throughout the organization
- b. Assign leads for strategic goals and indicators
- c. Establish quarterly reporting cycle



**NL Health
Services**

nlhealthservices.ca

[f](#) [in](#) [▶](#) [X](#) [◉](#)