



MEMORIAL  
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF MEDICINE

2 0 2 1

# ANNUAL REPORT

F A C U L T Y O F M E D I C I N E

## IN THIS ISSUE

DEAN'S MESSAGE • ADMINISTRATIVE OVERVIEW • DESTINATION EXCELLENCE

• RESPONDING TO A PANDEMIC • EDUCATION • RESEARCH • SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

• DONOR PRIDE • OUR SHINING STARS • FORWARD THINKING

Cover: Scientifically accurate atomic model of the external structure of the SARS-CoV-2. Each "ball" is an atom. Published by N+1.

Please note that some of the photos in this issue were taken pre-pandemic.



## DEAN'S MESSAGE

When the World Health Organization declared a pandemic due to the coronavirus COVID-19, our lives changed dramatically. Our 2020/2021 annual report highlights many achievements and advancements—and, where appropriate, the impact of and our response to the pandemic from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

Inside this report, you will read about the impact of the pandemic in various areas: medical education, research and health-care services. From quickly enabling hundreds of staff and faculty to work from home, to pivoting to remote learning for students, to temporarily halting all research, quick decisions, creative solutions and resource balancing ensured many successes.

Our learners showed resiliency as they continued their programs and research. Teaching and learning were adapted for our undergraduate medical students, postgraduate residents and graduate students. Many of our faculty and residents were front-line workers dealing with ever-changing circumstances and health risks.

During this difficult time, our strategic plan—*Destination Excellence*, now in its fourth year of implementation—provided a strategic framework that helped us focus on our priorities. This success speaks to the importance of meeting the needs of the people and communities we serve, as our project teams continue to work hard to help us reach our goals.

We continue to advance medical research, and you will learn more about the Faculty of Medicine's diverse research initiatives in this report. In addition to research related to COVID-19, we have community health, biomedical and clinical research addressing questions and exploring opportunities that will, in turn, advance health care.

The support of our donors has been more critical than ever before for many learners, who faced challenging circumstances throughout this difficult year. In this report, we highlight new funding and support provided by organizations like the Canadian Medical Association Foundation.

So much has happened over the past year. On behalf of the faculty, I wish to extend my thanks to all those who support and are connected to Memorial's Faculty of Medicine in so many different ways. As we continue to advance health through medical education, research and social accountability, I appreciate having you on this journey with us.

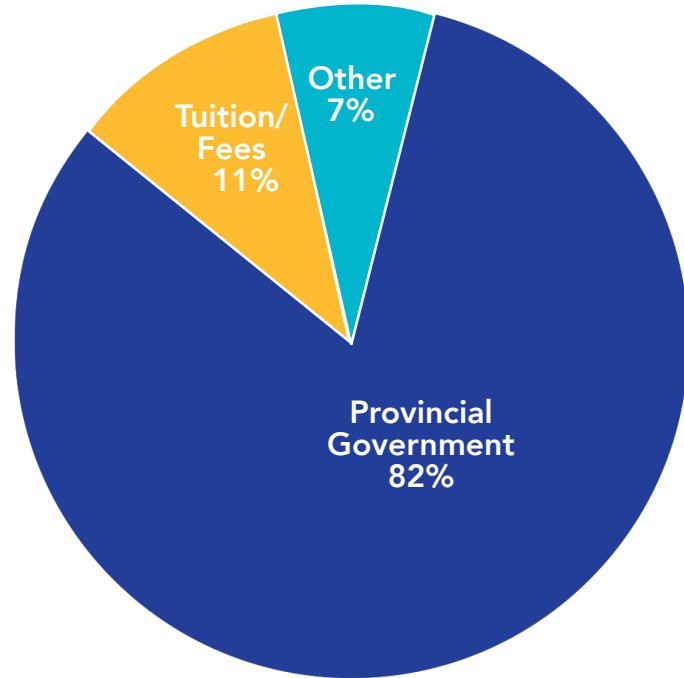
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Steele". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Margaret Steele  
Dean, Faculty of Medicine  
Professor, Discipline of Psychiatry  
Memorial University of Newfoundland

# ADMINISTRATIVE OVERVIEW

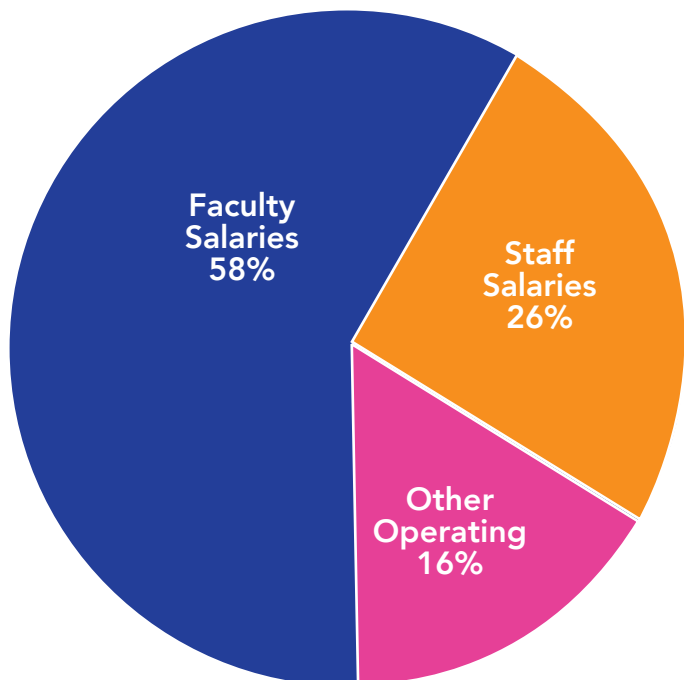
In 2020/21, the Faculty of Medicine earned \$71 million in operating revenues, including a \$3.8-million stabilization payment from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Health and Community Services to eliminate the annual operating grant deficit. As of March 31, 2021, the faculty had an accumulated surplus of \$1.8 million: \$1.2 million related to core operations and the remainder related to professional development funds and ancillary operations.

