



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

May 1, 2020

Clarification: Closure of Private health care clinics does not apply to Physician Clinics

Please note that the reference to “private health care clinics” in the Alert Levels released by the Chief Medical Officer of Health does not apply to physician offices in the community.

Physician offices were not/have not been ordered to close. During the pandemic many physician practices have adhered to good social distancing practices by reducing their office hours and increasing virtual care visits. In the new CMOH Plan released yesterday, Alert Level 5 refers to dentists, physiotherapists and other similar private practices, as follows: “Private health care clinics remain closed, except for urgent and emergent care, with virtual care options available for non-urgent care.”

Alert Level 4, similarly, did not include physician practices: “Private health care clinics remain closed, except for urgent and emergent care, with virtual care options available for non-urgent care.”

[EDIT: the Department has now updated it’s website to clarify that the closure does not apply to physicians or nurse practitioners.]

While physician offices remain open, individual physicians make their own decisions about which patients need to be seen in person.

The NLMA has launched a paid social media campaign to increase public awareness about the fact that many physicians are offering virtual appointments and the importance of not letting health issues languish. NLMA also issued a [news release](#) to all media to provide clarification on this matter and the President conducted interviews with all provincial media.

The NLMA will also be consulting members in the coming days to obtain input on best practices for phased return to full schedules in offices and the future of virtual care.

***Representing and supporting a united medical profession and providing leadership
in the provision of excellent health care in Newfoundland and Labrador***

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