



Quality of Care NL

2026

Annual Update

An overview of Quality of Care NL activities



QUALITYOFCARENL.CA



Introduction

Kris Aubrey-Bassler,
Principal Investigator, *NL SUPPORT*



It is my pleasure to share the 2026 Annual Update for Quality of Care NL. This report reflects another productive year of research, evaluation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing aimed at improving health and social outcomes for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Through strong partnerships with clinicians, researchers, health system leaders, government, community organizations, patients, and learners, we continue to generate evidence that supports better decision-making and meaningful improvements across our health system.

The breadth of work highlighted in this report demonstrates the value of an applied approach to health systems research and evaluation. This year, our team contributed to initiatives addressing social determinants of health, antimicrobial resistance, health system sustainability, and healthcare overuse, while also advancing innovative projects focused on primary care transformation, clinician experience, social prescribing, and child health. These efforts share a common goal: improving the quality, effectiveness, and sustainability of health and social services in our province.

Several themes stand out throughout this update. First is the importance of collaboration. Many of the accomplishments described here were made possible through partnerships with NL Health Services, Memorial University, government departments, community organizations, and colleagues across Canada. Second is our commitment to using data and evidence to inform action. Whether examining antibiotic prescribing trends, evaluating Family Care Teams, or developing tools to better understand clinician experiences, we are working to ensure that decisions are grounded in meaningful information and focused on improving outcomes for patients, providers, and communities.

I would like to thank the dedicated members of the Quality of Care NL team, our collaborators, and the many patients, clinicians, learners, and community partners who contribute their time, expertise, and perspectives to this work. Their commitment to continuous improvement is the foundation of our success. As we look ahead, we remain focused on strengthening partnerships, supporting innovation, and generating practical evidence that can help shape a healthier future for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Introduction



Amanda Dohey,
Director,
NL SUPPORT and Quality of Care NL

The past 18 months with the Quality of Care NL team has been a busy and rewarding journey. Our team successfully secured an additional two years of funding through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) SPOR SUPPORT Unit Extension application, allowing us to continue building on our work to advance patient-orientated research and improve health across the province.

We hosted a Climate Change Symposium that brought together government, researchers and health officials across Newfoundland and Labrador to advance dialogue and action on climate change, well-being, and sustainability. Earlier in the year, our Patient and Public Engagement Lead co-facilitated the Growing Inuit Youth Voices in Health gathering with the Nunatsiavut government. Held in Goose Bay, this gathering held space for a meaningful week of learning, cultural connection and exploration of health careers with youth from communities along coastal Labrador.

We also welcomed Georgia Skardasi as our new Capacity Development and Engagement Coordinator and had the pleasure of working with two summer students, Sierra and Tanvi, who completed their respective practicums as part of their Master of Applied Health Services Research and Master of Applied Psychological Science programs. More recently, we relaunched three existing funding opportunities and introduced two new awards focused on engagement and knowledge mobilization. These opportunities provide researchers and partners with funding to support innovative projects, build research capacity, and generate evidence to form improvements in the health care and social sectors.

We have continued to share our research findings through our Practice Points publication and engage our public through our monthly Healthy Discussions webinars. Topics ranged from recreation and nutrition supports across the province to acute care for the elderly to timely discussions on menopause and brain health in youth. We also worked collaboratively with researchers, students, the provincial health authority and organizations on several projects and initiatives, many of which are highlighted in this annual report.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to our team, our Patient and Public Advisory Council and our partners for their contribution and dedication over the past year that has shaped this program.

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The following document outlines some of the work of Quality of Care NL over the last year, including research, evaluation, analysis and activities conducted with partners or outside organizations. As an applied health and social systems research and evaluation program, Quality of Care NL aims to improve social and health outcomes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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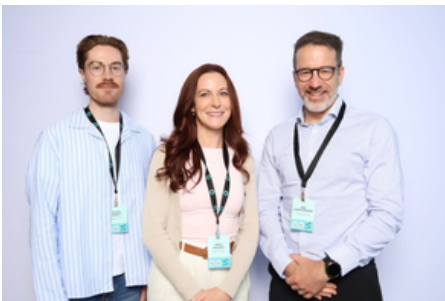
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Choosing Wisely NL

Over the past year, Choosing Wisely Newfoundland and Labrador (CWNL) has continued to advance efforts to reduce unnecessary tests, treatments, practices and procedures to support high quality, evidence-based healthcare across our province. Our work focuses on embedding Choosing Wisely recommendations into practice across our provincial health system, while building partnerships with clinicians, health system leaders, researchers, educators, patients and trainees.

