

# ATTRACTING AND RETAINING PROFESSIONALS IN LABRADOR

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# Attracting and Retaining Professionals in Labrador

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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR IN TRANSITION

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## The Population Project: Newfoundland and Labrador in Transition

In 2015, Newfoundland and Labrador had the most rapidly aging population in the country – which when combined with high rates of youth out-migration, declining birth rates, and an increasing number of people moving from rural parts of the province to more urban centres, means that the province is facing an unprecedented population challenge. Without intervention, this trend will have a drastic impact on the economy, governance, and the overall quality of life for the people of the province. Planning for this change and developing strategies to adjust and adapt to it is paramount.

The Harris Centre's Population Project has developed potential demographic scenarios for the province and its regions for the next 20 years and will explore a number of the issues arising. These include, but are not limited to, those concerning:

- **Labour markets** – how will future demands for labour be met given a shrinking labour supply?
- **Service demands** – what are the implications of an aging and a geographically shifting population on the demand for public, private and non-government sector services?
- **Service provision** – what are the implications of a declining rural population for the costs and delivery of services to an increasingly smaller and older, but still geographically dispersed population?
- **Governance** – how will local and senior levels of government respond to changing governance issues in the light of these demographic changes and challenges?

Utilizing expertise from both inside and outside the university, the project employs a combined research and debate approach to inform and contribute to government policy, as well as to develop strategies for the private and non-profit sectors to respond to the broad range of issues resulting from the anticipated population shifts.

This report, by a group directed by Dr. Delores Mullings, School of Social Work, Memorial University, explores policy approaches, which would contribute to a strategy for Labrador to help address professional staff attraction and retention needs in the light of anticipated demographic changes. The conclusions reached clearly indicate that many of the issues faced are longstanding ones, and, that in spite of earlier reports offering recommendations to address them, little has changed in the period since 2000. Key recurring themes are professionals' acute dissatisfaction with respect to many aspects of their professional and personal lives in Labrador, the need to provide orientation to incoming professionals in respect to their newly adopted region, community and workplace, and engagement of all stakeholders and decision-makers in the development of informed, consistent and locally relevant attraction and retention strategies for the region. Each of these themes is discussed and accompanied by a series of recommendations that address attraction and retention issues and by association have the potential to improve service delivery in more cost effective ways than is presently the case.

Funded by the International Grenfell Association (IGA), this report is the fourth published through *The Population Project*. This and all other reports generated through the Project are available online at [www.mun.ca/harriscentre/populationproject](http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre/populationproject). More information about the project can be obtained by contacting the Project Director. Comments on the Project and the reports generated are welcomed.

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## GLOSSARY

### Immigrant

Statistics Canada (2015) officially defines *immigrant* as "a person who is or has ever been a landed immigrant/permanent resident. A landed immigrant/permanent resident is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants are either Canadian citizens by naturalization (the citizenship process) or permanent residents (landed immigrants) under Canadian legislation. Some immigrants have resided in Canada for a number of years, while others have arrived recently. Most immigrants are born outside Canada, but a small number are born in Canada."

### Innu

Naskapi and Montagnais First Nations (Indian) peoples who live in Northern Quebec and Labrador. Not to be confused with Inuit (Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador. (2012). *Southern Inuit of NunatuKavut: the historical background*. Retrieved from <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/aboriginal/southern-inuit.php>).

### Inuit

Inuit are the Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada. Inuit live primarily in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and northern parts of Labrador and Quebec. They have traditionally lived above the tree line in the area bordered by the Mackenzie Delta in the west, the Labrador coast in the east, the southern point of Hudson Bay in the south, and the High Arctic islands in the north (Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador. (2012). *Southern Inuit of NunatuKavut: the historical background*. Retrieved from <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/aboriginal/southern-inuit.php>).

### Inuit-Métis

Inuit Metis: The first Southern Inuit of NunatuKavut (formerly Labrador Inuit-Metis) were the children of European men who came to the coast of southern and central Labrador to work in the fish trade, starting in the 1760s, and Inuit women. (NunatuKavut. *Who we are*. Retrieved from: [http://www.nunatukavut.ca/home/who\\_we\\_are.htm](http://www.nunatukavut.ca/home/who_we_are.htm).)

### Newcomers

*Newcomers* are recent immigrants to Canada who have arrived up to 5 years prior to a census year (Statistics Canada, 2006).

### Out-migration

*Out-migration* is the movement of members of a population away from a region. In the Canadian context we refer to both intraprovincial out-migrants (individuals who have moved within the same province) and interprovincial out-migrants (individuals who have moved from one province to another; Statistics Canada, 2011b).

### Professionals

*Professionals* are individuals employed in jobs that require special training, education, or skill (Merriam-Webster, 2016).

### Rural

*Rural* refers to the population living in towns and municipalities outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (i.e., outside the commuting zone of centres with populations of 10,000 or more; du Plessis, Beshiri, Bollman, & Clemenson, 2002, p. 1).

### Remote

In the Canadian context, *remote* is defined as a community that "is located over 350 kilometers [...] from the nearest urban area with year-round road access" (Lithopoulos, 2016, p. 13).

### Temporary Workers (also known as Temporary Foreign Workers)

Temporary workers are foreign nationals authorized (via federal work permit) to temporarily fill a labour or skilled trade position for which there exists a shortage of qualified Canadian citizens or residents as applicants (Government of Canada, 2012, 2016).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Labrador has a unique and distinct history and geography, with the potential for dynamic growth and development. Its vastness, beauty, and remoteness offer both opportunities and challenges for the region. This remoteness, coupled with a high percentage of self-identified Aboriginal residents (see Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority, 2013), outmigration, relatively low birth rates, high percentage of youth, and a rapidly aging population, adds both dynamism and challenges for the region as Labradorians work to consider the economic and social future needs of their region, particularly in terms of attracting and retaining professionals.

### Goals and Objectives

The objective of this project is to explore policy approaches which would contribute to a strategy for Labrador which would in turn help address professional staff attraction and retention needs in the light of anticipated changing demographics. The study was carried out through a community consultation process.

### Recommendations

The findings and recommendations in this report support existing related studies conducted between 2002 and 2016. Three related studies in combination identified many of the issues and concerns described here and reached similar conclusions in making their recommendations. What seems clear from this study of professional attraction and retention in Labrador is that not much has changed over the last 16 years. What appear to be constant, however, are key recurring themes: professionals' acute dissatisfaction in several areas with respect to their professional and personal lives in Labrador; the need to orient in-migrating professionals to their newly adopted region, community, and workplace; and the challenge of engaging stakeholders in a long-term commitment to informed, consistent strategies. At the end of each section, specific recommendations are made; those recommendations are grouped into larger themes and presented as: professional dissatisfaction, orientation and strategic priorities.

### Professional Dissatisfaction

To address specific, well-documented disincentives to professional retention, numerous short-term (immediate to five years) changes could be implemented. Once professionals stay longer in the region, the pressure to constantly recruit would be diminished, and that would help to stabilize the staffing issue in the region. The first steps to retaining professionals is to pay them competitive salaries; ensure fair treatment and show appreciation for the work that they do; re-instate bonuses and incentives; attend to staffing issues; and provide the opportunity for professional development. More specifically:

- 1) **Salaries:** Offer salaries that are comparable to those offered elsewhere in Northern Canada and similarly remote areas.
- 2) **Management and administration:** Pay all personnel based on the principle of equal pay for work of equal value; pay full round-trip travel for all staff; show appreciation for professionals' commitment to their work; have onsite managers and supervisors; and address workplace safety issues and concerns.
- 3) **Incentives:** Provide incentives similar to other regions across Canada in similarly rural and remote areas.
- 4) **Staffing issues:** Hire and train sufficient staff to implement schedules that will reduce the excessively long working hours, and allow staff to take days off and vacation.
- 5) **Professional advancement and connection:** Provide the opportunity and programs for training, development, advancement, professional collaboration, and support with continuing education for professionals.

## Orientation

Attracting and retaining professionals could be further improved by enhancing newcomers' knowledge of the region's history and culture, the community they will serve, and their specific workplace. This could include:

- 6) **Training and education:** Professional schools (e.g., of nursing, social work, medicine or teacher education) need to partner with Innu and Inuit communities in Labrador to provide cultural training and education.
- 7) **Familiarization:** All professionals must be provided with familiarization training about Labrador, its land, cultures and peoples, prior to starting work in Labrador.
- 8) **Staff orientation:** Provide staff orientation to new professionals when they begin their jobs; assign someone to meet, greet, and provide basic information to new professionals on the first day of work.

## Strategic Priorities

Over the long run, success will depend on policy makers' willingness to make Labrador's workforce a priority; to make and implement policies that recognize the region's special character; and to engage a broad swath of regional stakeholders in focussed, coordinated, informed, and consistent long-term efforts to implement the recommended solutions. For example:

- 9) **Services:** Offer appropriate services through skilled professionals to help motivate people to stay.
- 10) **Labrador's special character:** Policy pertaining to Labrador must be developed in collaboration with those who live in the region and are affected by policy decisions.
- 11) **Stakeholders:** All strategizing about professional attraction and retention in Labrador must include community stakeholders such as Innu and Inuit peoples and settlers, both established and those who are newer to the region.
- 12) **Women:** All programs, policies, and recruitment and retention strategies must consider gender-related concerns in order to have a successful retention experience.

The changing demographics of Labrador will have far-reaching implications for the region. The decline in birth rates, and increases in life expectancy, out-migration and retirements mean that in-migration is needed to maintain the workforce; otherwise most regions will experience a shrinking and aging population over the next twenty years. All economic and social sectors of Labrador will be affected by these demographic changes. Professionals are needed to provide services in schools, social services, and medical and health institutions and this problem will become greater with time.

Stakeholders, including young people, politicians, decisions makers, management, administrators, community leaders, and educational institutions, must partner to devise long-term plans to attract and retain professionals, to deal with the problem. These strategies must take into account recommendations from previous research, and make a commitment to address the problems identified in a holistic and balanced manner rather than the disjointed way in which issues are currently being addressed and solutions partially implemented. All strategizing must include Innu and Inuit peoples and settlers, both established and those who are newer to the region.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This province has long been challenged to attract and retain professionals and, in response, has commissioned individuals and committees to explore potential strategies to combat the problem. However, in spite of numerous reports and recommendations, the problems persist. With regards to Labrador, it appears that the region is successful in recruiting professionals in some geographic areas. However, it is clear that more is needed, and that a serious commitment to deal with the concern is crucial. Strategies to deal with professional attraction and retention must take into account recommendations from previous research, and a commitment to address the identified problems in a holistic and balanced manner, rather than in the perceived disjointed way in which recommendations have been partially implemented in the past. While successive provincial governments have claimed a commitment to welcoming newcomers and subsequently outlined new and/or adjusted priorities to attract newcomers to the province, the programs adopted have all been largely ineffective. Administrators and policy makers have also displayed a lack of commitment to solving the long-standing challenge of professional attraction and retention in Labrador. Attracting and retaining professionals in Labrador is important now and for the future of maintaining and advancing the region: Labradorians, the government, and crown corporations will need to collaborate and form partnerships to review, develop and implement strategic priorities for attracting and retaining professionals in Labrador.

### 1.1 Goals and Objectives

This project aims to identify factors that contribute to successful attraction and retention of professionals in Labrador. The question of how to best attract and retain professionals is examined from multiple perspectives, including those of employers, professional employees, and service providers. To provide depth to the project, researchers also conducted a literature review of relevant provincial, national, and international trends, and experiences pertaining to attraction and retention of professional workers in rural and remote areas. Ultimately, the project's objective is to propose recommendations to support government strategy for policy development and initiatives. These objectives have been informed by the following questions:

- What does the international, national, and provincial literature say about attracting and retaining professionals in rural and remote areas?
- What enablers do professionals experience when they move to rural and remote areas internationally, nationally, and provincially? How comparable are these enablers to professionals' experience in Labrador?
- What are the factors that potentially contribute to successfully attracting and retaining professionals in Labrador?

## 2.0 CURRENT SITUATION: DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN LABRADOR

Newfoundland and Labrador experienced a population increase between 1951 and 1991; however, since then, there has been an overall decline, with rural and remote areas showing the greatest changes. Nine percent or 25,113 of the Newfoundland and Labrador population reside in Labrador in several Innu, Inuit, Inuit-Métis, and settler communities. Statistics Canada (2016) notes that Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest median population age (44.2) of any Canadian province or territory, and that net interprovincial migration in 2015/2016 was zero; however, a further review tells a different story in that the net migration for 2001-2005 was -15,114; 2006-2010 -1,130; 2011-2015 1,130; and 2016-2017 -1,954. Low birth rates, an aging population, and outmigration of young people from rural and coastal areas to urban and regional centres continue to influence the decline in the province's population as a whole and that of Labrador specifically (Simms & Greenwood, 2015; Simms and Ward 2016).

Labrador is a resource-rich region with iron ore, nickel, zinc, cobalt, copper, gold, silver, fish, timber, petroleum, and hydroelectric power. Historically, mining has been a major economic contributor to the province, and to Labrador specifically, where several metal mines are in currently in operation including Voisey's Bay, Iron Ore Company of Canada and Tata Steel. Labrador's terrain is mountainous, subarctic, and arctic, and comprises a vast geographical region measuring 294,330 km<sup>2</sup>, almost three-quarters of Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole. Labrador's two largest export are mining and hydroelectricity; it is home to the second largest hydroelectric plant in North America (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2016a; 2016b, 2016c; Summers, 2010).

Labrador is divided into distinct regions with unique characteristics: Labrador North Coast, Central Labrador, Labrador South Coast, and Labrador West. There are complex regional demographic differences across these regions, including a high number of children and youth on Labrador's North Coast and a rapidly aging population on the South Coast. The Innu and Inuit communities are distinct, having different cultures, residing in different regional areas, and speaking different languages. The Nunatsiavut government, is a self-governing Inuit regional government and a leader for the Inuit people (Nunatsiavut government, 2017). The Inuit speak Inuktitut and the Innu speak Innu-Aimun as their first languages.

### 2.1 Implications for Anticipated Demographic Changes

In light of Newfoundland and Labrador's decreasing population, the provincial government engaged in a province-wide consultation with residents about their economic and social needs and aspirations (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2013). The consultations resulted in the development of a Provincial Population Growth Strategy (the Strategy) in which the government outlined key factors that contribute to the province's lack of population growth and shrinking labour supply, including outmigration, aging population, low birth rate, and an inability to retain immigrants in the province (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2013). The Strategy drew attention to the subsequent problems arising from a declining population, namely, an anticipated 70,000 job openings expected by 2020 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2013), with insufficient working-aged individuals to assume these roles.

The Strategy also suggested that the province needed to:

- 1) Develop policies which support families to have more children.
- 2) Retain current residents.
- 3) Encourage former residents to return.
- 4) Improve immigrant attraction and retention.
- 5) Increase retention of international students following their graduation.
- 6) Develop strategies to increase the well-being of residents (p. 4).

The province attracted only 0.3% of all new immigrants to Canada in 2012 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2013, p. 9). New immigrants are attracted to regions where the "possibilities for employment, good education for children, perceived inclusiveness of the local community, including the workplace, familiar cuisine, availability of culture-specific products, entertainment, and culture" are present (p. 9). However, Newfoundland and Labrador's racial and cultural diversity is primarily comprised of various groups of Indigenous peoples and a large white settler population. Social support services are few; newcomers who arrive in the province often leave to settle in other Canadian regions with an infrastructure, community service, and social connections aligned with their needs (Gien & Law, 2009).

In 2015, the newly-elected government of Newfoundland and Labrador updated the population growth strategy and extended it for 10 years (2015-2025), focusing on creating the conditions "that allow employers in the province to succeed, and attract businesses and employees from Canada and beyond" (p. 11). The new iteration of the strategy has four action plans:

- 1) The Workforce Development Action Plan focuses on job growth and matching job seekers with employers looking to hire people.
- 2) The Families Action Plan emphasizes the creation of a supportive climate to encourage families to increase the number of children they have (e.g. adoption, fostering, and birth) and to care for older adults.
- 3) The Communities Action Plan focuses on economic development in the entire province, as well as social and support programs, activities, services, including settlement services, and fostering economic growth.
- 4) The Immigration Action Plan Immigration Action Plan which "focuses on increasing the attraction and retention of immigrants and people from elsewhere in Canada and around the world by actively promoting the economic and lifestyle opportunities available throughout Newfoundland and Labrador" (p. 12).

As noted in the Strategy document, the Provincial government recognizes the need to create welcoming communities to enable individuals to balance careers and family life, including raising children. These action plans, if successfully developed, could potentially also aid in the attraction and retention of professionals in the province.

The government is tasked to invest money into its attraction and retention program recognizing that investments aimed at attracting and retaining newcomers to the province will ultimately benefit local communities as well.

### 3.0 GLOBAL ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

The issues of attracting and retaining professional workers in small urban centres and remote areas have generated much attention from scholars, state and local governments, and organizations worldwide. To this end, several countries and organizations have heavily invested in exploring the challenges of attracting and retaining professionals. While the focus of most international, national, and local literature is on attracting and retaining professionals in health care (see for example, Rohatinsky & Jahner, 2016; Roots & Li, 2013), many of the challenges to attracting and retaining workers in other professions and industries are similar. For example, despite a dearth of literature, attracting and retaining teachers and social workers appears to be a point of interest for many researchers, governments, and institutions in South Africa (South African Council for Educators, 20011), the United States (Sundeen & Wienke, 2009, Canada (Mueller et al., 2011), and Namibia (Anon, 2014).

Remote and rural areas worldwide have the most difficulty attracting and retaining professionals. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 50% of the world's population lives in rural areas, yet only 38% and less than 25% of the total nursing and physician workforce, respectively, provide services in those areas (Dolea, Stormont, & Braichet, 2010). Various strategies for attracting health professionals in rural and remote areas include incentives, signing bonuses, housing allowances, travel subsidies, and continuing education grants, which are used to attract and retain professionals such as nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, and physicians (Canadian Medical Association, 2000; Dolea et al. 2009; Campbell, McAllister & Eley, 2012; Mbemba, Gagnon, Paré, & Côté, 2013; Roots & Li, 2013). In order to understand successful attraction and retention of professional in remote and rural areas, the WHO and the European Union's European Regional Development Fund conducted a meta-analysis of published research that examined factors that motivate health care workers to work in rural areas, both in the Global South and North. This meta-analysis suggests that individuals who were born in rural and remote regions are motivated to return to work in those areas (Strasser & Neusy, 2010). Therefore, governments might do well to invest in programs to motivate individuals to remain in or return to their local communities.

