

Use of Obstetrics Services in NL

Objective

To report the number of deliveries and C-sections in the obstetrics units of NL.

Practice Points

1. In 2020, 3,630 babies were delivered in ten obstetrics units in NL. In the geographically isolated region of Labrador-Grenfell Health (LGH), there are three units and 282 babies were delivered. There is one unit in Western Health (WH) where 425 babies were delivered. The region ranges from Port Saunders (277 km north of Corner Brook), to Port aux Basques (218 km south of Corner Brook).

Central Health (CH) has two units one travel hour apart and 501 babies were delivered.

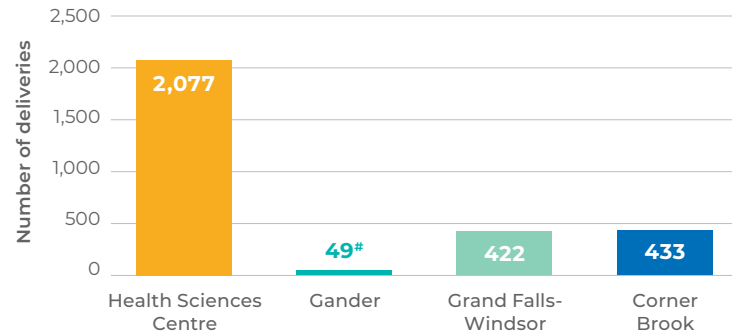
About 80,000 people live in the Tri-Peninsulas region of Eastern Health (EH) and it has three units. The St. John's region, including Placentia and the Cape Shore, has a population of 235,000 and one obstetrics unit.

2. Models of obstetrics care vary from the most frequent model, obstetricians, the obstetrician and family physician model in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB), and a model with obstetricians and midwives in Gander.
3. Small volumes of deliveries in units are a concern for the management of high-risk pregnancies, maintenance of competence, and the sustainability of the program should providers leave.

Data

Utilization data were obtained from Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) for the fiscal year 2019/20.

Results



[#]For some of this year, deliveries were diverted from Gander to Grand Falls-Windsor. The number of deliveries in CH was 471.

Figure 1A. Annual Number of Deliveries in the Large Hospitals, 2019/20

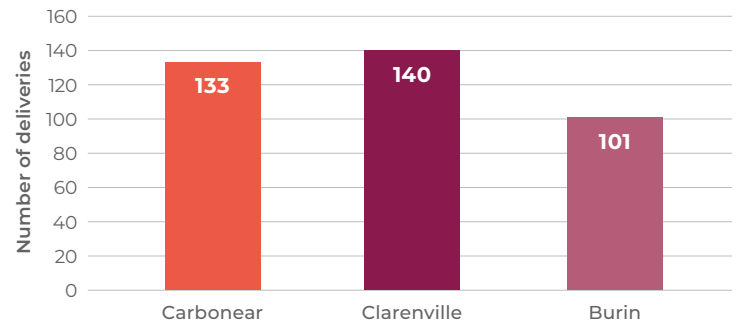


Figure 1B. Annual Number of Deliveries in the Three Rural Hospitals of EH, 2019/20

- The annual number of deliveries in the three rural hospitals was low. Despite a catchment population of at least 40,000 people, there were only 133 deliveries in Carbonear.

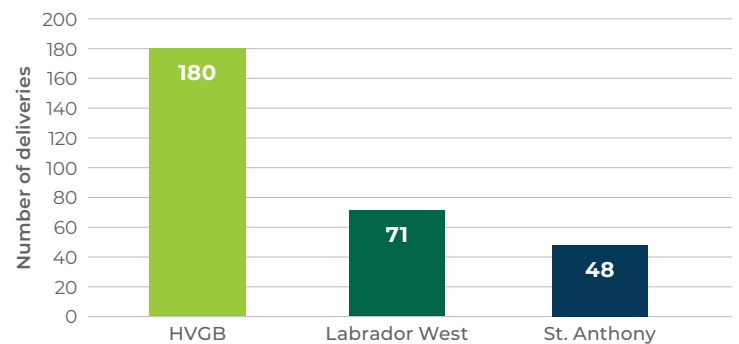


Figure 1C. Annual Number of Deliveries in LGH Hospitals, 2019/20

- The number of deliveries in Labrador West and St. Anthony was low.

