

# President's Letter

August 10, 2022



Kris Luscombe  
MD, FRCPC

Dear Colleagues:

The Department of Health and Community Services has announced a new program to encourage fully retired family physicians to return to practice so they can provide locum support in a time of crisis.

Communities with Category B facilities throughout the province are struggling to offer family medicine and emergency services. The province is also facing an increasing number of unattached patients, which according to our latest polling, has risen to approximately 125,000 people. This is having a devastating impact on patients who are unable to obtain medical care. It's also having a crippling effect on emergency departments, puts strain on our existing family medicine workforce, and impacts specialists who are seeing more unmanaged patients with no primary care provider.

The new one-year pilot program for Incentivizing Retired Physicians is part of an 'all-hands-on-deck' approach to help stabilize medical services. Retired family physicians who agree to reinstate their medical license and provide a minimum of 30 days locum service in a community-based practice or RHA of their choosing, will be fully reimbursed for fees associated with the CPSNL, the CMPA, the CFPC and the CFPC-NL. The NLMA will also waive the membership fee for currently retired family physicians who opt to return to practice under this program. Retired family physicians may choose to bill fee-for-service or receive sessional payments. Those who work in a rural area will qualify for a prorated rural retention bonus for every month of service.

If you are retired from practice but have practiced medicine for at least 120 days in the past three years, please review and consider this offer. For more information about eligibility or to apply, please visit <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/grantsfunding/bursaries/#med>. You can also download the application form [here](#).

The NLMA recognizes that this measure will not solve all our problems. Many measures are needed, and this is one more that will assist at this difficult time. As noted in my [July 22 letter](#), the NLMA is in ongoing discussions with the provincial government to develop short-term measures aimed at adding capacity to address the shortages in family medicine. Discussions are also underway to develop better retention bonuses, and work continues on developing a common agenda for addressing issues within family medicine. The NLMA and the Department of Health are also on track to implementing the initiatives that were recently negotiated in our new MOA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K Luscombe".

Kris Luscombe  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "NLMA".

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