Other research suggests a positive correlation between the inclusion of specialized or focussed training pertaining to working in rural and remote areas within professional programs. For example, Strasser and Ne`usy (2010) found that scheduling of clinical rotations in rural areas as a part of professionals' formal education, receiving education directly related to preparing for rural practice and financial incentives, are strong motivating factors that attracted professionals to work in rural and remote areas. In some cases, new graduates wanting to advance their careers are more likely to choose to practice in rural and remote areas, especially if they have exposure to such areas during their education. Specialized training, such as rural medicine, and post-graduate opportunities (e.g., scholarships) increased the chances of practitioners remaining in the areas in which they are trained or going to similar areas after finishing their programs (Wilson, Woodhead-Lyons, and Moores, 1998). Other methods used to retain professionals include time-limited restrictions placed on international physicians and nurses, requiring them to work in rural and remote regions for specific timeframes (European Union European Regional Development Fund, 2013).

In some countries and regions, governments have developed tangible policies that support new graduates to attract professionals to remote and rural areas. For example, Australia used the Tertiary Educators Rural, Regional and Remote Network (TERRR Network) to attract newly-graduated teachers to rural areas (Lynch, 2014). Administrators of the TERRR network target students in teacher education programs to promote rural teaching, highlight the Aboriginal population's educational needs, explain the complexities of working in rural regions, and prepare new teachers to accept the opportunity to work in rural and remote areas. Analogous to the health care sector, emphasis is placed on rural placements during training (Dorman, Kennedy & Young, 2014).

While focussing on recent graduates to attract professionals to rural settings through incentives within educational programs has been partially successful, other factors also matter, particularly if gender and other diversity are considered. For example, according to Schofield et al. (2009), male physicians are more likely to choose rural placements than women; however, this may change with the increasing number of women in medical programs and if better housing is provided for physicians as part of employment packages. Additionally, Lehmann, Dieleman, and Martineau (2008) determined that men's mobility was primarily linked to financial considerations, whereas women's mobility was more "closely related to marriage or family considerations" (p. 5).

Additionally, there were many barriers identified to retention of professionals related to the working conditions of professionals in rural areas. Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) produced a report for the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on improving the conditions for teachers in rural schools in several African countries, including the sub-Saharan African (SSA) region, the Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo), Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) examined the current education system and economic status of African countries, reviewed the challenges that teachers in rural areas experience, and strategized ways to improve teaching conditions. Some of the challenges unique to the region included:

- Poor funding in rural schools.
- Poor quality of education in rural schools.
- Poor status of teachers.
- Lack of career opportunities.
- Poor infrastructural facilities.
- Poor monitoring of teachers' attitude, behaviour, and performance in rural schools.
- Administrative bottlenecks which make the teachers in rural schools feel neglected and treated unfairly by the authorities.
- Inconsistent and incessant disruption of academic programmes caused by staff strikes and political disturbances.
- The threat of HIV/AIDS among teachers, and lack of adequate medical facilities for HIV/AIDS in rural areas (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011, p. 6).

Strategies to resolve the issues facing rural educators were similar to those used in other regions and professions, including financial incentives, training support, and educational opportunities. The report emphasized the need for state and local governments' commitment to help improve rural education, foster community participation in education, and recognize teachers as important members of the community in which they work and live (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011, p. 6).

The literature offers a mixture of possible challenges and solutions relevant to Labrador. Certainly, the challenges are clear and as will be seen attracting and retaining professionals in Labrador is hindered by inadequate infrastructure (housing, social and health services, accessible travel, and child and elder care) in communities and workplaces, administrative bottlenecks, inadequate financial incentives to offset the costs of living in rural areas, and unsupportive workplaces. The literature also suggests possible solutions many of which are relevant to Labrador. These include increasing financial incentives, training support, educational opportunities, and pre-employment orientation, as well as supporting professionals and their families in their settling in their new chosen community.

## 4.0 NATIONAL ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

Canadian provinces such as Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, as well as the federal government, implement strategies to attract and retain professionals in rural and remote areas. The Ontario and Alberta provincial governments have addressed their provinces' professional labour shortages by focussing on population growth strategies, primarily by increasing the immigrant population and importing foreign workers (Irshad, 2013). The use of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) to address labour shortages has become the norm across Canada. International TFWs are hired for limited time to fulfill labour contracts, and are used to fill the gaps in oil and gas, health care, mining, farming, and service industries (Barnetson & Foster, 2014; Bird, 2016; Byl, 2010; Cundal & Seaman, 2012; Geddes, 2012). There has also been a concerted effort to attract Canadian-born professionals to rural and remote areas by partnering with educational institutions to provide training and education among institutions; holding recruit-and-retain conferences (Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference Report, 2014) and forums (Northern Development Ministers' Forum, 2003); developing recruit-and-retain strategies; partnering discussions with Indigenous peoples; as well as other forms of assessing, discussing, consulting, and strategizing on how best to attract and retain professionals (Hewitt Associates, 2010).

In addition, Canadian provinces use attraction and retention strategies such as flexible work schedules (Smolkin, 2006), extension of employee benefits into retirement (Clermont 2007), and encouragement of workers to remain employed after retirement age (Dobson, 2009). Higher starting salaries are also one of the primary incentives that larger organizations, businesses, and institutions use to attract and retain employees (Pattern, 2013). In addition, employers may provide opportunities for professional development and help their employees advance internally (Trainor, 1999). Professional development and career advancement is important globally and nationally.

Finally, provincial governments have explored the use of mentorship programs for professionals transitioning into rural service systems. Rohatinsky and Jahner (2016) examined the inherent challenges to establishing and maintaining mentorship relationships and programming for newly-hired nurses in Saskatchewan. In their study, newly-hired nurses' involvement in mentoring programs seemed to have a significant impact on easing the transition from urban to rural nursing. The findings from this study suggest that mentorship programs could be readily translated to other areas of employment.

## 5.0 PROVINCIAL ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has developed policies to address labour shortages and population decline, including initiatives to attract and retain international students and graduates. For example, the provincial government has maintained competitively low tuition fees for international students, compared to other provinces, with the hopes that many students, accustomed to living in Canada and having received Canadian education, will choose to remain in the province post-graduation (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2013, p. 11). The government also encourages new graduate students of various citizenship status the opportunity to work in rural and remote areas by offering them incentive scholarships and bursaries, and contracts that mandate them to work in specific regions where they are most needed (Hewitt Associates, 2010). In addition, the province also implemented the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program (NLPNP) that provides an expedited alternative to the standard immigration application process for internationally skilled and educated workers and their families who want to settle in the province.

While these provincial programs and policies have had some success in attracting and retaining students, graduates, and professionals, a 2010 review of the Provincial Incentive Programs (see Appendix A) in relation to Registered Nurses suggests that there is room for improvement. Hewitt Associates (2010) identified barriers to attraction and retention of nurses in the province, and provided recommendations to mitigate the problem in their document, *Assessment and Recommendations for Attracting and Retaining Registered Nurses*, produced on behalf of the Department of Health and Community Services—Newfoundland and Labrador (2010). The scope of the recommendations were province-wide, although the authors attended to specific regional concerns. Specifically, the authors recommended that Labrador provide incentives to attract and retain nurses; however, the provincial government placed a hold on its incentive programs. Hewitt Associates (2010) noted that the reduced incentives placed Labrador at a disadvantage for recruiting new graduates, who might instead choose to work in other provinces with better incentives. In addition, nurses who were hired before the hold received their incentives, while those hired later did not receive them in spite being promised that they would.

Other barriers to recruitment and retention that surfaced in the Hewitt Associates (2010) report included: having limited time between accepting the job offer and reporting to work; not having information about where to report to work; lack of welcome and orientation when they arrived on location, leaving new arrivals to navigate on their own; being assigned to units in which they did not want to work; and not being told that they would be the only nurse on the unit. In addition, staffing, management, and supervisory concerns surfaced as barriers to retention. Nurses, social workers, and other health care professionals also identified working excessive overtime, and receiving late incentive payments or receiving them in bulk, which increased their tax payments or delayed loan payments they had to make. Hewitt Associates noted that: “nurses often do not feel appreciated or recognized for the work that they do, the overtime they put in, or the vacations they delay” (p. 68). (See Appendix B for a more detailed description of barriers and for recommendations to address nurses’ retention issues).

## 6.0 LABRADOR ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

The Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority (L-GHA), which encompasses all of Labrador, as well as the tip of the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, has had some success with several strategies for attracting and retaining professionals. Institutionally, L-GHA has invested time and money in exploring strategies to address some of the challenges. In its annual reports, the L-GHA has repeatedly discussed the challenges of staffing service on a permanent basis. For example, a review of L-GHA's 2005 community consultation (published 2007), *The Training, Recruitment and Retention Working Group Discussion Paper* (Dyson, et al. 2002), and its annual reports for the period of 2010 to 2015, demonstrated gains in hiring professionals, implementing mechanisms to support them, improvements to the work environment, and actions to explore other attraction and retention possibilities (See Appendix C-2). Specifically, they have implemented the Difficult-to-Fill Health Professional Bursary program to fund professional positions in partnership with Health Canada, Eastern Health, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Service. In addition, the L-GHA applied for a bursary and partnered with other regional Health Authorities to offer innovative educational programs and services. For example, one program consists of both a distance education and practical application component that allows students to work full-time and still attend school. In one case, a Medical Laboratory Technologist (MLT) attended school to learn X-ray skills. Following the training, the MLT filled the previously vacant full-time position on a permanent basis as a combined laboratory and X-Ray technologist at the White Bay Central Health Centre.

The assessment by Hewitt Associates (2010) confirmed "that the Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority and other rural parts of the Province face unique turnover issues due to the very low staffing levels at many points of healthcare delivery. For example, in one Labrador-Grenfell unit of 9 RNs, 5 have resigned" (p. 61). L-GHA offered nurses various incentives including tuition bursaries, summer student employment, relocation assistance, retention bonuses, fuel allowance, and return trips from work site to the nearest regional centre, as well as accommodation and food subsidies (Department of Health and Community Services, 2010, p. 47). Some of these incentives remain in place (e.g. housing subsidies) but others, such as signing bonuses, have been reduced.

Labrador's many remote geographical areas add further complexities to professional attraction and retention. Paliadelis et al. (2012) focussed on the challenges that health care professionals face in rural practice, and these challenges extend across other professional disciplines. Challenges include a lack of supervision and peer support; isolation; high case-loads and long work hours due to staffing shortages; and the high cost of living and travelling in areas with widely dispersed populations. Professionals, regardless of their field, face similar challenges when living in remote regions, and often the lack of access to health and social care professionals can play a significant role in individuals' decisions about whether to seek work in a region.

### 6.1 Reports and Consultations

Previous consultations and assessments (Hewitt Associates, 2010; L-GHA, 2007) suggest that despite the efforts by authorities in Labrador, there is certainly room for more sustained effort to attract and retain professionals to the region. In their *Discussion Paper*, Dyson et al. (2002) considered the question of attracting and retaining professionals in Newfoundland and Labrador, and provided clear recommendations to address the attraction and retention issues. The report identified the following issue areas: low market supply of professionals; compensation and benefits; relocation expenses;

accommodations; isolation; and training. (See Appendix D for an outline of recommendations relevant to this project.)

Similarly, L-GHA conducted a public consultation in 2005 in which issues of retention and attraction of professionals were raised. While the focus of the consultation was not specifically about attraction and retention, some of the findings included: access to specialist services; recruitment and retention; Child, Youth and Family Services (now called Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development); transportation; advocacy and communications; and workplace issues. (See Appendix C for the themes, specific concerns, and L-GHA's response to the concerns.)

As noted previously, Hewitt Associates (2010) conducted a study to explore attraction and retention issues among nurses in Labrador. Their recommendations included: partnering with stakeholders such as labour unions, to successfully implement some programs; implement a Human Resources Management System; review nurse managers' roles and responsibilities and; all Health Authorities in Newfoundland and Labrador should conduct exit interviews with nurses who leave. (See Appendix B for excerpts of the reports' major recommendations.)

## **6.2 Government Response to Newcomers**

The world has witnessed human displacement and mass migration resulting from humanitarian crises, such as war, genocide, terrorism, imperialism, and famine. Some groups, particularly those in the Global South are disproportionately marginalized and are therefore motivated to immigrate to Western countries. Simultaneously, some Western countries like Canada are experiencing a shortage of skilled workers and therefore need to increase their workforce population. Immigration therefore is seen as effective strategy to fill the labour gap (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2010). Therefore, rather than developing long-term strategies to increase its own population, Canada, including Newfoundland and Labrador, has opted to try and attract individuals from outside their own countries and in some cases, like Labrador, attract others from outside their regions. The Canadian and Provincial governments are motivated to recruit individuals, but are reluctant to implement the necessary infrastructure that would support newcomers' successful settlement and integration in their new communities. Professional recruitment and retention is formulated and implemented in a vacuum – that is, there is little or no recognition or understanding of newcomers' racial and cultural differences. The assumption, then, is that newcomers will assimilate into white society by using the programs and services that are developed and implemented with white people in mind (Drisko & Grady, 2015).

While Newfoundland and Labrador is often considered one of the nicest and friendliest places in the world, newcomers consistently report having experiences of racism, discrimination, lack of multicultural awareness, and service providers' lack of understand of their concerns and their daily realities (Gien & Law, 2009; Mullings & Anderson, 2015, Mullings, 2011; Mullings & Gien, 2013). Furthermore, newcomers to Labrador reported feeling stressed and disoriented, given the government's lack of planning, including failure to provide education about the climate, cultural norms and expectations, available community resources, and opportunity for community networking.

This practice of welcoming newcomers without implementing the necessary infrastructure is reflected in the federal and provincial governments' policy where settlement and integration services are regularly dismantled and defunded seemingly without thought. For example, the Harper federal government drastically reduced funding for refugee claimants in 2015, leaving many newcomers without basic services (Keung, 2015). Similarly, the current Ball provincial government gutted the funding for The Refugee Immigrant Advisory Committee (RIAC), a community-based organization that was the only safety net for

many newcomers to the province. Mullings and Anderson (2015) found that newcomers struggle to integrate into their new communities, given the lack of formal support systems in Labrador. Through personal discussions, individuals who use the services at RIAC and Multicultural Women's Organization (MWONL), shared that government programs are inaccessible (e.g., need to access information through the Internet) and difficult to navigate once accessed (e.g. forms to be completed). Any discussion about professional attraction and retention must be contextualized to include government's responsibilities to adequately fund infrastructure that will help to ensure that newcomers choose Labrador as potential homes but, more crucially, stay once they relocate to the region. This point cannot be emphasized enough especially since both RIAC and MWONL have limited capacities to provide the necessary services that newcomers need, given their restricted financial positions. The Association for New Canadians, the only adequately-funded settlement service in the province, cannot realistically provide comprehensive settlement and integration service to all newcomers.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

The literature discusses strategies for, barriers to, and challenges of attracting and retaining professionals. While the focus of most of the literature is on health care, professionals from other disciplines and fields face similar challenges. As well, these challenges are shared across most rural and remote areas around the globe. The challenges in retaining professionals include lack of opportunity for advancement or for professional training and development, isolation, and lack of services and resources, as well as poor infrastructure.

Governments, institutions, and organizations globally, nationally, provincially and regionally (e.g. Labrador) continue to explore attraction and retention strategies for professional employees. In response, incentives and bonuses such as travel subsidies, signing bonuses, and housing allowance are offered to professionals to encourage them to relocate and remain in rural and remote areas. It should be noted that some counties and regions offer more comprehensive incentives than others. For example, Canada's Northern regions (e.g. Northern Ontario, British Columbia, Yellowknife and Nunavut) and Australia provide generous incentive programs to professionals. Conversely, over the last 10 years, Labrador's incentive programs have been reduced. Incentives are among the primary methods used to attract and retaining professionals; however, incentive programs are only moderately successful as a strategy unless other programs which work to reduce isolation are also in place. When financial incentives are augmented with support for further and flexible training, such as specific training relevant to rural and remote practice, access to group exercise, better hospital equipment, reasonable workload, provision for replacement or substitute positions, better accommodations, and better educational support for families, retention is more likely to be successful (European Union European Regional Development Fund, 2013; Duplantie et al. 2007).

## 8.0 APPROACH TO GATHERING INFORMATION

### 8.1 Consultation Process

Various methods were used to consult with community members including professionals, service providers, and employers. The consultation was multifaceted and utilized social media, LISTSERVs, e-mails, written feedback forms, audio feedback, and in-person discussions. Consultation activities were publicized in the local newspaper and via the provincial radio broadcaster. The breakdown of responses is given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Breakdown of consultation responses**

Online Survey Feedback	In-Person Feedback	Electronic Feedback	Audio Feedback	Total Feedback
204	23	29	8	264

The following represents the consultation activities:

- 1) **Blog:** The blog explained the reason for the consultation; listed where public consultations would be held, along with their respective dates and times; and provided the URL for the anonymous, confidential online survey housed on Survey Monkey. The blog is located at the following URL: <https://labradorattractionandretention.wordpress.com>
- 2) **E-mail and telephone:** Professional associations and employers were contacted by e-mail and telephone to introduce the consultation activities, and were provided with information regarding ways that their members could participate in the consultation. A copy of a flyer (see Appendix E) and a brief introduction (Appendix F) to the consultation were forwarded to organizations and professional associations for distribution to their membership as well as to individuals and groups they thought would be interested in providing feedback about the topic. E-mails were also sent to employers and service providers asking them for feedback about their perception in working with professionals in the region. Table 2 lists the agencies and associations contacted in these ways.