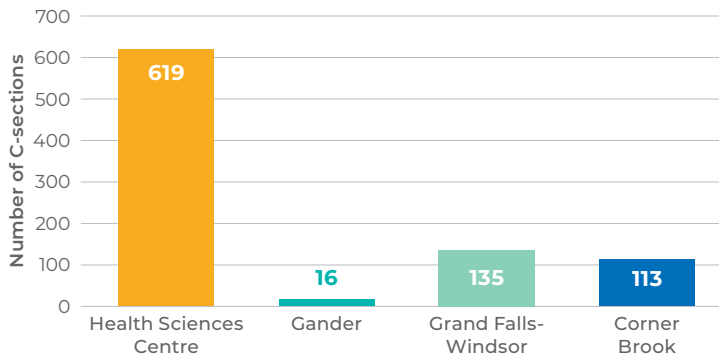


Figure 2A. Annual Number of C-Sections in the Large Hospitals, 2019/20

- The per cent of deliveries by C-section was 30% in St. John's, 29% in CH, and 26% in Corner Brook.
- The Canadian rate is 28%.

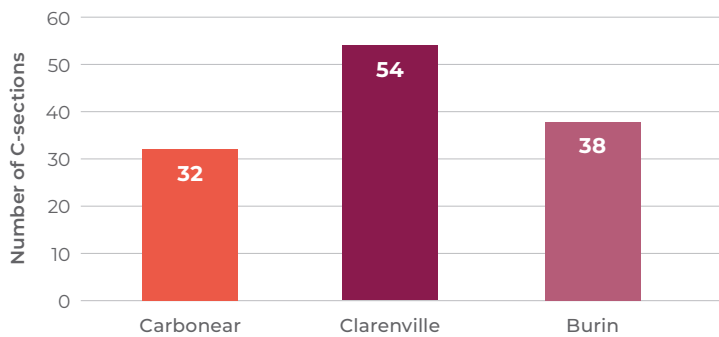


Figure 2B. Annual Number of C-Sections in the Three Rural Hospitals of EH, 2019/20

- The C-section rate was 24% in Carbonear, 39% in Clarenville and 38% in Burin.

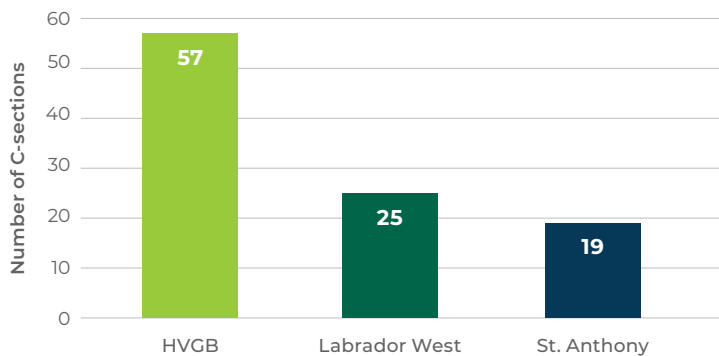


Figure 2C. Annual Number of C-Sections in the Three LGH Hospitals

- C-section rate in HVGB 32%, in Labrador City 35%, and in St. Anthony 40%.

Table 1. Distance to Next Nearest Obstetrics Unit

Area	Distance (km)
Carbonear to St. John's	112
Clarenville to St. John's	196
Burin to Clarenville	192
Gander to Grand Falls-Windsor	98
St. Anthony to Corner Brook	466
Labrador City to HVGB	531

