



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

NLMA asks for the public's input on care for seniors

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St. John's, NL – In March, a group of 30 front-line physicians, nurses and social workers gathered in St. John's during the 2011 NLMA Seniors Summit to develop recommendations for the medical treatment of the province's aging population.

Now, the NLMA is taking the discussion online and asking the public to provide their input on how to improve care for seniors.

The *2011 Seniors Summit Summary Report* is available for download from the Seniors Summit page of the NLMA's website at www.nlma.nl.ca. Videos from the summit can be viewed on the NLMA YouTube channel, which can be reached by clicking the YouTube icon on the NLMA website.

"We're calling on anyone with a vested interest in seniors' care to go online, view the report and videos from the Seniors Summit and then tell us how they would change the health care system to better serve seniors," said NLMA President Dr. Patrick O'Shea.

Participants are asked to describe three changes they would like to see happen in the medical system by 2025, when 25 per cent of the province's population will be over 65.

Feedback can be posted as a comment on the NLMA Facebook page by clicking the Facebook icon found at www.nlma.nl.ca. Suggestions can also be emailed to president@nlma.nl.ca no later than **June 20, 2011**.

"The delivery of care to seniors will become more challenging in the coming decade, bringing increased strain on personal care homes, long-term and acute care facilities, and on the medical management of seniors. The time to start planning for a better way to deliver care is now," said Dr. O'Shea.

"By coming together with our collective ideas and experiences, we can move towards effecting change that will have a lasting impact on the lives of the elderly in our province."

Input provided by the public will be used to generate a recommendations paper to support the province's long-term care and community support services strategy.

BACKGROUND

About the 2011 Seniors Summit

On March 30th, 2011, the President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association, Dr. Patrick O'Shea, hosted the 2011 Seniors Summit at the Holiday Inn in St. John's for 30 front-line physicians, nurses and social workers. The summit was designed to gather input into a positively-focused policy and recommendations paper for the medical treatment of seniors.

Barriers to Accessing Care

During the Summit, participants identified a number of existing issues and barriers that seniors face in the province's health care system including, prevailing ageism and inadequate human resources for home support, diagnostic services and convalescence. They also identified inadequate processes for the assessment, treatment, placement and discharge of patients. The province also lacks robust evidence-based data collection and information sharing systems to support system change. For some seniors, geographic disparity can also influence the level and type of care they can access.

Elements of a Medical Model of Care

There is potential to drastically improve the delivery of care to seniors using a new, streamlined medical care model. Four possible models for seniors' medical care and treatment were developed during the Seniors Summit, elements of which can be implemented using existing tools and resources.

Elements of a medical model of care for seniors must include: facilities designed specifically for geriatric care; access to 24-hour home care support and emergency response (e.g., a geriatric rescue service and home triage); community-based geriatric respite teams; adequate availability of acute, rehabilitation and long-term care beds; an adequate supply of health professionals for acute and community-based teams; and, systems that allow timely transfers and appropriate placements of patients. Robust information sharing systems and improved screening tools that determine the level and type of care required for each patient will also increase efficiency and productivity. Dedicated resources to help seniors navigate access to services and make decisions about their care will also reduce costs and wait times, while relieving anxiety for patients and their families.

Elements of a Funding Model for Seniors' Care

Participants called for a redesigned funding model whereby funding travels with the individual patient and is based on their needs, rather than being assigned to the institutional bed. A revitalized strategy for seniors' care must also include expanded professionals' education and training in geriatrics and an alternative payment model that recognizes the level of care required for the treatment of seniors and the dynamics of working in multidisciplinary teams.

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