

# Supporting Inter-Professional Collaboration in Family Care Teams in Newfoundland and Labrador

## Objective

To describe the Family Care Team Resource Hub Project in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).

## Practice Points

1. A Family Care Team is an interdisciplinary group of health care providers who provide longitudinal, comprehensive, person-centered care to individuals in a specific geographical area.
2. On 3 Nov 2023, the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) released Family Care Teams: A Health Policy Framework for NL which sets the policy direction for Family Care Teams in the province. (Source: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/2023-Family-Care-Teams-A-Health-Policy-Framework-for-NL.pdf>).
3. One of the nine key attributes of Family Care Teams described in the framework is inter-professional collaboration (IPC). IPC is the process of problem-solving, sharing responsibility for decision-making, and delivering a care plan while working towards a common goal.
4. Memorial University (Quality of Care NL and the Office of Professional and Educational Development in the Faculty of Medicine) partnered with HCS in a three year project to develop a Resource Hub to support IPC by providing learning and educational resources to health care providers and staff of Family Care Teams.
5. The Resource Hub, which is in development, will include a website with education materials, feedback mechanisms, webinars, and a training program for Family Care Teams.

## Data

A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted from Jun–Nov 2023 to explore the education, resource, and training needs of Family Care Teams in order to support IPC in primary health care.

### Data Collected from the Needs Assessment

Environmental Scan*	1
Family Care Team Managers Focus Group	1
Family Care Team Provider and Staff Focus Groups	5
Key Informant Interviews**	9
Family Care Team Provider Survey	1

\*The environmental scan included a review of peer-reviewed scoping articles that identified strategies and interventions for IPC and integration in primary health care published between Jan 2020 and Nov 2023, as well as an internet search of online open-source resources to help populate the Resource Hub website (i.e., web pages, toolkits, training, frameworks, and assessments).

\*\*Semi-structured interviews were conducted with informants representing key provincial and national organizations and/or institutions with expertise in IPC, training, education, IPC frameworks, processes, and strategies.

## Results

- Notably, themes that emerged from the needs assessment were consistent across all data sources.

**Table 1. Key Findings of the Needs Assessment**

Key Enablers	
Role clarity and scope of practice	Understanding the role of each team member
	Understanding the professional capabilities and limitations of team members
Communication	Strong communication skills lead to team development and better patient care
Co-location	Co-location improved collegiality
Dedicated time	Dedicated time for regular meetings and team huddles to foster team development
Leadership (team and stakeholder level)	Strong leadership to provide guidance and direction for Family Care Teams

**Table 1. Continued**

Key Barriers	
Role clarity	Lack of understanding of the roles of others can have a negative effect on collaboration
Culture change	Time needed to adapt to new health care delivery model
System supports	Lack of access to important strategic documents
	Lack of clear vision of goals and outcomes
Co-location	Teams require co-location and/or strong, effective virtual care technology and processes
Team structure	Having complete teams is essential to team functioning and development
Key Strategies, Supports and Resources	
Communication/ knowledge sharing/ case management	There needs to be effective communication where members have the opportunity to share knowledge and discuss cases
Dedicated time for team building	Teams need clear vision of goals and outcomes
	Teams need time allotted for team development
Guidelines/ frameworks/ strategic plans	Teams need access to strategic documents
	Goals must be clear and communicated early

**Table 2. Education and Training**

Topics and Educational Experiences Identified as Important by Focus Groups, Key Informants, and Survey Respondents
Role clarity/role negotiation
Team building
Conflict resolution/conflict management
Change management and quality improvement
Inter-professional collaboration and communication
Group dynamics
Leadership
Clinic specific needs

## Conclusions

1. The province continues to invest in team-based primary health care via the Family Care Team model.
2. The Resource Hub website (<https://www.familycareteamsnl.ca/>) went live 15 Dec 2023, and its content will evolve over time.
3. The results of the needs assessment along with the Provincial Policy Framework will be used to inform the development of a training program for Family Care Teams. This program will be designed to enhance IPC.
4. A webinar series for health care providers and staff of Family Care Teams was completed in early 2024 and another is being planned for Fall 2024.
5. The process of building a Family Care Team, adding providers, and attaching the expected number of patients is time consuming. As such, it will take time for teams to function at the expected level and the Resource Hub will be used to support those teams at different stages of implementation.