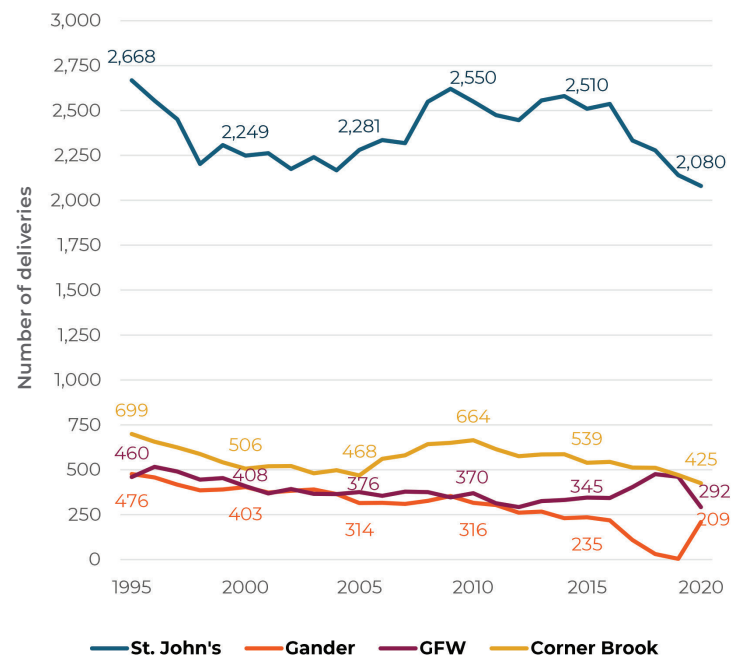


Figure 3A. Deliveries Over Time From 1995 to 2020 in the Large Hospitals

- The reduction in deliveries over the past 25 years was 22% in St. John's, 39% in Corner Brook, and 28% in Central.

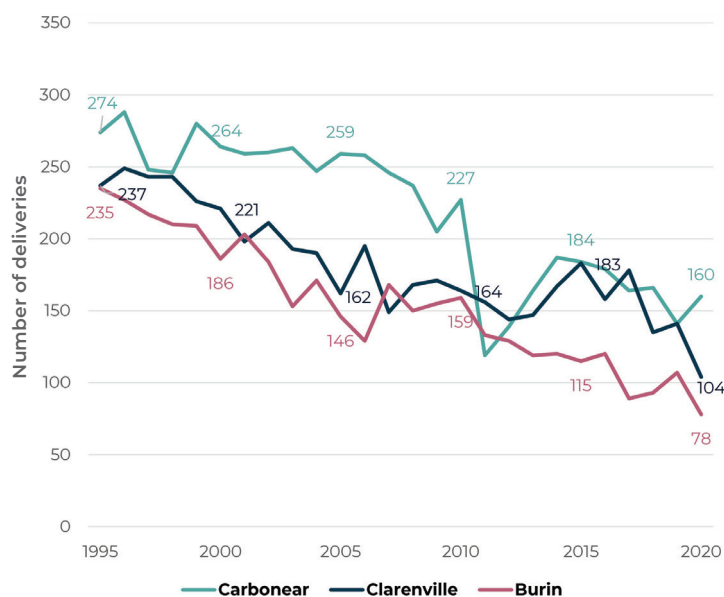


Figure 3B. Deliveries Over Time Since 1995 in the Three Rural Hospitals of EH

- In 2020, there were 360 deliveries from the catchment population of Carbonear, but only 160 deliveries in Carbonear Hospital with the majority in St. John's.
- The reduction in deliveries in the 3 rural hospitals was 42% in Carbonear, 56% in Clarenville, and 67% in Burin.

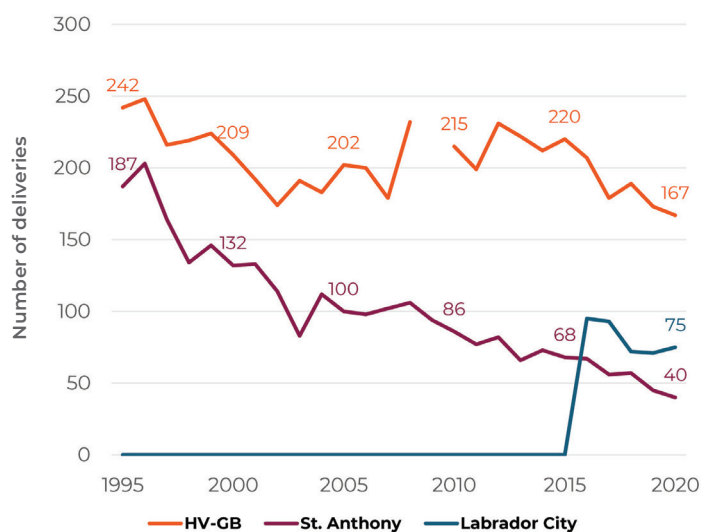


Figure 3C. Deliveries Over Time Since 1995 in the Three Hospitals in LGH

- The reduction in deliveries in HVGB over 25 years was 31% and in St. Anthony it was 79%.

Conclusions

1. Consideration should be given to one obstetrics unit in CH.
2. The small volume of deliveries in St. Anthony and Labrador City is a concern, whatever the model of obstetrics.
3. Because of concern about sustainability of obstetrics service in Burin, consideration should be given to a central unit in Clarenville with outreach to Burin.
4. Consideration should be given to outreach services from St. John's to Carbonear. Continuation of obstetric services in Carbonear would be feasible if more mothers went to Carbonear Hospital rather than St. John's.