In May 2026, three members of our QCNL team attended the Choosing Wisely Canada National Meeting in Toronto. Dr. Kris Aubrey-Bassler attended for the first time in his new role as Clinical Lead for CWNL. Krista Mahoney, PhD, presented "Aligning Environmental Stewardship with Choosing Wisely in Newfoundland and Labrador" and Michael Barrett presented "Optimization of Laboratory Testing to Advance Sustainable Healthcare in NL". These talks highlighted how Choosing Wisely can contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing waste, unnecessary care and the carbon footprint of our health system.



CWNL at the 2026 National Meeting in Toronto. Left to right: Michael Barrett, Krista Mahoney, PhD, and Dr. Kris Aubrey-Bassler



Visit the new www.choosingwiselynl.ca

CWNL

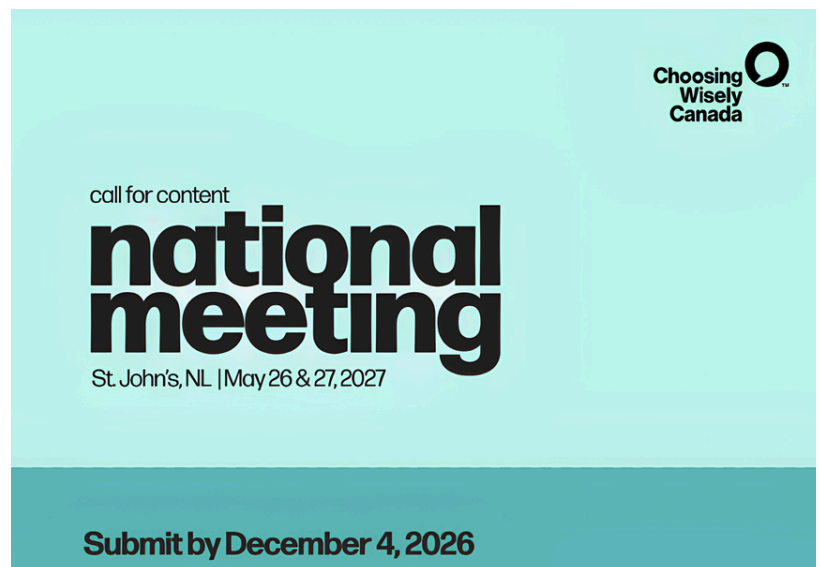
Save the Date! Choosing Wisely Canada's National Meeting is coming to NL!

May 26–27, 2027, Delta Hotel and Conference Centre, St. John's

We are thrilled to welcome the national Choosing Wisely community to the East Coast of Canada for the first time! We expect to welcome 200+ participants from across Canada for two days of engaging keynote speakers, interactive sessions, knowledge sharing and networking focused on reducing healthcare overuse and advancing Choosing Wisely principles.

We plan to make it a memorable one! In addition to a dynamic conference program, we are planning opportunities for our national colleagues to experience some of what makes NL such a special and unique place to visit.

This will be an opportunity to showcase the incredible work happening in our province, strengthen connections across the country, and celebrate the people working every day to improve healthcare. We can't wait to welcome the Choosing Wisely Canada community to Newfoundland and Labrador!



Call for content

Choosing Wisely NL

For the 2026-27 academic year, Memorial University has several new STARS (Students and Trainees Advocating for Resource Stewardship)

- ◆ Kaur Kirandeep (Kira) Singh - MUN Medicine, St. John's Campus
- ◆ Ann Seety - MUN Medicine, St. John's Campus
- ◆ Briana Creed - MUN Medicine, PEI Campus
- ◆ Alexis Young - MUN Pharmacy

We are excited to welcome back students representing both MUN Medicine campuses and the School of Pharmacy. We look forward to another year of student leadership and innovation in resource stewardship.

Environmental Sustainability



From left: Arista Marthyman, Leah Curnew, Kaur Kirandeep (Kira) Singh and Krista Mahoney, PhD.



Article

Our Environmental Sustainability Team has continued to build momentum over the past year, connecting with national organizations working to decarbonize healthcare and advance climate-resilient health systems. A key highlight this past year was the Planetary Health Report Card submission which was completed by a team of MUN Medical Students and supervised by QCNL. This marks the first year that MUN Med School participated in this global initiative, making it the 13th Canadian Medical School to enroll. Our school attained an overall grade of "C", which we consider to be baseline to launch future efforts to embed more Planetary Health curricula, offer more training opportunities in Planetary Health, and enhance sustainability across our campus.