**Table 2: Community contacts**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Wing Goose Bay</li> <li>• Association of Psychology Newfoundland and Labrador</li> <li>• Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador</li> <li>• Bank of Montreal</li> <li>• Bethel Pentecostal Tabernacle</li> <li>• Buck or Two Extreme Retail Inc.</li> <li>• Canada Post Corporation</li> <li>• Canadian Blood Services</li> <li>• Carol United Church</li> <li>• College of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of Newfoundland and Labrador</li> <li>• College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador</li> <li>• College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador</li> <li>• D &amp; J Construction (1995) Limited</li> <li>• Ford Construction Limited</li> <li>• Glad Tidings Pentecostal Church</li> <li>• Haynes Store Limited</li> <li>• Iron Ore Company of Canada</li> <li>• LI A Fisheries</li> <li>• Labrador Inuit Development Corp</li> <li>• Labrador North Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Labrador School Board</li> <li>• Labrador West Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Labrador West Health</li> <li>• Labrador West Status of Women's Center</li> <li>• Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority</li> <li>• Labrador-Grenfell Health Community Clinics</li> <li>• Mokami Status of Women Council</li> <li>• Nain Group Home Inc.</li> <li>• Nain Town Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Chiropractic Association</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Association</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador English School District</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Occupational Therapists</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador College of Dental Hygienists</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador College of Medical Laboratory Sciences</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador College of Physiotherapists</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Council of Health Professionals</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Physiotherapy Association</li> <li>• Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board</li> <li>• Nunatukavut</li> <li>• Office of Public Engagement (Newfoundland and Labrador)</li> <li>• Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Catholic Basilica)</li> <li>• Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish (Roman Catholic)</li> <li>• Paramedic Association of Newfoundland and Labrador</li> <li>• Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador</li> <li>• Piguttuk Family Resource Centre Inc.</li> <li>• Registered Nurses Union of Newfoundland and Labrador</li> <li>• St. Andrew's Anglican Church</li> <li>• The Anglican Parish of Labrador West</li> <li>• The Salvation Army Church</li> <li>• Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay</li> <li>• Town of Labrador City</li> <li>• Town of Wabush</li> <li>• Woodward's Oil Limited</li> </ul>
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- 3) **Community:** Individuals posted the consultation information on bulletin boards and in public spaces such as grocery stores, religious and spiritual venues, libraries, LISTSERVs, and fitness centres.
- 4) **Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC):** Dr. Mullings conducted an interview with CBC reporter Zach Goudie on July 12, 2016, discussing the project and the consultation activities. The interview was broadcast across Newfoundland and Labrador.
- 5) ***The Labradorian:*** On July 12, 2016, *The Labradorian* newspaper published a news article by reporter Evan Caren about the consultation (see Appendix G). The article can be located at the following URL: <http://www.thelabradorian.ca/news/regional/2016/7/12/new-study-looking-at-attracting-and-retaining-professionals.html>.

## 8.2 Limitations

The consultation was carried out from a settler perspective, both those born in Labrador and those that moved there for work and/or family. Attempts were made to solicit input from Innu and Inuit communities; however, these attempts were not culturally specific and did not consider the needs of the communities from whom information and input were being sought. A collaborative partnership would have provided the opportunity to hear the perspectives of the local communities. Similar to other reports of its kind, the consultation focused on the needs of individuals who relocated to Labrador from outside of the region. Future consultations should be done in partnership with Innu and Inuit communities and must also consider the experiences of those born in the region. Given their expertise in living in Labrador, input from representatives of these communities that are predominately affected by professional attraction and retention could yield good local ideas on how to recruit and retain individuals.

To preserve confidentiality, the results are presented by aggregating data from different geographical regions. This results in mixing experiences from very different communities – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, larger and small, remote and less remote - which conflates the experiences of the professionals who reside and work in those communities and which means that the needs of people who live in communities which may be very different, are not specifically recognized.

## 8.3 Method

- 1) **In the community:** Seven consultations were scheduled in various communities including three in Happy Valley Goose Bay and one in each of Labrador West, Wabush, and North West River. Due to a lack of available meeting space, one consultation was cancelled in Sheshatshiu, and inclement weather forced a second cancellation in Nain. We also reached out to the Nunatsiavut Government and its group of companies, as well as the Innu Nation; however, time constraints limited the opportunities for meaningful participation.

Direct consultations occurred at the following locations:

- Labrador Hotel – Wabush
- Glad Tidings Church – Labrador City
- Native Friendship Centre – Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority – Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- College of the North Atlantic – Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- North West River Town Council – North West River

- 2) **Online Survey:** The anonymous survey (see Appendix H) was posted online at the Survey Monkey site from June 23 to August 30, and was subsequently reopened in November to allow further input from professionals who had not responded previously.
- 3) **Open-ended questions:** The opportunity to respond to questions specifically related to service provision and hiring was provided to community members (see Appendix I). This opportunity was also communicated to individuals through telephone calls and e-mails.

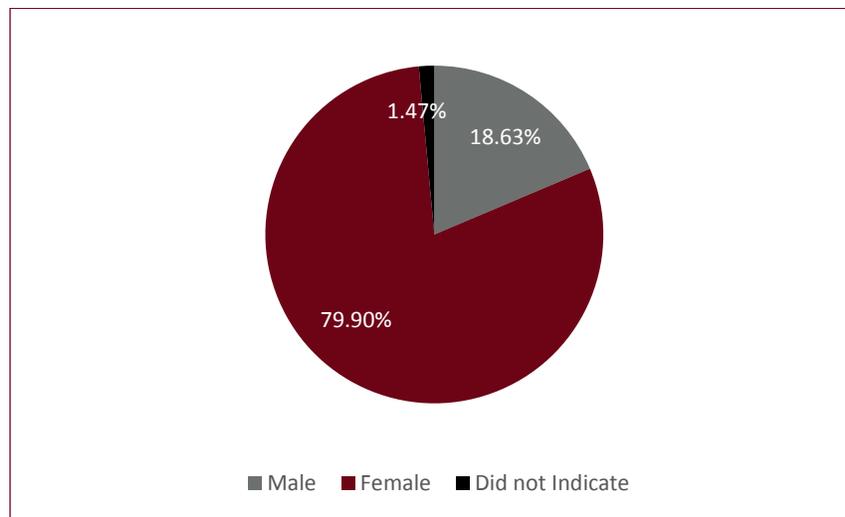
## 9.0 RESULTS: WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID

This section is divided into two parts and provides a summary of the feedback that was received from the different consultation activities: Part I summarizes respondents' characteristics from the online survey, and Part II summarizes verbal, electronic, and audio feedback across all sectors.

### 9.1 Respondent Demographics

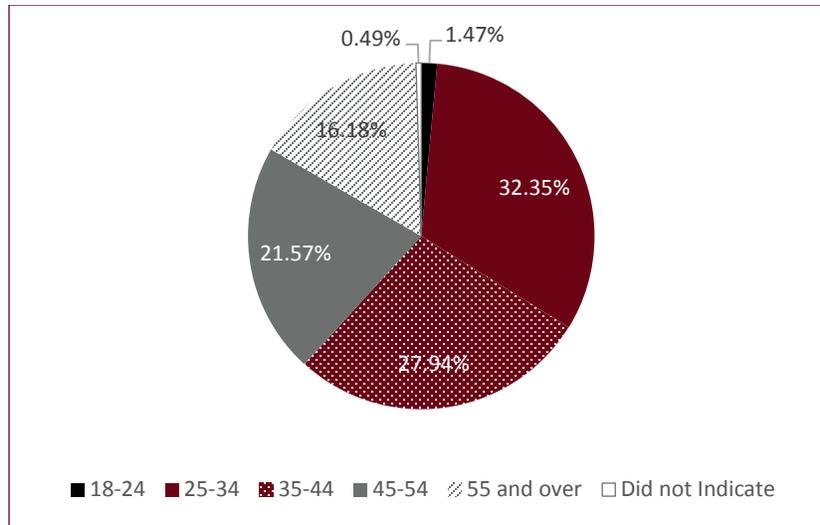
#### 9.1.1 ONLINE SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

In all, 204 individuals responded to the confidential online survey. Of those participants, the majority (79.90%) were female, while 18.63% were male. 1.47% chose not to indicate their gender identity (Figure 1).



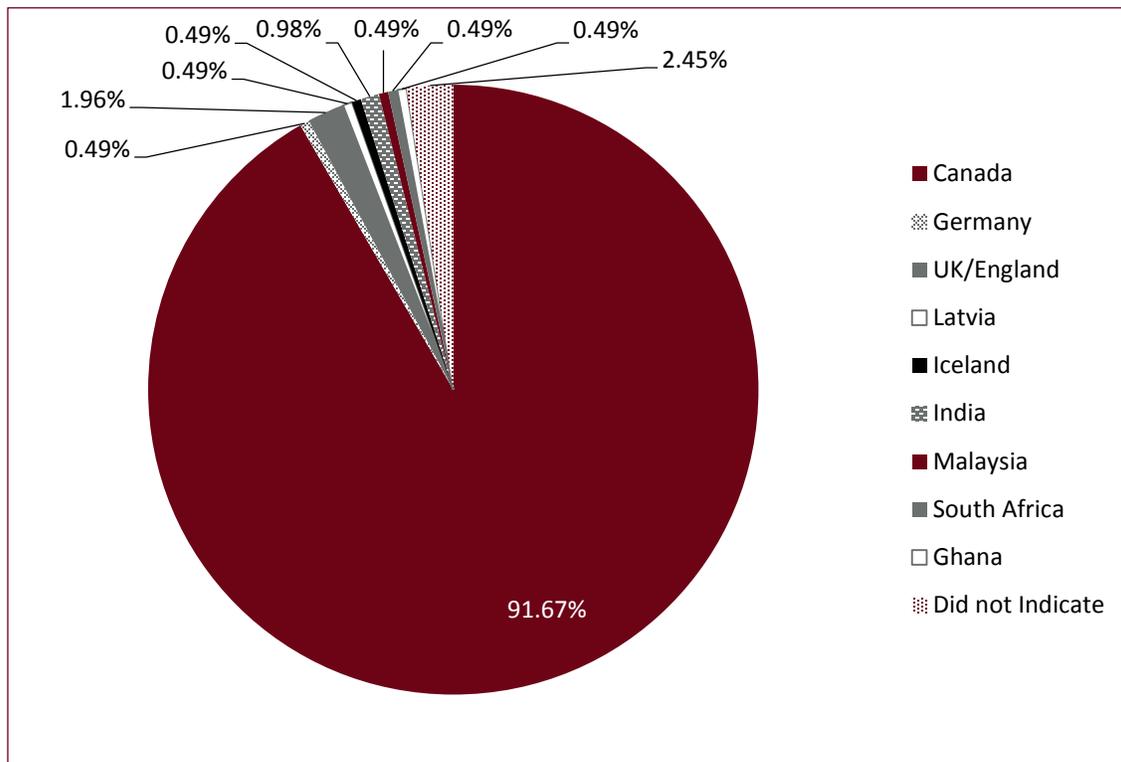
**Figure 1: Respondents by Gender**

Participants gave their age range primarily as 25–34 (32.51%); 35–44 (28.08%); or 45–54 (21.67%), with additional responses obtained from younger (18–24, 1.48%) and older participants (55 and over, 16.26%); one participant (0.49%) did not answer (Figure 2).



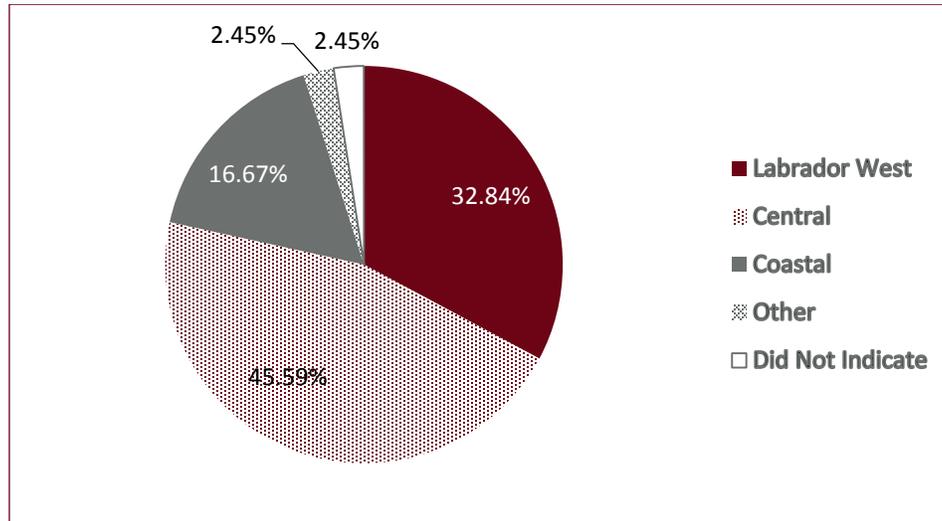
**Figure 2: Respondent Age**

Most participants in the survey (91.67%) indicated that Canada was their country of birth. Of these, 25% were born in Labrador; a few respondents indicated birth in the UK/England (1.96%), Germany, Ghana, India, Iceland, Latvia, Malaysia, or South Africa (0.49% each). Five participants (2.45%) did not respond to the question (Figure 3).



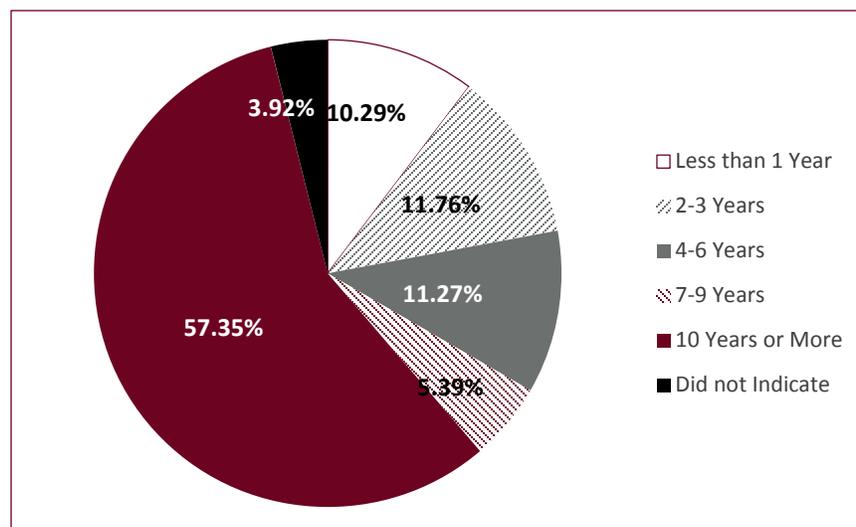
**Figure 3: Respondent Country of Birth**

Participants were asked to indicate the Labrador region in which they live. For the purposes of maintaining participants' confidentiality, responses have been divided into three distinct regions: Labrador West, including Labrador City, Wabush and Churchill Falls (32.84%); Central, comprising Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Lake Melville, North West River, and Sheshatshui (45.59%); and Coastal Labrador, including Cartwright, Mary's Harbour, Forteau, Straits Area, Makkovik, Natuashish and Nain (16.67%). Additional communities were placed in a fourth category of Other (2.45%) to represent participants who previously resided in Labrador but currently live outside of the region. Finally, 2.45% of participants did not indicate the geographic location in which they reside (Figure 4).



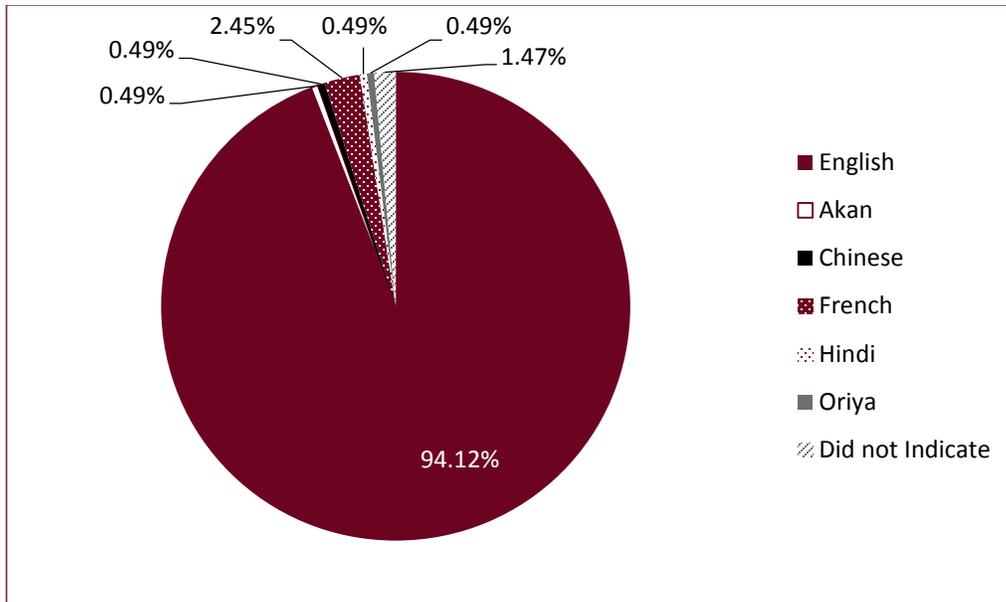
**Figure 4: Respondent Region of Residence**

The length of time that participants had resided in Labrador ranged from less than 1 year (10.29%) to over 10 years (57.35%). Additional responses indicated 2–3 years, 11.76%; 4–6 years, 11.27%; or 7–9 years, 5.39%. A further 3.92% did not indicate how long they had been living in Labrador (Figure 5).



