



Geography

The Labrador Health Centre is located in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The hospital serves the people living in the Upper Lake Melville catchment area which extends from Nain in the northern part of Labrador to Black Tickle in the south. The communities within the catchment area are Churchill Falls, Nain, Natuashish, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, Rigolet, Sheshatshiu, North West River, Cartwright, Mud Lake and Black Tickle. Aside from 42 km of pavement between Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River/Sheshatshiu, these communities are only accessible via air (north coast) or a lengthy drive over gravel road. The nearest tertiary referral centre is St. John's, Newfoundland (a two-hour flight).

Population

The four main ethnic groups are: Innu, Inuit, Nunatukavut (Southern Inuit) and settler. Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville and Rigolet are predominantly Inuit while Natuashish and Sheshatshiu are Innu reserves. Both these groups have ratified land claims and self-government agreements. Happy Valley-Goose Bay is a mix of Innu, Inuit, Nunatukavut, settlers and come-from-aways. The population of Happy Valley-Goose Bay is 8,100 and the catchment of the Labrador Health Center is 14,000.



Our mission is to prepare family medicine residents to be competent, confident rural physicians.

The NorFam Experience

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NorFam



Residency Training in Labrador

The Northern Family Medicine (NorFam) experience was established in 1991 as one of the country's first rural remote teaching programs.

NorFam is based in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, and offers an intensive two-year rural and northern family medicine residency to prepare physicians to be confident and competent in rural and remote medicine.

Medical student electives are also available.

Health Care Facilities



The Labrador Health Centre contains a 26-bed hospital that cares for children and adults and provides obstetrical and newborn care. The hospital includes a three-bed monitored unit for critically ill patients, a palliative care bed and a protective custody room. The centre also has an emergency department, operating room, day surgery, chemotherapy and dialysis units. The hospital is staffed by 13 family physicians, an obstetrician, a general surgeon and an anaesthetist. Numerous visiting specialists travel to Happy Valley-Goose Bay on a regular basis.

A long-term care facility is adjacent to the Labrador Health Centre and accommodates 75 residents. Medical care is provided by a family physician who visits every week.

There are 10 nursing stations serving the coastal communities. Basic primary care is delivered by regional nurses and visiting physicians. Patients travel to Happy Valley-Goose Bay for more complex problems and diagnostic imaging.



Educational Opportunities



Residents have opportunities to be involved in:

- Prenatal, intra-partum, and post-partum care, averaging 250 deliveries per year.
- Emergency room shifts.
- Fly-in clinics to communities on the coast of Labrador; outreach clinics to North West River/Sheshatshiu.
- Inpatient care: critically ill patients must be cared for locally, or stabilized before transported out.
- Geriatric care and palliative care.
- Interdisciplinary work with a wide variety of health care professionals including coastal nurses, nurse practitioners and midwives.



Unique Opportunities



- Over a two-year period residents can provide continuous comprehensive care for patients and their families in a variety of settings. Residents will learn community engagement and complete a research project that is useful to the community. Care is provided in the emergency room and inpatient unit and followed up in the patient's home community. Our practice covers a broad spectrum from newborn to end-of-life care and all points in between.
- Residents manage acute and chronic illness and provide health maintenance for the healthy.
- The learning of Aboriginal health is experiential through immersion. Each resident, with backup, is responsible for providing a visiting clinic service and telephone/videoconference support to a coastal community.
- Residents are actively involved in mentoring medical students.
- Telehealth – All coastal clinics are connected to Happy Valley-Goose Bay through videoconferencing facilities.
- Medevacs – Air transportation of acutely ill patients from coastal Labrador to the health centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, or from Happy Valley-Goose Bay to another referral centre.
- Acute and critical care – Residents will learn through simulations and clinical experience.