



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWFOUNDLAND AND
LABRADOR COLLEGE OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS



LE COLLÈGE DES MÉDECINS
DE FAMILLE DE TERRE-
NEUVE-ET-LABRADOR

A CHAPTER OF THE COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS OF CANADA
UNE SECTION DU COLLÈGE DES MÉDECINS DE FAMILLE DU CANADA

Today, the physicians of Newfoundland and Labrador stand in solidarity with our registered nurse colleagues across the province on their National Day of Action.

Our province is facing a critical nursing shortage. Right now, the regional health authorities are advertising more than 215 nursing vacancies on their websites. The province has responded to this crisis by mandating registered nurses to work over-time. This is not a solution. Too often, registered nurses are told at the end of their shifts that there is no one to relieve them and they must work a second shift – sometimes working up to 24 hours. This is leading to burnout, and it is putting patient safety at risk.

Chronic nursing understaffing affects all aspects of our strained health care system. It has been particularly felt in long-term care, where the shortage of registered nurses has restricted the number of patients who can be admitted. As a result, patients have nowhere to go, and they become stranded in over-crowded emergency departments and hospital wards. This, in turn, leads to cancelled surgeries and procedures, and increased wait times for everyone.

The province also has 99,000 citizens without access to a primary care provider and yet there is no province-wide framework for primary health care teams that includes physicians, nurse practitioners and registered nurses. The NLMA and the NLCFP echo the RNUNL in calling on the government to address the severe nursing shortage in Newfoundland and Labrador to stabilize our broken health care system.