Our team continues to work alongside the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, NL Health Services, Memorial University and partners across the province to support a more sustainable, climate-resilient health system. Together, we are working toward a future of healthcare that is better for patients, our health system, and our planet.

Other CWNL-Related Initiatives



Using Labs Wisely (ULW) is a national consortium dedicated to reducing low-value lab testing in Canada. Quality of Care NL and NL Health Services are actively collaborating to implement and measure the impact of ULW projects to support good laboratory stewardship.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the world's most urgent public health problems. Quality of Care NL is involved in ongoing work with the Provincial Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee, including research projects, working groups and initiatives aimed at monitoring and reducing antimicrobial use and AMR in various settings across NL.



Potentially inappropriate use of antipsychotics occurs in one in four long-term care (LTC) residents in Canada (CIHI, 2024). Quality of Care NL continues to engage with LTC homes in NL to understand antipsychotic use and how it can be reduced to meet national guidelines and benchmarks.

Chronic use of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) often occurs in patients who lack an ongoing indication. Quality of Care NL analyzes data on PPI prescribing trends in the province, including patient demographics and risk factors to help identify potential opportunities for deprescribing and optimizing PPI use.



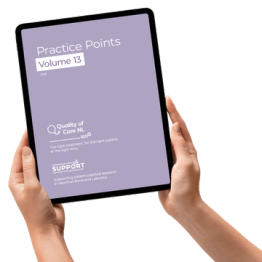
Social Determinants of Health

As an applied health and social systems research and evaluation program aimed at improving social and health outcomes in Newfoundland and Labrador, Quality of Care NL has committed to compiling available data to help paint an accurate picture of how social determinants are impacting health in the province. We break down the data for NL and Canada on topics such as food security, education, employment, income, housing insecurity, governance, health, society and sex/gender.

The latest volume of Practice Points published throughout 2026 features several articles on the social determinants of health and social care, such as:

- An Update on Food Insecurity in Newfoundland and Labrador
- An Update on Homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador
- Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy: How Are We Doing?

Quality of Care NL is also engaged with various working groups, project teams and/or research exploring connections between the social determinants and other health outcomes (e.g. modifiable risk factors related to cancer).



See the Data



Practice Points

Clinician Reported Experience Measures (CREMs) Study

The Clinician Reported Experience Measures (CREMs) study aims to develop a standardized tool to capture the experiences of clinicians working in primary care environments across NL. The goal is to identify the factors that influence clinician satisfaction, workplace culture, interprofessional collaboration, and perceived capacity to deliver quality patient care. By understanding these experiences, the project supports system-level improvements that enhance both clinician well-being and patient outcomes. Quality of Care NL is collaborating with the Quebec SPOR Support Unit project, acting as a second site to align development and validation methodologies for CREMs across provinces.

Clinician Focus Groups: Two focus groups (patients and health professionals) were conducted with a total of eight participants representing a range of primary care professionals in NL.



Qualitative Analysis: Completed comprehensive thematic analysis of both focus group transcripts, identifying major themes around workload, communication, support systems, and interprofessional relationships. These findings will be used to inform the conceptual framework for the CREMs survey. The focus groups provided valuable insights into the lived realities of health care providers working in primary care.

Thematic analysis:

Health care professionals

- referral barriers
- caseload and service demand
- moral distress when unable to meet patient needs

Patient Partners

- administrative burden
- recognition and appreciation
- system fragmentation
- cross-sector coordination

Both Groups

- workload and staffing capacity
- psychological safety
- engagement
- team-based care
- collaboration
- learning environments
- mentorship

Overall, the NL findings confirmed the results of the Quebec findings, which was the purpose of our collaboration, to validate the findings in a second site

Family Care Team Resource Hub

Launched in May 2023, the Family Care Team Resource Hub is a collaborative initiative involving Quality of Care NL, Memorial University's Office of Professional and Educational Development in the Faculty of Medicine, and the provincial Department of Health and Community Services. The Resource Hub supports Family Care Teams across Newfoundland and Labrador by providing accessible learning resources, professional development opportunities, and knowledge-sharing activities to strengthen interprofessional collaboration (IPC) and team-based primary care.



The Resource Hub offers a range of supports, including its Foundations program, which currently includes six online, self-paced learning modules and two workshops, with additional resources in development. Other activities include a monthly webinar series and newsletters that promote learning and knowledge exchange. In 2026, the Resource Hub partnered with the Primary Care Research Implementation, Improvement, and Evaluation (PRIIME) network to plan and host PriFor 2026: Team-based Primary Care, which included Integrated Primary Care (IPC) in Action: Lessons Learned in Team-based Primary Care, a half-day Community of Practice event focused on interprofessional collaboration.