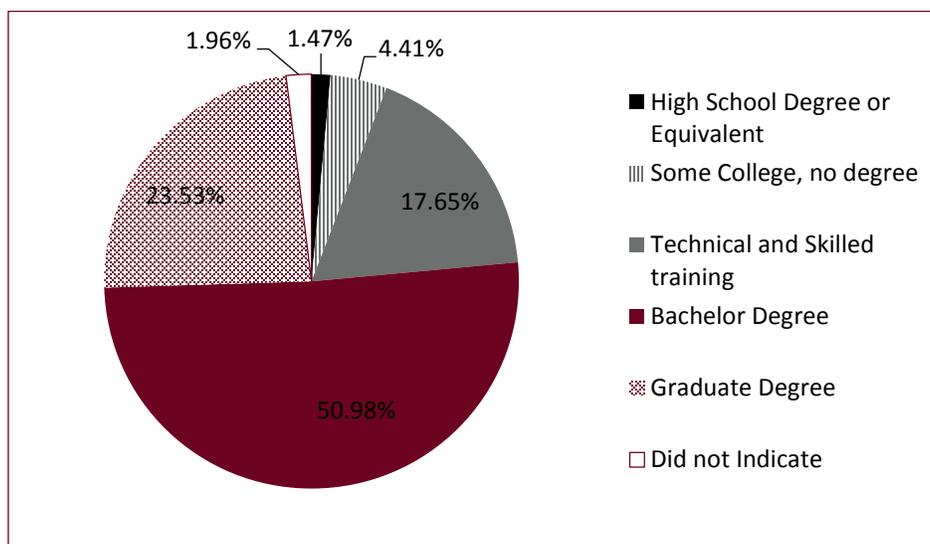
**Figure 5: Respondent Time Lived in Labrador**

The majority of participants indicated that their primary language was English (94.12%), with additional participants indicating French (2.45%), and Akan, Chinese, Hindi, and Oriya (0.49% each). A further 1.47% did not indicate their primary language (Figure 6).



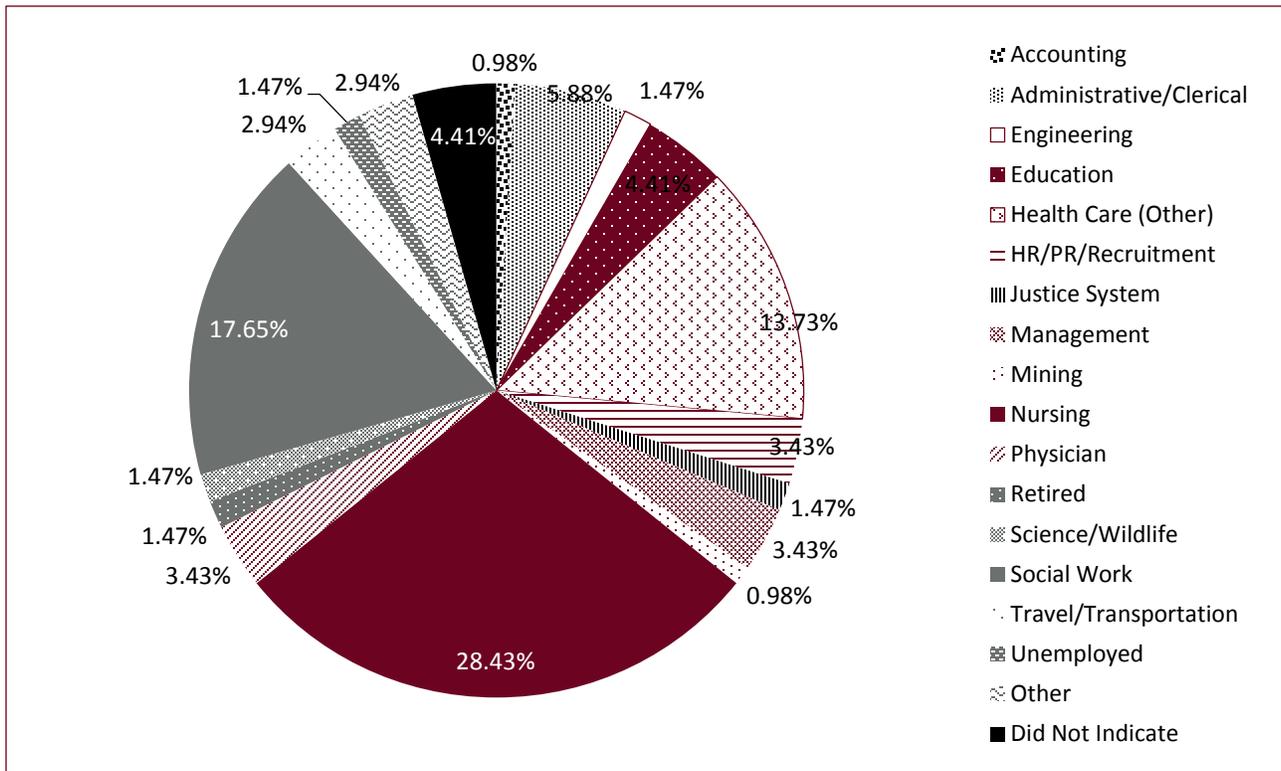
**Figure 6: Respondent Primary Language**

Participants' education level ranged from high school completion, or the equivalent GED (1.47%), to completion of a graduate degree (23.53%). The majority of participants indicated completion of a bachelor degree (50.98%), while 4.41% indicated some college training, and 17.65% indicated completion of technical or skilled training. An additional 1.96% of participants did not indicate their level of education (Figure 7).



**Figure 7: Respondent Level of Education**

Survey participants worked in a wide range of professions, with the majority occupying health and caring roles, including nurses (28.43%), social workers 17.65%), physicians (3.43%), and those in other health-related fields (13.73%). Other professions indicated by survey participants included: administrative/clerical (5.88%); education (4.41%); human resources, public relations and recruitment (3.43%); management (3.43%); travel and transportation (2.94%); criminal justice system (1.47%); engineering (1.47%); science and wildlife (1.47%); accounting (0.98%); mining (0.98%); and other (2.94%). Additionally, 1.47% were retired, 1.47% were unemployed, and 4.41% did not indicate their field (Figure 8).

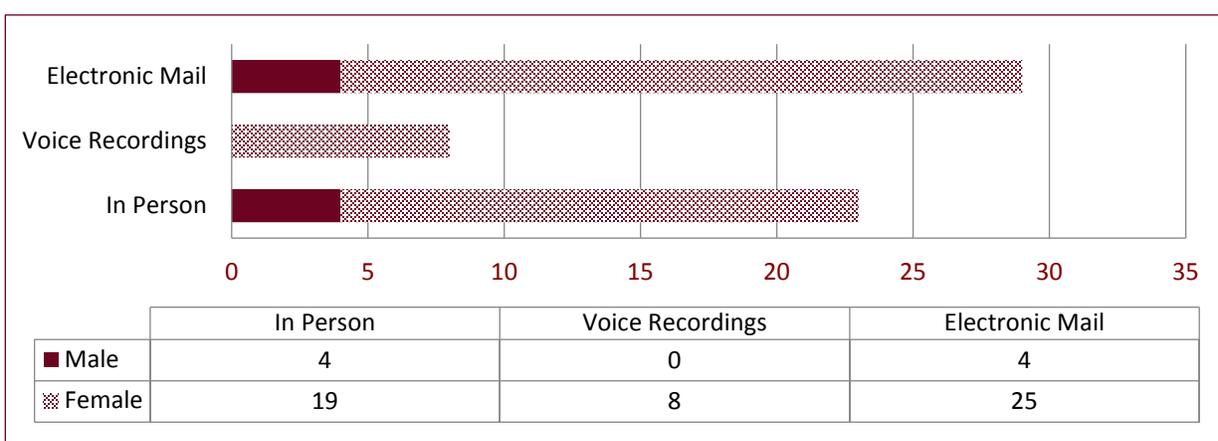


**Figure 8: Respondent Profession**

### 9.1.2 NON-SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS: IN-PERSON CONSULTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, EMAILS, AND VOICE RECORDINGS

In addition to the survey participants, a further 60 individuals contributed to the project. Of those contacted: for in-person consultations, 19 were females and 4 were males; via e-mail, 25 were females and 4 were males; and for audio/voice recordings, all 8 were females (Figure 9).

Of these 60 individuals, 5 self-identified as supervisors, recruiters, and/or human resources personnel.



**Figure 9: Non-Survey Participants**

## 9.2 Feedback Analysis

This section of the report provides an analysis of the feedback received from respondents. Data are organized under sections and subsections corresponding to opportunities for success and areas of constraint. At the end of each section, a summary and recommendations (if applicable) are provided.

### 9.2.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

#### A) Relationships and Potential for Partnership

A significant number of participants were motivated to live in Labrador by relationships associated with blood or marriage. In many cases individuals had wanted to return home to Labrador. Some participants indicated that they had left the province for work elsewhere, but missed the small-town lifestyle and their families. Participants who did not have roots in Labrador were often motivated to work in the region to be close to partners who did. Those who did not have partners often cited adventure and new opportunities as reasons for their attraction to Labrador.

Participants who have been motivated to remain in Labrador, cited family (e.g., the desire to be close to relatives or to allow children to finish their schooling), social, and professional relationships as pivotal to them. Participants who mentioned having children or partners were more likely to identify Labrador as home even if they were not born there. A significant number of these participants identified Labrador as “home and a great place to raise a family.” Others identified a combination of factors as important, including: “family, salary, work experience;” “family, friends, home town;” and “financial stability, high

wages, the benefits offered like a retention bonus, and housing." While participants indicated that bonuses, benefits, and incentives were important, some also warned that these were insufficient motivating factors to remain in Labrador in light of life-management challenges.

Some participants saw working in Labrador as an opportunity to partner with Aboriginal communities and/or "minority populations," obtain social justice and environmental perspectives, and to contribute to the region. There were also comments grounded in the need for more "locals" to work in the communities to make a difference, especially given their personal experiences. One participant identified climate change and large projects for their reason for working in Labrador:

*With environmentally and socially-destructive mega-projects and global trends like climate change, environmental and cultural resilience is being undermined in a disproportionately accelerated rate. In these circumstances, places like Labrador need as many smart and educated people as they can get.*

A significant number of participants noted gaining a "better understanding of Aboriginal and northern issues." One respondent indicated that:

*It had greatly increased my knowledge of aboriginal peoples and their struggles, and the negative influence that white people have had on their well-being. Increased my appreciation of the land.*

Numerous comments regarding challenges faced by Aboriginal people - their histories, cultures, frustrations - and barriers such as racism, resistance to self-government, and colonialism were provided.

Participants commented on learning how to live in remote areas, partnering with community people, and becoming creative with strategizing how to make do with limited resources. Participants indicated that they were connected to others in their community. They reported feeling "a sense of peace," "enjoy giving back to the community," "become more 'community-minded,'" "feel rewarded to contribute to the well-being of" their communities, and "enjoyed working with and getting to know the Inuit people." Many participants reported experiencing and developing strong relationships and partnerships with community people; as one respondent indicated:

*The community has been very kind and welcoming to my family, and we have enjoyed being full participants in community life and citizens. We have developed some of our most cherished friendships and professional relationships here.*

In addition, feeling a sense of and being a part of a community offers comfort. Labrador is seen as a unique entity given residents' willingness to support each other. Helping each other is an important quality that helps create that sense of being part of the community in Labrador. Overall, participants reported having a strong appreciation for the work that they do:

*Working in Labrador makes me feel good about what I do. I understand the issues that face my people and we are of the same cultural background so I am grateful that I have a connection that a lot of social workers do not have when they come to Labrador to work. I think what I am doing is making a positive impact on my community and for my people.*

Participants who are committed to staying in Labrador suggested that recruiters need to ensure that professionals want to stay in the region and one way to ensure that is to encourage them to sign multi-year contracts that include bonuses and incentives paid at the end of the term. Some also recommended

that signing bonuses be attached to the term contract so that if the contract is broken, the signing bonus would have to be returned.

## **B) Employment**

Almost all participants were motivated to live in Labrador for professional employment opportunities, either their own, a partner's, or other family members'. The specific reasons for choosing to work in Labrador include research opportunities, broadening the scope of practice, "life-long dream to work in an expanded role", gaining experience, and having "agency and autonomy". Women were most likely to identify that their partners motivated the family's move to Labrador. The labour market affected individuals in their places of residency both inside and outside of Canada. New graduates were particularly motivated to work in Labrador to gain new experiences, further their area of specialization, earn money to pay off student debts, and secure full-time permanent employment.

Experienced professionals were motivated to work in Labrador to engage in different and interesting work, and in opportunities that would develop specialized skills. Some had been working in private practice and felt it was time to explore different practice areas; the geographical change provided opportunities for them to develop specialized skills and try new things. Money also plays a role in attracting professionals to Labrador. The opportunity to save and earn money, the recent economic boom, and the various "signing bonuses" including moving expenses, Northern allowance, travel and health subsidies, and accommodation and housing allowances, were incentives that had attracted individuals to work in Labrador. Other benefits that attracted professionals included seniority, salary increases, and the paid opportunities to travel home to see relatives and friends outside of the province.

## **C) Personal Professional Growth**

Participants shared their experiences of growth, both professionally and personally, which included getting professional experiences that they otherwise would not have in other jurisdictions, and reflecting on the ways in which their experiences have changed them. The enriched experience, acquiring advanced skills within a short period of time, achieving work autonomy, and collaborating with other professionals within and outside their own discipline were highlighted as benefits and positive influences on participants.

*My skill set as a nurse is tremendous as we are an isolated hospital holding responsibilities of types of care and illness which has provided great opportunities that I would have not gotten elsewhere this early in my career. I have transitioned from LTC to Acute Care to Chemotherapy, which is my passion.*

Skills enhancement and development were also referred to as important in relation to learning to work with the local people, understanding their concerns and perspectives, and developing strong partnerships as a part of professional practice.

Some participants have different realizations about themselves, their knowledge, and their ability to adjust to life regardless of the geographic area or circumstances, and there is indication that some professionals do create full, active lives while they live in Labrador.

## D) Geography and Climate

Professionals find the Labrador region attractive for its rural, remote, small, outdoor, and northern characteristics. Some were “sick of the city” and wanted a less-stressful work experience. Participants suggested that they “really enjoyed the outdoors, sports, and active lifestyle that it provided,” including hunting, fishing, and snowmobiling. Others envisioned working in the region as potentially “adventurous” and were open and excited to explore other parts of Canada. Individuals also reported liking the climate, lack of traffic, and the “small community feeling”; and others were looking for adventure and a challenge, both in their professional and personal lives. In addition, the landscape and specifically the beauty of the land and the special characteristics of the various cultures attracted many professionals to the region.

Respondents shared that participation in local activities has helped with understanding local perspectives and in working with local people.

*Working and living in Labrador has given me the chance to learn about and grow connected to the various cultures in Labrador. I have had the experience to go seal hunting, skidooning in the winter, participating in cultural activities such as sweat lodges and smudging, and meeting some beautiful and resilient people. I am not sure that working in Labrador has had any negative impacts on me. Working and living here as an outsider, not being from here, has caused me to grow, learn, and provided me with the amazing opportunities that I have had. I am actually leaving this position to complete my MSW at the University of Toronto and I am so so going to miss this place, the people that inhabit this beautiful part of our country, and the work that I have been doing here.*

A reliable and less-stressful lifestyle motivated others to choose to live in Labrador. Families with children were especially drawn to the region, as it afforded parents and, in some cases, the primary earner to remain close to home rather than travel extensively as is required in some other positions. Many participants echoed that they appreciate the feeling of peace and safety that they experience from living in Labrador.

Others shared that living in Labrador has given them new perspectives in their work and the ability to understand the challenges of remote living. In addition, living and working in isolation has provided them with opportunities “to see the whole of Labrador, different cultures, different communities, and different ways to succeed with minimal resources.” Participants seemed generally happy and pleased with their choice to relocate to Labrador.

## E) Summary of Successes

Participants are drawn to Labrador primarily for relationship and work opportunities. Others are seeking adventure, attracted to the geography and climate, want to see other parts of Canada, and have a commitment to working with Aboriginal people. With respect to employment and relationships, many participants are local to Labrador - born and raised, have family in the region, and wanted to return home to be with family and resettle into a calmer lifestyle. Participants drew attention to their commitment and passion to build partnerships with the Indigenous people in their region and develop professional skills. Participants experienced personal and professional growth living and working in Labrador.

Some participants noted that the remoteness and small number of professional staff working in their discipline provided the opportunity for them to practice in areas and ways that they would not be able to elsewhere. They appreciate the benefits and bonuses such as the Northern allowance and travel subsidies. Others expressed appreciation for the autonomy of their practice and the ability to direct their practice approach and areas. They also discussed building successful relationships with colleagues and community

people. Further, they enjoy the climate that allows them and their families to engage in outdoor activities such as skiing and fishing. In addition, participants feel a sense of peace and safety to live, work, and raise children, as well as improve quality of life free from personal stress associated with driving, for example, in larger urban centres.

## 9.2.2 AREAS OF CONSTRAINT

### A) Context: Lack of Orientation, Education, and Cultural Readiness

Several participants discussed not having culturally-relevant training for or orientation to working with different racial and cultural populations. Specifically, they noted they had “no wider cultural orientation to Labrador” or to working with Innu and Inuit people. Participants discussed their experiences, work-related challenges, and perspectives of being relocated to Labrador. One participant acknowledged:

*I have no connection to the land and the people and were [sic] not provide[d] with any education to help understand the type of work I would encounter in Labrador. That made the job really hard because I was always struggling trying to figure out what was going on and what I was supposed to do.*

Professionals who arrived in Labrador for adventure were sometimes “misguided about the region, work, people and their challenges” and without the cultural background, education and training, work can become challenging. Some professionals reported encountering different types of social issues for which they were unprepared, including addiction concerns (drugs and alcohol), homelessness, the high number of suicides, sexual assaults, high crime rate, and large number of children in care.

Participants suggested that lack of training and readiness to work with Innu and Inuit people negatively impact how they perform their duties with these groups. For example, they lack the cultural sensitivity and understanding to effectively work with Innu people. This lack of understanding influences how they practice with these individuals and an impact is the undue scrutiny of Innu communities, which results in an “over representation of Aboriginal peoples in justice and child welfare systems.” Professionals are not prepared for the “nature of cases—trauma; impacts of colonization and extreme violence” in the community, which causes professionals to experience “vicarious trauma/burn out”. In addition, some participants mentioned “witnessing and experiencing racism” and “witnessing oppression, cultural insensitivities, and paternalism/implementation of Eurocentric worldviews” towards Aboriginal people.

