

Promising Practices for Strengthening Primary Care

Patient Pathways to Family Care Team Services



The challenge

Many people living in Western Newfoundland and Labrador do not have timely access to team-based primary care, and experience long wait times for services. Also, many community-based private physician clinics do not have established pathways to connect with services offered by NL Health Services family care teams (FCT) that can support patients in navigating health and social services.

The promising practice

Patient pathways to improve timely access to services within family care teams. Following a referral by the primary care provider (i.e. community-based physician, FCT or regional virtual care [RVCC] provider), a FCT nurse or social worker provides care or navigation to team-based services (e.g., case management, advanced care planning, preventative care services).

Anticipated impacts

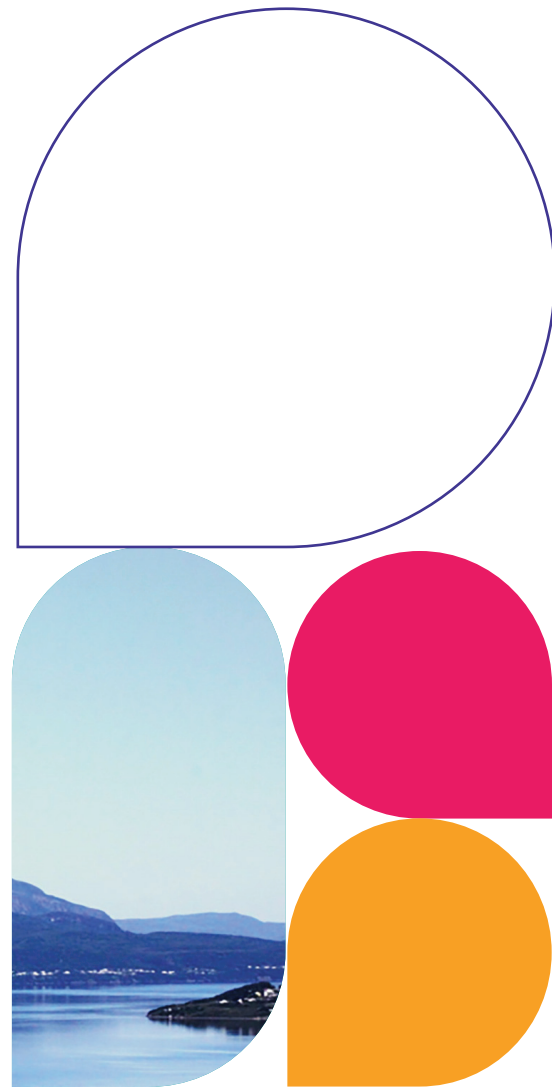
The patient pathways were implemented in October 2024.
Key anticipated impacts include:

More patients will have access to team-based care closer to home.

- Patients have more timely access to team-based care with the right provider. This includes improving access for patients who are attached to community-based physician clinics or, the FCT as well as unattached patients who receive care from RVCC, since they can be referred to allied services within the FCT.

Enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration.

- Having patients seen by the most appropriate team member allows team members to work to their full scope of practice and see more patients. Clear patient pathways and well-defined roles for all team members will support greater team efficiency and improve quality of care and collaboration.



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Keys to success

- **Funding:** \$50,000 to support technology, equipment, and salary for a project lead.
- **A multidisciplinary team and partnerships** with community-based physician clinics to create and adapt the patient pathway over time to meet patient and provider needs.
- **Having people on the ground to do the work.** Including doctors, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, social workers, and navigation support workers.
- **Flexibility** to adjust team-based care to meet primary care needs and pivoting when something is not working well, with a focus on process improvement.

Lessons learned

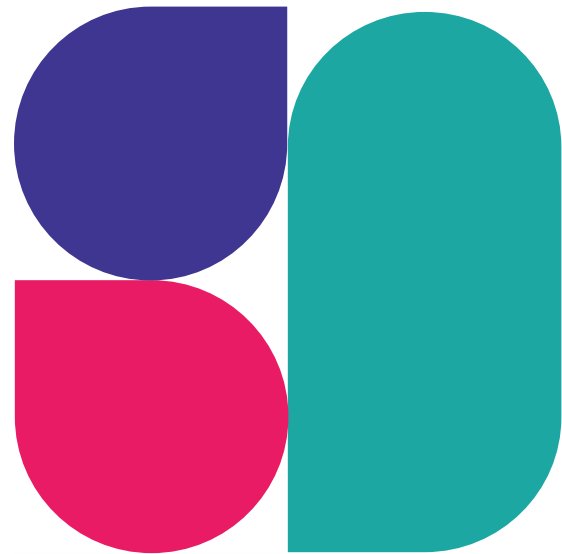
- Engage early with those directly involved (i.e. community-based physicians, NLHS team members, clients) to allow for co-design.
- Continue to report back to those involved to maintain engagement and ensure appropriateness of changes.

How can I learn more?

Contact the organization.

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Why was this summary created?

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (NLHS), participated in **Healthcare Excellence Canada's (HEC) Strengthening Primary Care (SPC)** program.

SPC brought together 20 primary care organizations from across Canada to advance practices to improve access to safe, including culturally safe, team-based primary care. This promising practice summary was co-produced with NLHS to help others learn about their work and generate discussion about how similar approaches could be adapted and applied elsewhere.

