



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

**ATIPPA request reveals Health Minister has no plan to address doctor shortage**

**For immediate release – October 1, 2021**

**St. John's, NL** – The response the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association (NLMA) received to a recent request under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA)*, demonstrates that the Minister of Health and Community Services, John Haggie, has no plan for addressing the province's doctor shortage.

Last month, the NLMA submitted an *ATIPPA* request for a copy of the plan that the Health Minister referenced in an [NTV Evening News interview](#) where he stated: “*We have a plan. We've got a short, medium and long-term approach, but there is no secret sauce for this just at the moment.*”

The claim that plans existed was a surprise to the NLMA so we requested, under *ATIPPA* legislation, copies of the short, medium and long-term plans, and any related documents that might assess the supply and demand for physicians in the province, a human resource plan for physicians and recruitment and retention for physicians.

The Department's response on September 21 contained no plans or records other than a link to a 2015 document before Minister Haggie was appointed Minister of Health and Community Services. The Minister's assertion in the media was therefore inaccurate and misleading.

Furthermore, none of the activities mentioned in the Department's response were focused on addressing the physician shortage.

“The NLMA has been saying all along that the Minister of Health has no plan and that it is time for the government to address the province's physician shortage by implementing a physician human resource plan and a recruitment and retention strategy,” says NLMA President Dr. Susan MacDonald.

“The Minister talks a good talk and has repeatedly assured the public that government is on top of this issue. Yet, he has failed to produce any concrete plan aimed at helping the more than 98,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians without a family doctor. The response from his department did not even reference doctors. The lack of an actual plan to address the province's physician shortage is both alarming and sad.”

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