Participants also reported experiencing or witnessing abusive and hostile behaviour from Aboriginal people such as screaming, yelling, threats, and throwing items at themselves or other professionals. One respondent was hit with stones and chased out of an office in one community. Some professionals are therefore “fearful of working in those communities especially alone”. There is some suggestion that these behaviours are motivated by the fact that “the community cannot trust professionals because of the history” of working with non-Natives or Natives who are trained in mainstream ways, and because of the constant rotation of workers, which limits the possibility for collaboration. Therefore, community residents are reluctant to work with professionals. With the community’s reactions, “professionals get frustrated with community people” and frequently leave their positions. Participants suggested that:

*CYFS [Child Youth and Family Services] and other professional workers do not understand the impact of colonialism (e.g., people are hurt/hurting, angry, dislocated from the land & their culture).*

The difference in culture and lack of understanding may motivate some professionals to say that they feel “discriminated against,” as three participants indicated when community people ignored their ideas and opinions; however, there seems to be a lack of understanding of how best to provide service for Innu people. Participants suggested that one way to learn and understand the local cultures is by being trained in the community, and practicing inside the community over time (e.g. the Aboriginal Health Initiative in the MUN School of Medicine). One participant mentioned the partnership between the Nunatsiavut Government and the School of Social Work at MUN, which created an accredited Inuit bachelor of social work (IBSW) program for 19 Inuit students in 2011. The participant felt that this type of training helped to prepare social workers to work in the region with Inuit people. However, there was a question as to where the graduates of the IBSW were, given the shortage of social workers in the region.

It was noted that communities in Labrador do not all have the same power or relationship with the provincial government, and this reality can be frustrating for professionals when it results in the implementation of policies that are ineffective. It was suggested that the Newfoundland and Labrador Teaching Association, for example, does not recognize teaching experience in Innu communities; therefore, teachers who choose to work in Labrador do not maintain or increase their seniority “so they are reluctant to remain in the region for extended periods of time”. Participants perceived this policy and practice as “institutional racism—lack of recognition of public employment in Labrador”. While the teachers’ service record is not recognized in St John’s, there is also conflict with the Bands as they, too, are reluctant to recognize teachers who are culturally unprepared and are unable to respond to the community’s educational needs.

Participants noted that current education curricula are developed from the perspective of the school districts in St. John’s or other global perspectives rather than that of the Innu or Inuit communities. “Professionals are trained outside of the region—they don’t understand the language, culture or the people”, which causes premature breakdown of relationships even before the professionals enter the communities.

Some participants reported that there is a lack of qualified professionals to work with Innu and Inuit people; consequently, “professionals experience culture shock” when they relocate to the region. Other participants reported the benefits of flying in and out of communities for two-week blocks of time. When they fly into the communities, they live and work there for the duration of their stay. Participants identified that familial responsibilities limit work opportunities, and that this work structure is ideal for them as it allows them the opportunity to gain experience working in remote areas and contributing to the communities in which they work. This fly-in-fly-out arrangement is also an effective way to provide services to remote communities that otherwise may not be served.

Participants had conflicting opinions about this arrangement; some agreed that service provision had improved and that having the same two workers provides some continuity for the community. Others felt that some of the professionals’ dress (e.g. arriving in business attire such as high heeled shoes and carrying brief cases), demeanour and attitude were not conducive to building relationship with community people. A few individuals shared stories of designated community individuals refusing to provide transfer transportation for some of the fly-in workers who were stranded once they exited the aircraft.

Participants raised communication as an important issue that often affects the relationship between professionals and community people. Local community people have different experiences with professionals, “some negative, [and] some positive because of language and culture”. Participants indicated that individuals have different “accents” that determine how they may sound when speaking English, and which may not necessarily be understood by everyone. Furthermore, the majority of Innu

population are children and youth under 18 years of age, and participants suggested that intervention strategies for children are not child-centred. For example, professionals are not aware of community parenting, and they often accuse community members of parental neglect if children are not directly supervised. Therefore, it is important that professionals have knowledge and understanding of the region and the community people who reside there, before relocating to Labrador. This would better prepare them to work more effectively with the community.

### *A-1) Context Recommendations*

It should be noted that Hewitt Associates (2010) and Dyson et al. (2002) made recommendations similar to some of those proposed here; however, many of the same concerns that surfaced years ago remain for participants in this consultation, in spite of the documented implementation of some earlier recommendations.

- Introduction and orientation: In partnership with stakeholders and community individuals, develop video information for marketing purposes, and provide all professionals, prior to and after their arrival, with information, orientation, and training about Labrador, aimed at improving their knowledge and understanding of the region, inclusive of its climate, geography, communities, populations, histories, struggles, lifestyles, services, resources, sports, recreational and social activities, and contemporary issues (see also Dyson et al., 2002, Recommendation #1).
- Explore partnership models with other post-secondary institutions across Canada, to meet the training needs of professionals relocating to Labrador. Other northern models of delivery should be explored and recommended, e.g., nursing access, etc. (see also Dyson et al., 2002, Recommendation #5).
- Provide mandatory cultural sensitivity courses for all students in nursing, teaching, social work, medicine, and pharmacology (see also Dyson et al., 2002, Recommendation #7). This can be expanded so that education and training programs are culturally appropriate (e.g., MUN School of Social Work partnership with the Nunatsiavut government to train Inuit social workers in Labrador).
- Develop a collaborative approach to career awareness for secondary students, to make them aware of opportunities that may exist, e.g., Med Quest (see also Dyson et al., 2002, Recommendation #13).
- Develop a training and integration system to:
  - Train professionals to provide culturally appropriate service.
  - Integrate pre-placement cultural training and provide more in-depth training consistently during the hiring period.
  - Publicly acknowledge the cultural differences among Innu, Inuit, and settler communities.
  - Introduce professionals to the community through video, familiarization visits, courses, etc., before they are placed.
  - Invest in training local community people so that professionals such as nurses, doctors, social workers, and teachers come from Labrador.
  - Recognize teachers' years of service in all Labrador regions.

- o Develop a program to mentor and train Labrador residents for workplace preparedness.
- o Develop better programs to encourage more professionals to live in the communities in which they work.

## **B) Employment: Lack of Opportunity & Resources for Training, Development, & Advancement**

As discussed previously, a significant number of participants reported that their attraction to Labrador was employment related. This theme generated the most amount of feedback, in which participants highlighted personal, systemic, and structural challenges in their workplaces. Ineffective administration, absent or non-existent supervisory support, and a lack of training and preparation to work effectively and successfully in Labrador were among the major concerns listed.

Participants considered Labrador as having a lack of or limited social and health resources for professionals themselves, their families, and their clients. They discussed concerns for themselves and for clients and service users. For example, accessibility concerns were highlighted and one respondent said: “no one even mentions disability around here and that is a real concern for clients.” Services and resources are either often not available or accessible, which makes it more challenging to help. Common examples provided were the current housing crisis and long counselling waitlists for those who are homeless, or need crisis or psychiatric help.

*Very few resources for clients. For example a client needing psychiatric care would need to travel to St. John's, and if they needed case management services, these are not available on the North Coast. Counsellors sometimes do case management duties on the North Coast however this becomes difficult with a full counselling caseload as well.*

Some participants identified experiencing bias and lack of support from professional colleagues in other disciplines. For example, social workers frequently commented on having a “Lack of support from other workers [professionals] to social workers” and suggested that “other professionals/organizations dislike of CYFS [Child Youth and Family Services]” results in some social workers feeling isolated and unsupported in their work environment.

In addition, participants noted a lack of opportunity in the work environment for advancement, promotion, training, and support. Many participants remarked that the “corporation’s” lack of support for continuing education (e.g., subsidized course material such as textbooks) limited their capacity to provide the best quality work to clients and service users. Others discussed the high travel cost to attend courses, conferences, seminars, and other professional development activities, which translates into a lack of sustained and meaningful opportunities for professional growth in their field, especially those in fields with small numbers. Some professionals would like in-service training and “discussion forum[s] on issues of interest to their professions.

To remain current and to deal with the lack of funds for training, participants sometimes volunteer in order to get advanced training, but they were explicit in stating why they needed the training.

*As a working professional the opportunities for training can be limited compared to metro areas. In Labrador we also deal with more complex issues within the Aboriginal communities and adequate training is needed to ensure professionals can build good working relationships. The resources in the community can often be limited and therefore wait times for services can be lengthy. Professionals need training opportunities, or given financial help to obtain those training*

*opportunities elsewhere.*

Some participants discussed the lack of opportunity for advancement in their career paths. That is, there are limited jobs in their fields and the small number of employers or work opportunities in a small facility, where there is only one professional on staff for some disciplines (e.g. travelling dentist), contributes to the lack of available opportunities for advancement.

### **B-1) Employment Recommendations**

Specific training, development and advancement recommendations include:

- Provide increased subsidies for training and development.
- Dedicate time and plan activities to recognize professionals (e.g., social work week).
- Create activities and training to foster inter-professional and inter-disciplinary partnerships and collaboration.
- Use teleconference or videoconferencing tools to reduce isolation and improve access to professional training.
- Create the opportunity for and provide help to organize in-service training.

### **C) Staffing**

Approximately 70% of participants mentioned that they worked in occupations with a high staff turnover. Administrators, including managers, recruiters, and supervisors, as well as staff commented on various staffing concerns. From a management perspective, concerns surfaced around being short-staffed, which puts them at a disadvantage and makes it difficult to recruit and retain new professionals. It was noted that there are fewer human resources and recruitment staff in Labrador than in more-densely populated areas. Many supervisors spend a good deal of time recruiting since, as they note, having vacant positions is the norm. Furthermore, much of their time is spent checking references, interviewing, and trying to help relocate professionals quickly in order to fill needed vacancies. The lack of administrative staff makes it challenging to recruit effectively, e.g., being available to provide applicants with information and answer questions in a timely manner.

The high turnover rate places additional stress on managers and recruiters not only to fill vacated spots, but also to ensure sufficient number of professional staff are available to work. Having insufficient staff available means that existing staff must work overtime and being unable to get time off away from work can create additional pressures and motivate staff to leave, all of which ultimately affects professional recruitment and retention. Some participants identified structural issues that reduce their ability to effectively recruit and retain professionals. For example, there seems to be a large number of contract positions and few permanent full-time positions, which makes it almost impossible to recruit professionals for the long term. On the other hand, nurses feel that they are better off financially as contract workers since their transportation is fully paid and there are no added costs when working. Often when they leave Labrador, nurses find work in the North Northwest Territories and Nunavut where the pay and incentives are much higher. Since professionals will not relocate for short-term contracts, retaining them seems is very difficult.

Staff shortages were among the biggest concerns related to working in Labrador, and it influenced participants' thoughts about leaving the region if the situation did not improve. One respondent shared:

*Currently, the shortage of full time nurses here, and in other clinics is getting significant. I am now the only permanent full time nurse here, and staffing issues are very stressful. I am afraid if it doesn't improve, I will be forced to leave.*

Participants noted that being short-staffed manifests itself as: excessive work hours; not being able to take vacation, accumulated overtime, or leave when the shift ends; "doing the work of two people"; not being able to build relationships with other professionals; and feeling "overworked/burned out". For some professionals, the volume of work, e.g., number of cases, and the high turnover rates of various professionals, including nurses and social workers, impedes relationship building between and among professional groups and ultimately affects client care.

Other staffing concerns include inexperienced professionals, some of whom see Labrador as a "training ground to get experience and then leave". Working with others who have little or no experience is troubling for some professionals given there is no back up or alternative, and supervisors are located off-site and therefore cannot offer the necessary guidance and support to them when it is needed. In addition, working with insufficient numbers of technicians and/or technicians with inadequate training poses some challenges when, for example, computerized tomography (CT) and ultrasound are not available 24/7, or there is a lack of consistent skills (e.g., some technicians are qualified to perform only X-rays and CT scans, while others perform only X-rays and ultrasounds).

There are, nevertheless, some success stories that must be highlighted. One manager indicated that greater emphasis should be placed on hiring, training, and mentoring local community residents. The participant noted that all positions in this particular work place had been filled with dedicated local people, many of whom have lived and worked in the region for their entire lives.

*I have had staff tell me that they have never felt so supported, that they can see things changing positively in their work-life, that this makes them want to stay. What are other employers doing differently? There is less support, more reliance on out-of-region professionals, less willingness to take the time to foster strong workers, less proactive recruitment of local individuals who have potential to meet the needs.*

From a line staff perspective, the poor workplace was made bearable with good senior managers who provided "12 hrs of ward clerks 7 days a week [as well as] the Ottawa model, [a model of nursing care with a set of guiding principles organized around patient care and staff support], of care that help make nurses' work lives a million times easier" in their daily tasks. A social worker shared that while it is challenging to work in Labrador, it can also be rewarding to celebrate small steps and gains with service users. The participant similarly noted "that it would be helpful if there was more Aboriginal self-government and self-directed programs/services (such as healing strategies); increased community capacities and solutions/ideas coming from within the communities themselves." A few participants shared that they loved their work environment and that they experienced support and mentorships from their managers.

### C-1) Staffing Recommendations

Address staffing issues by:

- Providing a full staff complement (see also Hewitt, 2010);
- Increase staffing for human resources and administrative support or hire professional recruiters to help complete the hiring process to secure professionals (see also Hewitt, 2010);
- In partnership with social sciences professionals, develop strategies to reduce professional isolation;
- Create activities to demonstrate staff appreciation (see also Hewitt, 2010).
- Hire, train, and mentor local residents (see also Dyson et al. 2002).

### D) Management, Governance, and Administration

Participants discussed various aspects of governance and management that influenced them negatively. Comments about nepotism, discrimination in hiring, and different treatment for casual or contract workers surfaced repeatedly. For example, a few participants suggested that workers from outside the region (e.g., Quebec and immigrants) are hired through personal contact with managers, even when they are less qualified than local residents. There were also suggestions of inequitable compensation, (e.g., “office administration/reception positions with lower salary scales” than others in the same workplace), and “locums being treated better and given more benefits” (e.g., all travel expenses to and from Labrador are paid), perks, and incentives than those who have similar roles but who work on a permanent basis. To deal with this imbalance, participants suggested that long-term professionals should be awarded with bonuses for each year they remain. It should also be noted that not all professionals receive a signing bonus or housing allowance. Numerous participants, including social workers, reported not receiving moving expenses, signing bonuses, and housing allowances. Some professionals commented on being rushed to relocate.

Consistently, participants commented on administrative “disorganization”, “lack of appreciation for workers”, “unsupportive” behaviour, and failure to address safety issues in the workplace generally. More specifically, participants commented on the “lack of reward and appreciation by Labrador Health for the job you do in the coastal communities in Labrador”; the workload and caseload is triple the provincial standards” and “I unfortunately do not feel as if I work for a very supportive corporation—my workload is such that it is not sustainable in the long term”.

Twenty-seven (13.2%) individuals mentioned a combination of “safety on the job”, “job safety”, “safety issues”, and “workplace safety issues” as being concerns for them. Workplace safety issues such as inappropriate or inadequate equipment and a lack of security, as well as low morale and negative work environment, were discussed repeatedly.

*It has shown me that a facility can have very poorly managed and disorganized work flow. The staff turnover rate is high due to unaddressed IMPORTANT workplace safety issues and staffing shortages. I would say I'm impacted to work and live in Labrador to try and help make a change, but that sounds [is] impossible as there have been staff issues [left] unaddressed as [of] 6 months ago.*

Inexperienced, ineffective directors or supervisors, and a lack of understanding and support from management were identified as having impact on the professional work environment. In addition, a lack of experience and expertise among administrative and support staff was highlighted. It was reported that sometimes the most senior nurse on site is a recent university graduate with less than 12 months of experience. Not having supervisors on site, having little or no opportunity for input from managers, lack of communication between frontline workers and managers, and overall poor management in the workplace are significant constraints for professionals. Management and supervisors are offsite and do not regularly communicate with professionals. Participants also indicated that the lack of an active role by management in daily operations, and new graduates not having mentors, created feelings of being unappreciated and unsupported, as two participants expressed:

*Management does not take active role in daily operations. Staffing levels are inadequate and frankly unsafe, management does not make staff feel appreciated or respected. This makes for little incentive to want to stay. The people who work here are excellent, and if management also exemplified attributes that the staff had, this would be a wonderful place to work.*

In addition to sending a clear message about the need for management and supervisors to be “on the ground” in Labrador, participants also indicated that there is a disconnect and lack of understanding between management located in St. John’s and the reality of working and living in Labrador. More specifically, participants suggested that “Island people” and “St. John’s managers” do not understand or appreciate the issues in Labrador, and especially in the Innu and Inuit communities. As well, participants commented on the provincial government’s lack of understanding and policy makers’ lack of appreciation for the unique needs of all Labradorians, but particularly those of Indigenous people.

Another policy decision that conflicts with the needs of the communities in Labrador discourages and limits professionals from integrating with the community. One respondent shared that professionals are “forbidden” from attending public events, which creates more barriers and distance for working effectively with the communities and their members. Workers are seen as “workers” and there is no opportunity for community members to bond with them and get to know them better before “real work” (e.g., counselling) can begin. Furthermore, the consistent and frequent rotation of some professionals makes it difficult for them to integrate into the community. Some professionals, such as Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), are moved out of their work area after one three-year term. While some RCMP officers may not want to leave the communities in which they have established themselves and their families, the policy dictates that they must be relocated. There is a parallel discussion to this that highlights the tension associated with encouraging professionals to integrate with the communities in which they work. The tension around dual relationship is discussed below in the section titled *Isolation*. This will provide a more balanced approach to this argument.

In addition, participants commented on tensions between Labrador and St. John’s and the need for government, managers, and professionals to acknowledge the special characteristic differences between Innu, Inuit and white mainstream cultures. Governments and managers lack the understanding of what professionals in Labrador need, which contributes to work difficulties with these different groups. Their lack of understanding leads them to implement rigid schedules and inflexible working hours, which contribute to a stressful work climate. Some professionals would like to adjust their working schedule in minor ways to allow for self-care. For example, taking a longer-than-scheduled lunchtime of approximately 30 minutes would allow time for some staff to schedule exercise during their lunch break. They could make up the time by either working 30 minutes earlier or later. In addition, some participants are prevented from working from home some days as they were able to in similar positions elsewhere. Some participants discussed the need for Innu and Inuit people to have input into the formulation of government

policies that are implemented in Labrador. They suggested that contributing to shaping of public policy and programming will reduce colonialism, racism, and biases that are inherent in current policy and practice.