Results to date: As of September 30, 2026, the Resource Hub website had attracted more than 19,000 unique users, with 60% from Newfoundland and Labrador. Its mailing list had grown to 229 subscribers, including 118 Family Care Team members and representation from all NL Health Services zones. Since February 2024, the Resource Hub has hosted 19 webinars, with a combined attendance of 707 across all sessions, covering a range of topics to support interprofessional collaboration and strengthen team-based primary care. Evaluation feedback on the Foundations program has been positive, with 95% of respondents rating the content as relevant to their work and 97% indicating that it met their learning needs. These results demonstrate the Resource Hub's reach, engagement, and perceived value as a provincial resource for collaborative practice.

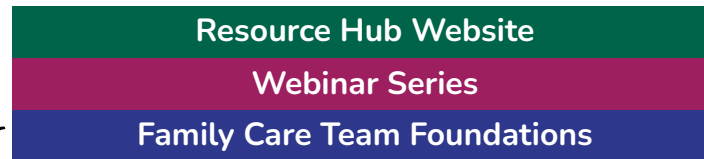
Ongoing evaluation is informing efforts to ensure resources remain relevant, accessible, and responsive to the realities of Family Care Teams across the province. With the current funding period ending in March 2027, a key priority is planning for sustainability and exploring opportunities for continued collaboration to support team-based primary care. Continued promotion, engagement with new and existing team members, and sustained access to practical learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities will be important to maintaining the Resource Hub's value and supporting collaborative practice across Newfoundland and Labrador.



[Learn More](#)

Family Care Team Resource Hub

The Resource Hub continues to serve as a central platform supporting Family Care Teams, with strong engagement across its core components in 2025:



Series of online, self-paced modules and workshops aimed at building and supporting interprofessional collaborative practice in Family Care Teams working in NL.

Module 1: Introduction to Interprofessional Collaborative Practice

Module 2: Social Dimensions of Primary Care

Module 3: Professional Roles & Scopes

Module 4: Governance & Leadership

Workshop 1: Onboarding Team Members

Workshop 2: Communication **New**

Storming Stage: Module 1: Communication and Conflict Management **New**

Storming Stage: Module 2: Role Negotiation **New**

Webinar Series attendance typically ranged from 10 to 82 participants from February 2024 to May 2026. Topics include:

1. A Health Policy Framework
2. Effective Teamwork—A Primer
3. Interprofessional Collaboration
4. Effective Communication and Aligning Teams for Performance
5. Resources Available to Support Collaborative Practice in NL's Family Care Teams
6. Bridging Health & Community—The Role of Family Care Teams in Addressing Social Determinants of Health
7. Enhancing Patient Care Across NL: Strategic Health Network for Primary Health Care
8. Social Prescribing in Family Care Teams
9. Needs-based Planning for Family Care Teams
10. Management of Chronic Disease in Family Care Teams
11. Integrating Concepts of Trauma-informed Care in Family Care Teams
12. Family Care Teams and the Vision for Integrated Older Adult Care in NL
13. Collaborative Practice Resources: Annual Update
14. Indigenous Health and Family Care Teams **New**
15. Chronic Disease Management in Family Care Teams: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD) **New**
16. Disagreement and Conflict in Family Care Teams **New**
17. Chronic Disease Management in Family Care Teams: Diabetes Care and Navigation **New**
18. Integrating Generative Artificial Intelligence in Collaborative Family Care Team Practice **New**
19. Gender Affirming Care in Family Care Teams **New**

Social Prescribing Study

In 2023, SeniorsNL received funding and partnered with Quality of Care NL to develop, implement, and evaluate "The Social Prescribing Project". Thanks to this support, social prescribing has been integrated into nine Family Care Teams across NL Health Services.

Social prescribing is a person-centered, community based approach to health care that empowers individuals to better understand their needs and take action to improve their health and well-being. Patients can access this service by referral from a member of their Family Care Team or by self-referral. The primary aim of the project is to evaluate the impact of social prescribing from both patient and health care provider perspectives. These findings will guide ongoing efforts to enhance and streamline the social prescribing service within NL Health Services.

