



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

**Unfilled residency positions signal worsening problems for province
woefully short of family doctors**

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St. John's, NL – Over one-third of available family medicine residency positions in the province remain vacant after the first round of the CaRMS match, according to information obtained by the NLMA.

The Canadian Resident Matching Service “matches” medical students to training positions across Canada. Of the 35 family medicine residency positions in Newfoundland and Labrador, 13 went “unmatched”, all of them outside the Eastern region. This is the highest number of first round vacancies since 2014.

“This is certainly a disappointing year,” said NLMA President Dr. Charlene Fitzgerald. “It is a signal of worsening problems for the province when we are already woefully short of family doctors.”

Fitzgerald, a family doctor in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, said in the past few years Memorial University has enjoyed a very high first round match rate. “The NLMA is concerned that this sharp decline may be the start of a trend unless steps are taken to make family medicine a more attractive option to our students.”

Fitzgerald said she and her colleagues are worried that if more is not done to support needed changes in family medicine – such as enabling team-based care and virtual care – the situation may not improve.

“Too many people in this province do not have access to a family doctor, with untold consequences to their overall health. The NLMA has made proposals to the provincial government on how to address the problems with family medicine. Patients cannot wait any longer. The government must begin to act now.”

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