*I also felt that the policies we worked under did not match the community and that the organization was not culturally sensitive enough, which created a barrier between us (the workers) and the clients as well as the community in general.*

Numerous professionals expressed feelings of disappointment in human resources departments and administrative units that did not follow through with promises made to them prior to their being hired. Similarly frequent were suggestions that their arrival on the job and in the community was disorganized and displayed a “complete lack of preparedness”. Some participants felt strongly that management is only interested in recruitment, and is not committed to retaining professionals. Participants suggested that “there is no problem recruiting staff as we pay large relocation bonuses, but they are not staying once their agreement is completed.” They suggested that retention is linked to poor support from management to professionals and their families during their relocation. Some professionals who moved from Newfoundland and outside of the country to Labrador experienced a lack of support with immigration and generally transitioning into their new communities:

*Poor support from HR with regard to moving my family to Labrador and they are not interested in retention, just getting you through the door in the first place. LACK OF ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES.*

One participant suggested that the Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority needs to review its recruiting practices and contracts with respect to dentists since the current system is unlikely to attract the best candidates. There is a lack of competitive salary “with other provinces (or even with fee for service dentistry in Newfoundland). Some of its clinics are run down and unpleasant places to work. There is no incentive built into contracts for dentists to be productive”. Others suggested that higher provincial tax rates, the deficit reduction levy and few incentives will motivate some to seek work elsewhere.

### **D-1) Management, Governance, and Administration Recommendations**

Recommendations include:

- Provide training to help enhance management and supervisory skills;
- Establish regular meetings of HR personnel from all departments (cross-departmentally) to enhance communication and provide a forum for discussion on policy interpretation; provide regularly pre-established updates as they relate to HR management. It is felt that there should be regional consistencies on such matters to improve human resource needs (see also Dyson, et al. 2002, Recommendation #6);
- Provide permanent supervisors and managers for ongoing direct and on-site support (see also L-GHA Consultation Report [2007]—Workplace issues; Hewitt, 2010);
- Managers and supervisors need to establish proper communications protocols with staff (see also Hewitt, 2010);
- Review and rectify staff-perceived safety issues;
- Establish a mentorship program (see also Dyson, 2002, et al., Recommendation #6);

- Review hiring and promotion practices and implement policy to eliminate preferential treatment, nepotism, and unfair labour practices (see also L-GHA Consultation Report [2007] – Workplace issues);
- Ensure that equal pay is given for work of equal value
- Offer flex time/staggered working hours to allow for outside interests/activities (see also Hewitt, 2010; Dyson, 2002, et al., Recommendation #16).
- Hire professionals on a full-time basis and reduce the use of casual short-term temporary workers;
- Implement a better system that clearly distinguishes between full-time and casual workers and compensate them accordingly.

## E) Operations

Some participants suggested that operational issues put the user population at risk. More specifically, unsigned documents, incorrectly completed forms, poorly designed/unclear forms, illegible photocopying, excessive paperwork, lack of staff orientation, staff rotations and other staffing issues created safety issues for patients and clients.

*Many missed/not signed medications as the MAR [medication administration record] is very difficult to read, as photocopied MARS. As well as very tiny boxes to initial/ write times in. The routine medications are not organized together but on random backs of pages with flow sheets, and PRN [pro re nata or "as needed"] Meds. In addition, discontinued medications are normally highlighted; however, they are sometimes documented "as an urgent or stat med that needs to be given!*

*The emergency nurses in Goose-Bay are staffed with 2 RNS per night shift, yet they see more patients than the Gander hospital [that is] staffed [with] 5 RNS [registered nurses] on nights. The nurse-patient ratio is extremely unsafe. 1 Security guard is staffed per 12 hour shift, which gives no security if in the LIKELY event that more than one patient is combative/aggressive/needing a code white.*

Others suggested that they have witnessed a lot of concerning behaviour and gaps in the workplace from both management and first line staff that put patients at risk. Participants suggested that the reactive nature of the work place impacts patient care; "and sadly patients are not treated as an integral part of the work" and that the Authority is "bounded by finances, budgets and unprofessional care at times." There was a call for everyone to "step away from "politics" sometimes and understand that patient care is the most important part and we ALL need to be on the same page." There were many claims of inappropriate patient care from participants.

### E-1) Operations Recommendations

Recommendations include:

- Create and implement a better nurse-patient ratio
- Increase the number of security guards per shift based on nurse-patient ratio.

- Comprehensively review internal structures and routine activities, and discontinue and/or implement changes as needed.
- Review orientation structure and staffing rotations, and implement improvement programs where necessary (see also Hewitt Associates, 2010).

## **F) Isolation**

Female participants exclusively discussed the difficulties of feeling isolated while living long distances away from their families. Some participants mentioned not having friends, feeling like they will always be outsiders, and feeling judged for being different or a Newfoundlander. Others share sentiments similar to the following:

*While Happy Valley-Goose Bay has a lot going on for a small community, most of the groups seem fairly insular at first and communication about what is going on and how to get involved is sometimes hard to come by. It takes a lot of concerted effort to break into the community and start forming networks and connections.*

However, trying to form community connections and build relationships presents professional conflicts, and only a few friendships are formed, “due to potential dual relationships or compromising” practice. Professionals reside in the same communities as the people they serve; they attend the same social gatherings, are connected to the same social clubs, grocery stores, and voluntary organizations. In this context, some individuals discussed needing “to be on” at all times, having a lack of down time or privacy, and experiencing an inability “to get away from work”. Public encounters can be intrusive, especially if clients try to seek advice or support. Working in a small community such as Labrador West that has one major industry, or in remote coastal communities such as Makkovik, Nain, and Rigolet, forces professionals to interact with local community people, some of who are clients or service users, outside of work.

Participants also experience workplace isolation, with some suggesting that “the biggest difficulty” is a lack of peer support. Without peers and colleagues with similar experience, some professionals work alone with minimal collegial contact or interaction with like-minded intellectuals. One respondent reported: “the stress of working alone and the isolation causes mental fatigue and without getting a break I don’t feel that it is good for your mental health.” Some participants who in-migrated suggested being new to Canada presented some settlement concerns that were not adequately dealt with and they did not know where to get help to resolve the issues. These experiences created stress in addition to the job related-stress and isolation. Experiences of isolation, regardless of status or professional allegiance, influenced the mental health condition of participants.

### ***F-1) Isolation Recommendations***

Recommendations related to isolation include:

- Initiate activities to help build professional community supports.
- Introduce professionals to social and cultural activities.
- Provide or highlight tangible and accessible support, such as counselling services.
- Assist immigrants and Provincial Nominee Program participants with immigration issues.

- Provide social and professional networking opportunities.
- Provide professional mentorship activities and programs.
- Implement a buddy system by connecting more-established professionals with those who are newly hired to help them navigate their new environment and create the opportunities for professionals in the same discipline to network and develop collegial relationships.

### G) Mental Health

Some participants shared that they experienced less environmental stress by residing in Labrador, where they are away from urban centre stressors such as busy streets and faster-paced life. However, they were also negatively impacted by high job-related stress associated with “poor management”, and being overworked and understaffed. Participants said: “the stress of the lack of relief staff for emergency coverage has had a negative impact upon my life and my personal well-being” and has created an “unhealthy work/life unbalance”. More women participants identified mental health concerns and specifically job-related stress than men.

Further, female participants identified that their stress level is exacerbated by having to pay for health services and then seek reimbursement (it takes a long time to recover funds), as well as by their inability to find “romantic partners”, “visit family and friends” who reside outside of the region, and “take part in social activities”. Others are impacted by: having to live in small accommodations, some of which are in serious disrepair; having to deal with damage to motor vehicles arising from poor road conditions; and an inability to access resources such as medical specialists (e.g., ear, nose and throat specialists; one respondent noted that “dust in the air” in Labrador West has caused and aggravated some health conditions). In addition, participants reported “gaining weight”, “having feelings of depression,” and an inability to receive support “in times of crisis and illness”. Numerous participants noted that “even with special attention paid to self-care” they experience “compassion fatigue/vicarious trauma/burnout” and other mental health conditions. While this might be the case for all professionals, none of the male participants addressed it, so the information presented here reflects only a female perspective.

Some are also negatively affected by their isolation in the work environment and/or in the community. Participants discussed many positive characteristics of working with local communities, and some also noted challenges that they experience with integration, both from a personal and professional perspective:

*I have a very limited social life and romantic life. I am very outgoing but the weather and lack of potential single partners in my area has affected my mental health negatively—I often feel alone, especially during the long cold winter months when my daily routine is limited to work and the gym. Leaving home in the dark and returning in the dark is depressing. I chose my education based on my love for the outdoors and field work. I have not been able to find a job in my area of expertise that permits me to utilize my full educational training.*

At the time of the consultation (July 2016), participants reported that home foreclosures were high in Labrador West and that as many as 60 homeowners had lost their homes in a short time. This heightened the stress levels for some professionals, as they too feared the possibility of losing their own homes. Mental health concerns significantly impact participants, even when they acknowledge positive aspects of their work and personal life.

### G-1) Mental Health Recommendations

Recommendations aimed toward mental health include:

- Develop a system to enable professionals to receive emergency or critical medical care without having to pay out-of-pocket prior to receiving treatment.
- Expedite reimbursement when professionals pay out of pocket for medical treatment.
- Provide, or let professionals know where to find, tangible and accessible support such as counselling services.

### H) Pay and Cost of Living

Participants commented on the discrepancy between the salary that they receive and the cost of living in Labrador. This is especially relevant in remote areas such as Nain and other coastal communities; participants suggested that the L-GHA's compensation for work is insufficient to cover the costs of transportation, housing and food which are particularly high in the region. A few participants shared that their low salary range and the high cost of living has contributed to financial burdens for them, such that they are unable to pay for good-quality accommodation and in the face of rising monthly costs and have consequently accumulated debts. The high costs of transportation, gasoline, food, and housing elicited many comments.

Almost every participant reported the “outrageous” cost of transportation and its inaccessibility as a significant barrier. Participants with families and especially children commented more about the cost than those who were single or had no children. Though a few participants mentioned having access to the Trans-Labrador Highway, many others commented on its poor driving condition; travel delays due to inclement weather, in combination with the vast geographical areas that must be covered when travelling; and an inability to leave quickly from any region, but especially coastal areas, if the need arises.

Some participants identified the long delays, downtimes, and flight cancellations associated with travelling for vacation, to visit family, and for work activities. The cost of travel prohibits some families—especially those with children or with only one employed person in the household— from travelling, even with their travel subsidies. It was noted that “the Labrador Allowance and Labrador Travel Allowance is not enough to cover the extra costs of everyday living and travel to visit family.” Self-identified persons with disabilities commented on having to adapt to winter conditions when roads are not ploughed in some regions. In addition, accessible parking (e.g., signage and space) is none-existent. Another concern around travelling surfaced in that a few participants shared that “elders, children and persons with disabilities are not offered to be seated on the flights first” which means that sometimes they are not seated comfortably on the flights.

Some participants considered gasoline a “necessary commodity” since residents in the region “have to use it to get around in lieu of public transportation”; therefore, its high cost is of concern to many. They also noted that the lack of availability and high cost of fresh meats and produce at grocery stores were “daunting”, “unreal”, and “frustrating”. One participant said: “getting fresh produce is very hard, to eat healthy is very expensive” and several suggested that a box store such as Wal-Mart is needed in the area to help provide competition. However, other concerns exist aside from the expense and quality of food. Individuals who have food allergies, health concerns, and other lifestyle needs are particularly affected. “Personally, getting a healthy diet especially when you have restrictions such as being a vegetarian or vegan, and food allergies such as gluten can be very hard. The lack of fresh vegetables and diversity in products can be difficult” says one participant.

The lack of affordable and suitable housing surfaced as a major concern for all participants, but especially for women. Women overwhelmingly mentioned the cost of housing and lack of maintenance on their rented accommodations. A number of individuals identified not being able to find affordable housing for over three months after moving to Labrador, given the housing shortage. Many participants echoed these sentiments: “Mortgages, rent and housing prices are astronomical.” When accommodation is available, it is not always appropriate (e.g., old infrastructure, mould, etc.) One professional explained concerns with a broken furnace:

*Maintenance issues with staff housing etc. When we need something fixed on the North Coast it can take a while. I have been waiting for something to be fixed on my house for almost 2 years now. When living in another community I had a broken furnace, which had to be reset every couple of hours. This was not fixed until it would not run anymore and I did not feel as though I was listened to in order to get the help I needed. I had to wake up every couple of hours in the night just to keep the heat going and my house from freezing up.*

The combination of high cost of living including travel, gasoline and food, impacts the quality of life for many participants.

### H-1) Pay and Cost of Living Recommendations

Recommendations focused on pay and cost of living include:

- Provide increased housing subsidies and build more housing.
- Ensure that all professionals have equitable housing subsidies.
- Implement wage parity that is similar to other northern regions in Canada.
- Provide dedicated parking spots for individual with disabilities.
- Ensure that clear and visible disabled signage is constructed for each parking space.
- Investigate the possibility of influencing airlines to implement priority boarding for people with disabilities, elders, and children.

### I) Lack of Resources and Services

Participants identified gaps in health and dental care for all members of their families ranging from “a lack of medical services” to “having to travel for medical and dental” care. Although basic health and dental care is reasonably available, many professionals shared that they must travel outside of the area to receive care that is beyond basic care. They noted the high cost of travelling to receive medical and dental services outside of Labrador, as well as the lack of subsidy (e.g., accommodation and food costs when accessing medical treatment out of the region) and the restrictive manner in which subsidies are offered. For example, transportation subsidies are not available for preventative dental treatment, but there is a partial subsidy when a problem arises and needs to be addressed.

Participants reported a lack of childcare services generally, and specifically with respect to the lack of available spaces, qualified childcare providers and accessibility during the summer months. Participants said that “childcare is basically non-existent!” and that the region has “nowhere near sufficient amounts of child care”. When childcare is available, it is not affordable; and this affects some professionals’ ability to work outside the home, as indicated by participants who suggested that it is “better to stay home and

take care of my kids than go to work and pay most of my salary in childcare expenses". Where some professionals are willing and can afford to pay for childcare, childcare spaces are not available. In addition, there is a lack of respite spaces for children in care.

While it is reasonable to expect that most communities in Labrador would have different social and recreational activities and resources, participants made several suggestions that seem unrealistic for the Labrador region, especially considering aspects of rural and remote living. Some identified the lack of public recreational and social spaces in the coastal communities for exercising in particular, as well as "no place to hang out" and connect with others. Socially, there is a "lack of access to a city-like center (shopping, cafes, different experiences, different restaurants)" and forms of entertainment in most areas across the region. Other than centres like Labrador City, Happy Valley Goose Bay, and Churchill Falls, which have arenas, recreational, and fitness clubs (e.g., ski club, curling clubs, walking trails, and gyms), there is very little elsewhere in the region. Happy Valley Goose Bay has one gym but it is not open to the public and is therefore not accessible. At least eight women reported that the lack of access to public workout areas have caused them to alter their lifestyles in a way that they feel negatively impacts their health.

A few participants discussed professional and personal concerns regarding the challenging climate of long winters and short days. A few others discussed concerns about a lack of employer support, specifically regarding initial assistance to navigate the immigration bureaucracy.

### **I-1) Lack of Resources and Services Recommendations**

Recommendations for addressing the lack of resources and services include:

- Evaluate, review, and change existing policies that are congruent with the needs of the community, including policies that:
  - Create flexible licensed childcare policy in partnership with Labrador residents;
  - Review term employment regulations (e.g., RCMP) to allow longer terms in the community;
  - Develop a partnership with corporations and businesses (e.g., Nalcor) to build sports, recreation, and wellness facilities in the region.

### **J) Summary of Constraints**

Constraints reported during the consultation were among some of those previously documented (see Hewitt Associates, 2010), such as lack of opportunity for professional advancement and training, lack of resources, high cost of living, and isolation. A lack of orientation and resulting lack of readiness to work in the region was cited as a major constraint. Professionals who relocate from outside of Labrador do not normally understand the social, historical, and political context of the region or the population that they are expected to work with. Their education and training do not include information about Labrador, and this lack of training further exacerbates the challenges of working effectively within Labrador communities.

Employment-related constraints were numerous, with most comments being directed at staffing issues, as well as supervisory and management roles and functions. Based on participants' observations, the Labrador community consultation report published in 2007, and L-GHA's annual reports published between 2010 and 2015, there is a high turnover rate which results in various professional disciplines in

the coastal regions having high vacancy rates. The lack of staffing results in many professionals being required to work long hours, and they have limited days off and limited ability to take vacation time and use their accumulated overtime hours. The arduous work schedule also contributes to participants' motivation to leave their positions.

Professionals are also concerned about inexperienced employees who are not committed to the people of Labrador, but see working in the region only as potential training opportunities. The concerns around inexperience also include new graduates being placed in senior positions with responsibilities that are beyond their knowledge and experience. Concerns surfaced regarding unfair employment policy that favours short-term, contract workers over full-time permanent employees. Other bias-related concerns include the apparent preferential hiring of immigrants or professionals from Newfoundland and Quebec over those from Labrador.

There are significant constraints in supervision, management, governance, and operations, with a lack of congruency and a disconnect between policies that are formulated in Newfoundland and implemented in Labrador. Such policies are perceived to be formulated from a predominately white mainstream perspective by managers who do not understand the special characteristics and challenges of living in the Labrador region. Professionals suggests that the disconnect is also present with supervisors and managers who mostly carry out their duties from a distance. They are unavailable for consultation, guidance, support, or help, and are not readily available to help make difficult decisions. Managers and supervisors are perceived to be primarily responsible for chronic staff shortages through mismanagement and disorganization, and for failing to respond to workplace safety issues and staffing concerns. Participants report a need for more effective operations—with clearer documentation and more balanced staffing ratios—to reduce miscommunication and improve safety.

The lack of resources surfaced prominently as a barrier to working in Labrador, including the high cost of living and a lack of services for professionals, their families, and communities, including those with disabilities. Job losses due to mine closures, high cost of housing, and the challenge to access fresh produce and foods, especially for those with food allergies and dietary restrictions, were mentioned frequently. Other significant concerns include the high cost of transportation and travelling challenges such as airline delays and cancellations. Furthermore, subsidies are insufficient to effectively address the cost of travel, especially for families. Limited or unavailable health and social care services, including access to specialists, create stress and anxiety among professionals, as does having to pay for these up front and then having to await often delayed reimbursement.