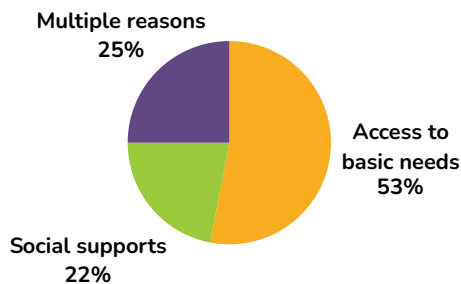


Figure 1: Distribution of Referral Types: What Older Adults Needed Jul. 2024–Sept. 2026

Eligible patients include individuals aged 50 and older who have been referred to the social prescribing service at participating Family Care Team (FCT) sites. In addition, all link workers and any FCT members directly involved in referring patients or in the referral process are eligible to participate in the study.

A total of 1,237 referrals have been made to a link worker from July 2024 to September 2026. The reasons for referrals included access to basic needs (37%) and multiple reasons (25%), but the majority were for social support (38%). Forty-six percent of referrals citing multiple reasons included addressing social support needs. (Figure 1). In terms of those participating in the program, the majority of patients accessed it through self-referrals (Figure 2).

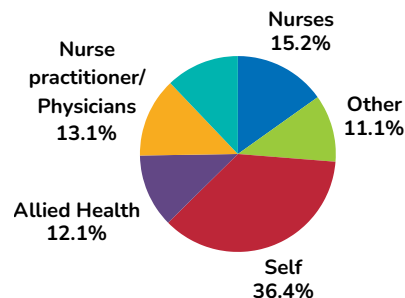


Figure 2: Referral Sources: Building Awareness and Access, Jul. 2024–Sept. 2026

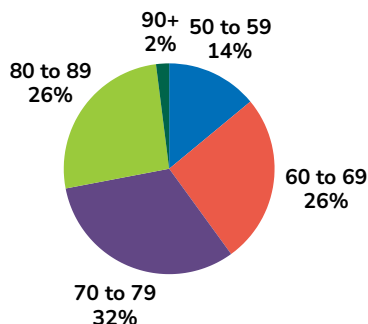


Figure 3: Age Distribution of Social Prescribing Participants

32 patients met the inclusion criteria and were enrolled in the full study. Of the 32 patients, 25 participants presented with basic and multidimensional support needs. Family Care Team members at each participating site are asked to complete a survey every three months to provide feedback on their involvement and perspectives.

BEACON Study

Led by Dr. Leigh Anne Allwood Newhook and Dr. Jo-Anna Hudson in partnership with Quality of Care NL, the Building an Enhanced Health and Social Care Future for Children and Youth in Newfoundland and Labrador (BEACON) Study follows all children born in Newfoundland and Labrador from 2013 to 2022. Linked data will help the team understand children's health, service use, and social determinants over time and inform care across the province.

Research and partnerships: The Phase One master dataset was completed, and preliminary results were generated for the updated birth cohort, including ten-year perinatal trends and rural-urban comparisons. Phase Two linkage work is well underway. A genetics subproject led by Dr. Marisa Chard received a \$30,000 Janeway Foundation Research Award to study referrals and diagnoses within the cohort. The team is also working on a medical complexity scoping review and submitted an NL Health Research Fund (NLHRF) Innovation Grant application for further population-based analyses.

The Patient and Public Partner Advisory Committee grew to 17 members and reviewed study and grant materials. Two 40-hour MUCEP student positions were allocated to the study; one medical student accepted a position and recruitment for the second was underway. A master's student role is being developed for a defined data project, and recruitment for a research assistant on the genetics subproject is in progress.

Presentations and knowledge sharing: The team shared preliminary findings at Pediatric Grand Rounds and PriFor 2026. Dr. Jo-Anna Hudson presented a BEACON Study poster at the Canadian Paediatric Society conference and an oral presentation at Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CASPER). The study was also presented to Child and Youth Health Model directors to explore alignment with their evaluation.

Two BEACON Study Practice Points were drafted, including one on ten-year trends and determinants of perinatal health outcomes. A BEACON Study article was submitted for the Janeway Pediatric Research Unit Research Report. The protocol manuscript was revised and resubmitted to PLOS ONE, and a knowledge translation paper is in development.

Digital and community outreach. The BEACON Study website was updated regularly and recorded 781 views and 471 active users as of June 8, 2026. The team engaged government, health care, education, and community partners on data linkage opportunities and the use of findings. Recruitment materials were distributed across the province, and a new brochure was prepared for community outreach and patient and public partner recruitment.

Next steps. The team will continue Phase Two linkages and analyses and work with patient and public partners to interpret and share findings. Planned activities include Labrador outreach in October, a presentation at the SHARE Summit, discussions with the Child Health Strategic Health Network, and potential Research Week participation.



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