Barriers related to isolation include a lack of professional colleagues to work with, lack of peer support and mentorship, being away from family and friends, and not being able to integrate in the community given that professionals live and work in the same community where they may encounter situations that are conflicts of interest. Small, established communities, which tend to be insular in nature, affect professionals' abilities to develop community connections and partnerships. Isolation also influences professionals' mental health and well-being. The long hours of darkness, lack of romantic options, the stress of working alone, being overworked, and an overall lack of work-life balance all contribute to stress and feelings of loneliness.

## 10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous provincial government introduced the Population Strategy, and the current government augmented and extended it in 2015. The revised Population Strategy includes a variety of opportunities and activities designed to try to increase the general population across the province. The document does not identify the specifics of attraction and retention strategies for professionals in Labrador. There are various government information websites encouraging newcomers to consider Newfoundland and Labrador as their home. The government's multiculturalism policy and Provincial Nominee Program are specifically intended to encourage and expedite the entry of professionals into the provincial labour force. The government has also kept tuition competitively low hoping to retain individuals who have completed their education in Newfoundland and Labrador. There is also more emphasis on training and education, economic development, and employment (e.g. employers needing to fill vacancies are linked with jobseekers); creating welcoming communities; and creating the environment for individuals to pursue careers while having families.

Rural and remote areas of the province, including Labrador, present particular issues related to attraction and retention of professionals associated with the region's geography, climate, and population. Labrador's special characteristics, and regional challenges and complexities must be addressed in any attempt to attract and retain professionals. This project is not the first of its kind to address these issues; Dyson et al. (2002) and Hewitt Associates (2010) explored professional attraction and retention in Labrador and recommended strategies to address the labour shortage in the province and in Labrador specifically. Building on those historical documents, and based on the feedback and suggestions from 264 participants in this community consultation, the following recommendations are offered to aid the provincial government and all stakeholders in their efforts to develop strategies for effectively attracting and retaining professionals in Labrador:

### 10.1 Professional Dissatisfaction

To address specific, well-documented disincentives to professional retention, numerous short-term (immediate to five years) changes can be implemented. Once professionals stay longer in the region, the pressure to constantly recruit would be diminished, and that would help to stabilize the staffing issue in the region. The first steps to retaining professionals is to pay them competitive salaries; ensure fair treatment and show appreciation for the work that they do; reinstate bonuses and incentives; attend to staffing issues; and provide the opportunity for professional development:

- 1) **Salaries:** Offer salaries that are comparable to those offered elsewhere in Northern Canada and similarly remote areas.
- 2) **Management and administration:** Pay all personnel based on the principle of equal pay for work of equal value; pay full round-trip travel for all staff; show appreciation for professionals' commitment to their work; have onsite managers and supervisors; and address workplace safety issues and concerns.
- 3) **Incentives:** Provide incentives similar to other regions across Canada in similarly rural and remote areas.
- 4) **Staffing issues:** Hire and train sufficient staff to implement schedules that will reduce the excessively long working hours, and allow staff to take days off and vacation.

- 5) **Professional advancement and connection:** Provide the opportunity and programs for training, development, opportunity for advancement, professional collaboration, and support with continuing education to professionals.

## 10.2 Orientation

Attracting and retaining professionals could be further improved by enhancing newcomers' knowledge of the region's history and culture, the community they will serve, and their specific workplace:

- 6) **Training and education:** Professional schools (e.g., of nursing, social work, medicine or teacher education) need to partner with Innu and Inuit communities in Labrador to provide cultural training and education.
- 7) **Familiarization:** All professionals must be provided with familiarization training about Labrador, its land, cultures, and peoples prior to starting work in Labrador.
- 8) **Staff orientation:** Provide staff orientation to new professionals when they begin their jobs; assign someone to meet, greet, and provide basic information to new professionals on the first day of work.

## 10.3 Strategic Priorities

Over the long run, success will depend on policy makers' willingness to make Labrador's workforce a priority; to make and implement policies that recognize the region's special character; and to engage a broad swath of regional stakeholders in focussed, coordinated, informed, and consistent long-term efforts to implement the recommended solutions.

- 9) **Available services:** Offer appropriate services through skilled professionals to help motivate people to stay.
- 10) **Labrador's special character:** Policy pertaining to Labrador must be developed in collaboration with those who live in the region and are affected by policy decisions.
- 11) **Stakeholders:** All strategizing about professional attraction and retention in Labrador must include community stakeholders such as Innu and Inuit peoples and settlers, both established and those who are newer to the region.
- 12) **Women:** All programs, policies, and recruitment and retention strategies must consider gender-related concerns in order to have a successful retention experience.

## 11.0 CONCLUSION

The changing demographics of Labrador will have far-reaching implications for the region. The increase in life expectancy, decline in birth rate, out-migration, and retirement means that Labrador's population will age, and change in terms of total numbers and regional distribution. All economic and social sectors in Labrador are and will continue to be affected by these demographic changes. Professionals are needed to in schools, social agencies, as well as in medical and health institutions. Currently there is a shortage of professionals who provide these services and it is anticipated that this shortage will be exacerbated over time. Labrador does attract professionals, many of whom are returnees to the region. Professionals that do not have family in the region are attracted to Labrador for its beauty, financial incentives, potential professional autonomy, professional growth and collaboration with the community. However, once professionals begin to work in the region, they are deterred from remaining for a variety of reasons including isolation, lack of professional advancement and skill development, staffing issues, lack of training and orientation, high cost of living and transportation to get to and from Labrador, managers and supervisors who function from a distance, and a political disconnect and lack of understanding of the region's needs. Stakeholders must strategize how to encourage residents from leaving their communities and how to increase in-migration and subsequent retention in Labrador.

L-GHA's annual reports suggest that it has adopted some of the recommendations outlined in previous reports and consultations. Specifically, they have collaborated and partnered with Health Canada, Eastern Health, the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Service, the Difficult-to-Fill Health Professional Bursary program, and hired staff and addressed some structural concerns. In spite of these changes, the L-GHA remains challenged to retain its professional employees. L-GHA is one of the largest employers in the Labrador region and this is reflected in the number of professionals in this consultation; however, it would be an error to focus on only one sector. Strategies for professional attraction and retention must be applied to all professional sectors. It is important to ensure that strategies to attract and retain professionals are aligned with the needs of the local communities in Labrador. It is essential that strategies disrupt the practices of colonialism, racism and discrimination. Therefore, transferring the practices and ideas from large urban centres to accommodate professionals in the Labrador context must be considered carefully and vetted with local communities in which professionals reside.

The findings in this consultation support previous findings that attracting and retaining professionals in remote areas is a challenge. Previous research has also focussed on professionals' motivations for relocating, most of which seem to involve personal gains such as money and skills development. While some of those findings are certainly corroborated in this consultation, some are unsubstantiated. Labrador's special characteristics are highlighted here, as some professionals were born in the region and want to either return home or remain in the region, and those who are born outside of the region are attracted to it for various reasons. All of the participants in this consultation identified loving and appreciating their work, life, and environment in Labrador. The major contributing factors for the lack of retention in Labrador are: the lack of support to help connect them with other professionals; the inability to learn new skills; the exhausting work schedule; staffing issues; management's disconnect and lack of understanding of the region's policy and program needs; and the under-appreciation for professionals' efforts to provide service under difficult conditions.

There are nuances within the findings: more than 80 of participants were women, including nurses, social workers, and teachers working in the traditional female-oriented professions. Women overwhelmingly identified isolation, stress, accommodation, nepotism (e.g., failure to hire qualified local residents), and lack of social and recreational facilities as barriers to them remaining in Labrador. This finding concurs with the literature that recruiters need to consider women's needs for accommodation, for example, in their recruitment strategies. Professionals with young children or those considering having children identified the need for childcare spaces and flexible childcare policies. All groups of professionals, inclusive of gender, age, length of time in Labrador, and educational level, identified the need for pre-training before relocating to Labrador. This report builds on others previously done in the province but it has also highlighted some new pieces of information that specifically relate to the Labrador context.

During the consultation, an individual enquired about who is responsible for the problem of recruitment and retention in Labrador? Is it the employer, Aboriginal or provincial governments, health authorities, or post-secondary institutions? It is important to note that this consultation, similar to many of the others that occurred before, was completed without partnering with local residents, specifically those in Innu and Inuit communities, the majority of whom are the recipients of the services that professionals provide in remote areas. The barriers to attraction and retention are primarily geared towards the needs of professionals themselves and their families, and that makes sense given the questions that were asked in the consultation and the population of focus. However, some participants identified barriers and strategies that are not aligned with the realities of living in rural and remote regions. Based on some of the suggestions that participants made, it appears that they are not aware of and familiar with the realities of the Labrador region. Suggestions relating to lack of business competition (e.g., wanting access to large businesses such as Wal-Mart), shopping malls, and lack of paved sidewalks and bike lanes are distinctively urban in nature and unlikely to become a reality in small urban centres, rural and remote regions. This may be an indication of participants' lack of orientation to and education about their new communities. For example, North Coast communities remain unpaved, including the airport runways; therefore, paving sidewalks and constructing bike lanes does not seem to be realistic or a priority for those communities. Similarly, the suggestion for a community recreational centre with a pool may be the preference of incoming professionals, but local residents may want properly groomed snow mobile trails between isolated communities.

Participants discussed the lack of opportunity to access professional development and recommended that distance programs be utilized to fill this gap. However, the lack of stable and reliable Internet service is of significant concern, and improving that service could potentially help improve distance professional development. Having better access to Internet services would benefit both incoming professionals and established residents in the region.

The majority of participants also focussed on government policies, such as childcare and formal workplace strategies to support their needs; they did not seem to see a connection between their needs and local communities' needs. Some participants discussed partnering with Aboriginal communities but the majority did not have this vision. If participants envision partnering with local communities to address some of their concerns, a community solution could perhaps be found. For example, in response to the childcare challenge, partnering with the Nunatsiavut government to train local community members in early childhood education would not only build community capacity, but also help address the childcare crisis. The further development of partnerships among stakeholders might not only directly address specific issues, but also indirectly help address problems of professional attraction and retention in the Labrador region.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Provincial Incentive Programs

**Table 3: Registered Nurse Incentives**

Discipline	Incentive	Comments
<p><b>Nursing</b></p>	<p><b>All Nurses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For 2008-09: Student bursary of \$5,000 per year up to a maximum of \$10,000 for up to a 2-year RIS.</li> <li>Note - in 2007-08, student bursaries were offered to a maximum of \$15,000 for a 3-year RIS.</li> <li>2. Summer student employment for nursing students (\$15-\$19/hr) including accommodations and transportation.</li> <li>3. Experienced nurses who preceptor student nurses during their clinical placements will be reimbursed the cost of their ARNRL fees.</li> <li>4. 100% relocation assistance.</li> <li>5. Bursaries to staff RNs and LPNs completing their BN degree on a part-time basis. They can avail of the lesser of their actual course costs or \$2,500 in a one-year period. They have to provide a 6-month return in service. We have only offered this for a 1-year period and will re-evaluate in 2009. We had at least 15 RNs/LPNs signed up.</li> </ol> <p><b>Nurses working in Coastal Labrador:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Retention bonus of \$5,000 per year.</li> <li>7. Two return trips from worksite to nearest regional centre (HVGB or St. Anthony).</li> <li>8. Fuel allowance of \$1,800 per year for nurses who own and reside in their own homes.</li> <li>9. Rent subsidies for housing – different amounts ranging from full to partial subsidy depending on location.</li> <li>10. \$1,000 annual food subsidy in select locations.</li> </ol>	<p>LG Health awaiting confirmation of current enhanced nursing incentives from other RHAs with the intent to match.</p> <p>Incentives #6, 7, 8, and 9 have been offered historically to Nurses on the Coast of Labrador due to increased cost of living.</p>

Source: *Assessment and Recommendations for Attracting and Retaining Registered Nurses (2010)*

## Appendix B: Hewitt Associates Recommendations

### High Priority, Quick Wins

These are recommendations that we believe should be considered immediately. They are not listed in order of priority; but rather classified by those that we believe are “quick wins” versus those that, although high priority, will take some time to implement.

- 1) Reinstate incentives. This recommendation is obviously controversial, given that incentives have currently been stopped. From all sources, incentives are a powerful tool that both help attract nurses, and help to fill vacancies in a timely manner.
- 2) Ensure interviews are effective and informative to candidates. This is a relatively easy fix that would address many of the concerns that came up regarding candidates not knowing what to expect on the job, as well as candidate's fit for the job and/or location.
- 3) Increase communication with candidates during the offer process. This recommendation is tied to the first recommendation. Specific time commitments should be defined and spelled out to all candidates regarding when and from whom communication will be received. A positive candidate experience should be the goal, supported by metrics and a well-defined communication process.
- 4) Outsource reference checks. Recruiting resources are spending too much time on administrative activities, and this activity in particular is the culprit of much of the time commitment. This should be outsourced to a third party, fully automated online, or centralized in an administrative pool for the entire Department.
- 5) Implement the Ottawa Hospital Model. While sourcing and attracting nursing talent serves as one way to increase the number of available nurses, another important approach is to understand how the nurses currently available are being used. With this model, there are anticipated results that
- 6) would have a major impact on the RHAs for which it is implemented.
- 7) Formalize employee referral program. Referrals are a great source for candidates that are currently underutilized. This recommendation can address two separate issues – 1. providing a great, new candidate pool; and 2. increasing engagement of those nurses who refer others and receive the money. This must be executed flawlessly, or the same noise regarding bonus or incentive payouts will be reported.
- 8) Conduct an engagement survey. This practice provides the necessary input from nurses to better understand where to leverage funding in order to invest in programs that will provide the most impact. From this, other strategies can be developed to address the outcomes. This is a foundational part of the recommendations.
- 9) Assess the role of Nurse Managers and associated total rewards, including span of control. To address the current challenges Nurse Managers are facing, as well as to encourage other nurses to move into management positions, this is a critical issue that should be addressed.
- 10) Document recruitment process and roles and responsibilities at the Provincial, RHA, and role levels. The documentation of these processes is very important to help identify roles, responsibilities, and appropriate staffing levels of the recruitment organization. These processes can be mapped during dedicated sessions and could be completed within the next several months, assuming resource availability.

### High Priority, Strategic Initiative

These are recommendations that we believe should be planned for now, but implemented as budget and resources allow. The remainder of the recommendations should be considered as each RHA develops a plan from 2 – 5 years out.

- 11) Formalize recognition programs. After an initial engagement study is conducted, each RHA should develop a strategic recognition plan based on the results. In addition, programs, their associated objectives, and key measures for each should be defined.
- 12) Implement a Recruitment Management System (RMS). The recruitment management system or some form of HR technology is required to both eliminate administrative tasks, as well as to track and measure program effectiveness.
- 13) Identify and regularly track key metrics. The following recommendations all address some form of measurement infrastructure. It is imperative that each RHA defines key measures and has access to the data necessary to support them. Some exist today, but enhancements are required at all RHAs.
- 14) Measure the effectiveness of sourcing channels. In order to develop a sourcing strategy, it is imperative to understand the cost and outcomes of the investments that are being made into the various sourcing channels. This can be done relatively easily since it requires minimal resources and would provide each RHA with valuable information about current sourcing efforts.
- 15) Measure retention of graduates recruited from other Provinces. This recommendation is in line with the recommendation above. The effectiveness of this tactic needs to be evaluated to make ongoing decisions about sourcing.
- 16) Develop a stronger workforce plan and forecast. All RHAs complete some component of a workforce plan today. The workforce plans should be enhanced with the recommendations contained in this document. This effort will best be conducted across the Department with inputs from all RHAs.

Source: Hewitt Associates (2010). Assessment and Recommendations for Attracting and Retaining Registered Nurses

## Appendix C-1: L-GHA Recommendations from Community Consultation

Themes	Concerns	Steps to address concerns
Specialist services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to specialist services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment for vacant specialist services</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of clerical support for clerical rehabilitation staff</li> <li>• Low numbers of professional staff ratio to population and geographical area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased clerical support for rehabilitation staff</li> <li>• Hiring of new professional staff (speech language pathologist – St Anthony, Happy Valley Goose Bay; behavioural management and child management specialists for the region)</li> </ul>
Recruitment and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary and parity with other jurisdictions</li> <li>• Consistency with benefits</li> <li>• Turnover</li> <li>• Accommodations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursing staffing has stabilized at several community clinics.</li> <li>• New staff accommodations have been purchased for Cartwright, Port Hope Simpson, Charlottetown and Natuashish.</li> <li>• Significant recruitment incentives for nursing and selected allied health professionals have been implemented with considerable success.</li> <li>• The Health Authority is also focusing on strategies to address the recruitment of social workers and overall retention of professionals.</li> </ul>
Child Youth and Family Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of space</li> <li>• Heavy workload</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New building constructed in Nain</li> <li>• St. Anthony CYFS staff have moved into the Mission Store Building</li> <li>• 20 new social work position added to the region</li> <li>• Expected staff increase in the L-GHA region</li> <li>• Change in reporting structure, new leadership model, increased clinical and administrative support for social workers</li> <li>• A foster home recruiter has been hired</li> <li>• There is a plan hire financial assessment offers to assume the financial assessment role from social workers</li> <li>• Appropriate vehicles have been provided for Nain, Natuashish and Hopedale.</li> </ul>
Workplace issues	Lack of communication, involvement in decision making, perceived inequalities, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and retention focus groups held with nurses throughout the region and strategies are being developed to address the suggestions that arose.</li> </ul>

Source: Labrador-Grenfell Health (2007). *Community consultation: A progress report*

## Appendix C-2: L-GHA Response Actions taken to Attract and Retain Professionals

Concerns addressed/Year	Actions taken
2010-2011	<p>Recruited two Child Youth and Family Services Family Intervention Workers and two Program Managers for the North Coast, one each in Hopedale and Nain resulting in onsite supervision for social workers. During this time, L-GHA reported that the CYFS staffing was the best it had been in that region for several years. This improved staffing was indicated by an 83 per cent of positions being filled in the North Coast.</p> <p>Recruited internationally trained nurses in partnership with various departments of the Provincial Government. "This initiative and partnership is viewed as a positive step forward as Labrador-Grenfell Health continues to face challenges with nursing recruitment and retention (p. 15).</p> <p>After a 24 months and 14 months respective vacancy, L-GHA recruited a second physiotherapist for St. Anthony and a speech language pathologist. L-GHA also recruited service-related staff to cover vacancies and social worker II positions</p>
2012-2013	<p>Adopted The Ottawa Hospital of Nursing Clinical Practice Model (TOH-MoNCP) in the 2012-2013 fiscal year and adapted it to Labrador's unique circumstances and now referred to as Labrador-Grenfell Health Model of Nursing Clinical Practice.</p> <p>internationally educated nurses (IENs) provincial and federal government funding made it possible to hire clinical nurse educator who formed professional networks, developed and implemented comprehensive orientation packages and programs to help support IENs' professional and social integration into their new lives in Labrador</p> <p>In 2012, L-GHA hired five permanent full-time mental health and addictions counsellors for Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik (also providing clinical services to Rigolet and Postville) and Natuashish. A full-time psychiatrist was hired and provided services to three main hospital sites and telehealth technology is used to provide health care across the region.</p> <p>A full-time audiologist was recruited June 2012; locums previously filled the position for eight years. Audiologist services were provided in three hospital sites in the L-GHA region in addition to a total of seven travelling clinics, five in Happy Valley Goose Bay and two in Labrador City. L-GHA also improved its dialysis services which resulted in an increase in clients at Captain William Jackman Memorial Hospital (Labrador City), Charles S. Curtis Memorial Hospital (St Anthony) and Labrador Health Centre (Happy Valley-Goose Bay)</p> <p>2012-13 represented the first year that all six diabetes educator positions based in Charlottetown, Labrador City, Roddickton/Flower's Cove, St Anthony, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Sheshatshiu were filled</p> <p>Two groups of professionals at L-GHA, social workers from Intervention Services and staff from mental health and addictions programs partnered to provide parenting programs to residents in Happy-Valley=Goose Bay and Nain (L-GHA, 2013, p. 15).</p>

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	<p>Replaced portable water treatment plants with permanent ones at the Labrador Health Centre and Charles S Curtis Memorial Hospital (St Anthony)</p> <p>Recruited physiotherapist in Labrador City and a Speech Language Pathologist, dentists and dental hygienists in St Anthony. One dentist travels more than seven times “per year to the coastal Labrador communities of Black Tickle and Cartwright”</p> <p>A permanent dentist was appointed to the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre in Flower’s Cove This dentist also traveled to coastal Labrador regularly.</p>
2015-2016	<p>As part of the ongoing development of a Health Human Resources Information System (HHRIS) implementation, the Health Authority launched its eRecruit module in January of 2016 This module allows internal and external job candidates to apply directly on-line to vacant positions and has created system efficiencies through integration with existing information systems.</p> <p>Implemented a Model of Nursing Clinical Practice (LGHA MoNCP) in many sites and unites across the region. LGHA MoNCP established a standardized method of nursing care thorough the region including providing orientation for new nursing staff and “developing Nursing Information Management System (NIMS), which is an automated internal tool used to communicate policies, memos, clinical practice guidelines and resource materials (p. 26).</p>

## Appendix D: Attraction and Retention Discussion Paper Recommendations

Recommendations	Cost	Short Term < 6 months
	<10,000 Low >10 000 High	Long Term > 6 months
1. Develop a community based promotional video on Labrador, to send with recruitment packages and to use as exhibitions at job fairs.	High	Short
2. Gather information/survey those professionals that have stayed, explore their interests and reasons for staying, as a way to identify target audiences, e.g. 1) Educated, physically active, over age 30, 2) Educated, married with children. Such baseline data will help focus marketing campaign.	Low	Short
3. Obtain the services of a marketing firm to market the uniqueness of Labrador. The marketing firm could assist in the development of a folder, in addition to reviewing current Web pages or assisting in the setting up of new ones.	High	Short
4. Develop a collaborative approach to local training and education with agencies working together to meet human resource development needs.		Long
5. Explore partnership models with other post secondary institutions across Canada, to meet the training needs of Labrador. Other northern models of delivery should also be explored and recommended, e.g. Nursing access etc.		Long
6. Establish a community mentorship program	Low	Short
7. Provide mandatory cultural sensitivity courses for all students in nursing, teaching, social work, medicine, pharmaceutical	Low	Short
8. Sign a multi-departmental or board memorandum of understanding, to ensure that each employer conducts a skills assessment of new employees. The purpose would be to highlight opportunities or particular interests that new staff may have as resource persons, that could help with increased job satisfaction, e.g. Former First Aid Instructors - be given reduced workload to train staff and community members instead of bringing in / paying for outside instructors.		Long
9. Conduct exit surveys. Every Labrador employer agrees to complete exit interviews to understand why employees do not stay.	Low	Short

<p>10. Create reciprocal agreements with other provinces for certification of professional, i.e. A nursing policy developed to support interim certification.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Long</p>
<p>11. Develop close working relationship with departments and Human Resources Development Canada to understand the processes involved in immigration and work towards improved processing of work validations of foreign workers.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Short</p>
<p>12. Develop a collaborative approach to career awareness for secondary students, to make them aware of opportunities that may exist. Example, Med Quest.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Long</p>
<p>13. Develop a Northern Communities Professional Alliance@ to provide opportunities for professionals from Nunavut, northern Manitoba, northern Ontario, and Labrador to network and provide peer support. For example, establish monthly social worker discussion groups among northern communities. Such initiatives may help reduce feelings of professional isolation and improve communication.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Short</p>
<p>14. Establish regular meetings of HR personnel from all departments (cross-departmental) to enhance communication and provide a forum for discussion on policy interpretation and frequent updates as they relate to HR management. It is felt that there should be regional consistencies on such matters to improve human resource needs.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Short</p>
<p>15. Explore incentives : Agreements with municipal councils to clear snow from driveways for the first winter, or on a weekly basis, first month etc. Community perks such as a month free membership at golf or fitness facilities, with a 2 year contract signing. Offer reduced costs on canoeing and kayaking certification courses at the local college. Offer flex time / staggered working hours to allow for outside interests / activities, or child care etc. Promote reduced long distance calling packages. Get an agreement to reduce cable and telephone initial set up charges for those that sign a 3 year contract. Provide a clothing allowance every 2 years. Reimburse relocation expenses for temporary employees that are working more than 18 months. Consider offering recruitment/retention bonuses to professionals that currently reside and work within the region. Offer assistance for re-paying student loans as a part of a recruitment package. Offer paid trips to larger centres such as St. John's or Halifax</p>		
<p>16. Research other Internet Service Low providers if it is perceived that needs are not being met by the current provider.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Short</p>

17. Make recommendation to Dept. of Education that School Districts 1 and 2 have particular concerns with housing needs for teachers and may require budget flexibility to address this issue.	High	Short
18. Increase awareness of housing shortage to potential entrepreneurs within communities, who may consider developing housing units for long term lease.	Low	Long
19. Evaluate policy on pensioned employees. Provincial government must relax or waive regulations for retired teachers. Correspondence needs to be forwarded to Department of Education, requesting support for this action in Labrador.	Low	Short

Source: Dyson et al. (2002). *Training, recruitment and retention working group discussion paper*

## Appendix E: Community Consultation Flyer



### Attracting and Retaining Professionals in Labrador

To complete the 10-15 minute Survey go to

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDFJJXY](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDFJJXY)

Available until August 30<sup>th</sup> 2016

#### Consultation Dates:

July 11 - Wabush and Labrador City	July 12 - Happy Valley-Goose Bay
10-12 am Wabush Hotel	10-12 am 47 Grenfell St. Labrador Friendship Centre
1-3 pm 610 Hudson Dr. Glad Tidings Church	7-9 pm CNA Room 106
July 13 - North West River	July 14 - Nain
9:30-11:30 am 1 Mission Rd.	7-9 pm Town Council of Nain, 2 Anaktalak St.
Sheshatshieu (cancelled due to lack of space)	

For more Information visit our Website [labradorattractionandretention.wordpress.com](http://labradorattractionandretention.wordpress.com)

or call Dr. Delores Mullings at 709-687-3419

## Appendix F: Project information sheet and letter of invitation to participate

### Calling Script

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_

I am a student research assistant from MUN. I am working with Dr. Delores Mullings on a project which is funded by the Harris Centre.

The project looks at what needs to happen to attract and retain professionals in Labrador.

Would you please tell me who your Human Resources representative is or who the best person is for me to talk with (get the person's name, contact number and email address) than you]

IF THEY DON'T KNOW – ask for the name of the supervisor or the manager

WHEN YOU GET ON THE PHONE WITH THE PERSON SAY:

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_

I am a student research assistant from MUN.

I received your name and contact information from [give the person's name] over at [give the name of the business]

I am working with Dr. Delores Mullings on a project which is funded by the Harris Centre.

The project looks at what needs to happen to attract and keep professionals in Labrador.

Dr. Mullings will be coming to Labrador during these times to talk with the community:

July 11 – Wabush  
July 12 – Goose Bay  
July 13 – Sheshatsiu  
July 14 – Nain

We wonder if you or someone you know would be interested in attending a community consultation to discuss some of the concerns about getting professionals in Labrador and how to encourage them to stay. [thank you]

Could you also please post our notice about the survey in a public place where people will see it (e.g. email listserves or notice boards). [thank you]

Is there anyone else that you think we should be talking to about this project?

Thank you for talking with me today. If you think of anything that I should know, please contact Dr. Mullings or myself at...

Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Lesley Derraugh, and I am a research assistant to Dr. Delores Mullings at Memorial University. Currently we are working on a report for the Harris Centre as part of their Population Project. This section of the project is examining attraction and retention of professionals in Labrador and included a series of public consultations as well as the circulation of an online survey last summer. As we compile our final report however, we find ourselves seeking further insights about attraction and retention from Human Resources professionals such as yourself.

If you could take the time to answer a few short questions about your experiences working in Labrador it would greatly contribute to the completion of a well-rounded and informed report.

I have attached the questions to this email. Any support you could provide would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself, or Dr. Mullings.

Thank you in advance,

Lesley Derraugh  
Candidate, Master of Gender Studies  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
lsd543@mun.ca

Dr. Delores V. Mullings  
Associate Professor  
School of Social Work  
Memorial University  
Coughlan College, CL-2018  
[dmullings@mun.ca](mailto:dmullings@mun.ca)  
[deloresmullingsMUN@mail.com](mailto:deloresmullingsMUN@mail.com)

## Appendix G: The Labradorian News Article

### New study looking at attracting and retaining professionals

Evan Careen [evan.careen@tc.tc](mailto:evan.careen@tc.tc)

Published on July 12, 2016

[<img src='/content/dam/tc/the-labradorian/images/2016/12/LAB-A00-18072016-professionals-EC.jpg.imgtransform/MCL/0.36.150.136.310.206/image.jpg.imgtransform/MRL/image.jpg' alt='New study looking at attracting and retaining professionals'>](#)



Dr. Delores Mullings with Memorial University is looking for feedback from professionals in Labrador regarding the challenges they face.

Photo Submitted

### A new project from the Harris Centre at Memorial University is looking for some feedback from professionals in the area.

The project, titled Labrador Professional Attraction and Retention, is looking for input on the challenges facing professionals in the area.

“The bottom line is the government of Newfoundland and Labrador is interested in exploring and developing strategies that will attract professionals to Labrador and make them want to stay,” said Dr. Delores Mullings of Memorial University, one of the researchers on the project.

Mullings said what the researchers are looking for is finding out how people are attracted to the area, why they are attracted and when they do come in to Labrador, what keeps them there and what drives them away.

They are looking for input from anyone who self-identifies as a professional, as opposed to limiting it to certain professions.

Mullings said since they launched the survey, which can be completed online, they have gotten some great responses, and identified some common issues.

“The top four challenges we’re hearing so far are the isolation, the lack of infrastructure — such as people can’t find proper doctors, social services, social events; the high cost of living and the inability to visit family, which ties into the isolation,” she said.

In addition to finding out the challenges, they are also looking for the reasons people stay. Mullings said so far, there has been one big reason people say they stay.

“The natural beauty of the landscape is a reason we’ve heard over and over,” she said. “People fall in love with the rugged landscape, the views, the land itself.”

One component of the survey asks what people see as solutions, and one of the biggest responses they are getting is people think there should be subsidy on the transportation into Labrador and on gasoline.

“To reduce the cost of living, to reduce isolation and to get people moving in and out,” she said. “A lot said they would be more willing to stay if they could travel in and out at reasonable prices or their families could come to visit them more easily.”

Once the information is gathered, they will give it back to the communities and share it with government. Mullings said they could provide it to any business or institution that wants it.

“It’s not ours, it’s the peoples,” she said. “We will be posting it liberally on websites wherever we can get it posted and for people who don’t have Internet access we have limited funds to mail copies or it to them in paper form. Because of the Internet availability in some areas of Labrador, this seemed like the best option.

“However, if I can get funded to go back I would love to present the findings to the communities in person.”

For more information on the project, visit <https://labradorattractionandretention.wordpress.com/>. The survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDFJJXY> and will be up until Aug. 30. The researchers will be visiting communities all this week, Wabush and Labrador City on July 11, Happy Valley-Goose Bay on July 12, Sheshatshiu on July 13 and Nain on July 14.

[evan.careen@tc.tc](mailto:evan.careen@tc.tc)

Source: <http://www.thelabradorian.ca/news/regional/2016/7/12/new-study-looking-at-attracting-and-retaining-professionals.html>

## Appendix H: Public Consultation Blog Post

The screenshot shows a website with a header banner for "LABRADOR PROFESSIONAL ATTRACTION AND RETENTION" and a navigation menu with links for Home, Project Team, Contact, and Blog. The main content area features a "Home" section with the following text:

**Home**

The Population Project is an initiative of the Harris Centre at Memorial University to explore policy options designed to address issues arising from current and anticipated demographic changes in Newfoundland and Labrador over the next twenty years. The initial focus is on Labrador which is a complex area characterized by relatively small, highly dispersed, population clusters distributed over a large area. These clusters vary considerably from the young and growing Aboriginal population on the north-east coast, the ageing and shrinking population in the Labrador Straits area, volatile population numbers in the mineral resource region of western Labrador and a mix of many of these elements in the central area of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Developing and maintaining a healthy economy in Labrador requires the attraction and retention of a body of professionals with the skills needed for that development process. Too often, however, there appear to be barriers to attracting such individuals and their families and in keeping them there for any length of time. Attraction/retention constraints include access to affordable housing and childcare and local costs of living. The changing demographic characteristics of Labrador seem likely to exacerbate this challenge.

We are engaging in a public consultation to hear from stakeholders about some of the barriers and enablers to attracting and retaining professionals in Labrador.

[1] A series of population projects for Labrador for the period 2015-2036 has been developed for the Project and will be available shortly.

On the right side of the page, there are three sections:

- SEARCH**: A search bar with the placeholder text "Search ...".
- FEEDBACK FORM**: A link to a survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDFJJKY](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDFJJKY).
- COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**: A dark box with the text "Consultation July 10th, 2016" and a white box below it with the text "The big day is here."
- FLICKR PHOTOS**: Three small photo thumbnails and a link labeled "More Photos".

## **Appendix I: Public Consultation Guided Questions**

### **Consultations Questions for service providers and human resources manager**

What barriers do you see affecting professionals in Labrador?

What do you think needs to be done to attract and retain professionals in Labrador?

What would you like to have in Labrador to encourage professionals to remain in the region?

What are some things that the government could consider to help motivate professionals to remain in Labrador?

Would you like to add any further comments?

### **Consultations guided questions for professionals**

What motivates you to stay in Labrador?

What motivates you to leave Labrador? Consider if you went away to school and did not return at first.

What would you like to have in Labrador to encourage you to stay?

What are some things that the government need to do to help motivate you to remain in Labrador?

## Appendix J: Online Survey

### *Disclaimer:*

Under the authority of the section 32(c) of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, personal information including opinions, name and email are collected for the purpose of conducting public consultations of Safe and Caring issues. This information is kept confidential and handled as required by the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Act. Any questions or comments can be directed to [johnbarron@gov.nl.ca](mailto:johnbarron@gov.nl.ca)

**Project objectives:** To explore policy approaches that would contribute to a strategy for Labrador to help address professional staff attraction and retention needs.

**Expectations:** To summarize the current situation with respect to hiring and retention of professionals in Labrador and to consider the implications of anticipated demographic changes for this. The project will identify success factors that contribute to staff attraction and retention through discussions with current service providers and with reference to experience from other jurisdictions. The constraints and opportunities of implementing these success factors will form the basis for a strategy for a public policy approach to this issue.

**Feedback to the community:** Once the project is complete, I will post a copy of the full report online, accessible to everyone and if need be, provide hard copies of the executive summary to individuals upon request. In addition, where possible, I will present a project update electronically.

1. What is your age?

18 to 24 25 to 34 35 to 44 45 to 54 55 and over

2. What is your country of birth? Please Specify.

3. What is your gender? Please Specify.

4. What is your primary language? Please specify.

5. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Less than high school degree, High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED); Some college but no degree  
Technical and skilled training Bachelor degree Graduate degree Other (please specify)

6. Approximately how long have you lived in Labrador? Less than 1 year

2-3 years 4-6 years 7-9 years 10 or more

7. In which part of Labrador are you located?

8. What is your profession?

9. Are you working in your profession in Labrador? If no, why not? Please explain.

10. Where did you hear about jobs in Labrador? Newspaper, Advertisement, Internet, Radio, Television  
Agency Other (please specify)

We are trying to understand your experience in Labrador; please provide as much details as possible.

11. What motivated you to seek work in Labrador?
12. What barriers or difficulties have you experienced while working in Labrador?
13. What motivates you to remain in Labrador?
14. How has working and living in Labrador impacted you? Please comment on both positive and negative impacts.
15. What do you think needs to be done to attract and retain professionals like yourself in Labrador?
16. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

Thank you for completing the survey. Please enter your contact information for consultation purposes.

Name, Email Address, Phone Number