## A BREAKDOWN OF CORE OPERATIONS:



### Other revenue is comprised of:

- External recoveries
- Contract revenue
- Indirect cost of research funding
- Other learner-related revenue
- Other miscellaneous



### Other operating expenses is comprised of:

- Externally contracted services/MOUs
- Utilities
- Library collection
- Operating leases
- Materials and supplies
- Professional fees
- Internal transfers
- Building and equipment repair
- Telecommunications
- Other miscellaneous

Office	GFT faculty	MUNFA / Other full-time faculty	Clinical educators	Part-time stipendiary clinical faculty	Non-academic staff
Admissions					4
Building Operations					1
Clinical Learning and Simulation Centre					11
Dean's Office					12
Discipline of Anesthesia	13			8	2
Discipline of Emergency Medicine	7	1		9	1.5
Discipline of Family Medicine	22	3	5	26	19
Discipline of Laboratory Medicine	11			2	2
Discipline of Medicine	47	3	1	24	6
Discipline of Obstetrics/Gynecology	12	2	2	6	2
Discipline of Oncology	7	1		16	2
Discipline of Pediatrics	24	1		19	4
Discipline of Psychiatry	15	4	2	21	3
Discipline of Radiology	3	3		31	4
Discipline of Surgery	13		1	25	3.5
Division of BioMedical Sciences		35			6
Division of Community Health and Humanities		31		4	11
Finance					10
Health Sciences Centre Library		7			9
Human Resources					4
Health Research Ethics Authority					3
HSIMS					30
Medical Laboratories					12
Medicine Development Office					3
New Brunswick Office				4	
NL Centre for Applied Health Research					6
Professional & Educational Development					11
Postgraduate Medical Education					5
Research and Graduate Studies					6
Distributed Medical Education				3	11
Learner Well-Being and Success					5
Undergraduate Medical Education				1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>217</b>

**STUDENT NUMBERS:**

**Doctor of Medicine learners:**

Class of 2021	80
Class of 2022	82
Class of 2023	78
Class of 2024	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>



**Graduate learners enrolled for 2020-21:**

Graduate Program	Diploma	Masters	Doctoral
BioMedical Sciences	0	45	33
Community Health and Humanities/Clinical Epidemiology	17	110	41
<b>Total Enrolled Graduate Learners</b>	<b>246</b>		

**Postgraduate Medical Education Residents:**

Anatomical Pathology	8
Anesthesia	22
Care of the Elderly*	1
Care of Underserved Populations*	0
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**	0
Diagnostic Radiology	19
Emergency Medicine	6
Family Medicine	69
General Internal Medicine	3
General Surgery	20
Internal Medicine	40
Medical Oncology	2
Nephrology	1
Neurology	11
Obstetrics and Gynecology	17
Orthopedic Surgery	11
Pediatrics	22
Psychiatry	24
<b>Total Active Residents</b>	<b>276</b>

\*Discipline of Family Medicine enhanced skills program

\*\* Discipline of Psychiatry subspecialty program

# DESTINATION EXCELLENCE

The Faculty of Medicine’s strategic plan, *Destination Excellence*, is in its third year of implementation. Some key activities and initiatives were able to move forward in 2020-2021 to support the plan’s on-going implementation.

Despite the global pandemic, the annual strategic planning update and planning days took place over two half-days on Nov. 20 and 27, 2020. Approximately 80 individuals participated in each of the sessions. As the plan entered the midpoint of implementation, three of the original project teams (research, social accountability and wellness) concluded their work after completing their original tasks, and these initiatives are now operational.



## IMPROVING LIVES

- The **DISTRIBUTED MEDICAL EDUCATION (DME) OFFICE** was created as a result of the amalgamation of the former Rural Medical Education Network (RMEN) and key functions of the Discipline of Family Medicine's streams. **THE FIRST ASSISTANT DEAN DME, DR. ANDREW HUNT**, was appointed to lead the new office.
- A proposal to create **LONGITUDINAL INTEGRATED CLERKSHIPS (LICS)** in Newfoundland and Labrador was prepared and sent to the Department of Health and Community Services.
- A provincial **GENETICS\GENOMICS STEERING COMMITTEE** is being established and will decide on the vision, mission and outcomes, as well as membership, on a number of working groups.

## EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO

- The **RESEARCH PROJECT TEAM** concluded its work by finalizing a set of recommendations to reduce barriers to clinical faculty who want to participate in research. Implementation of the recommendations is being overseen by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.
- The **OFFICE OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY** was created and the **FIRST ASSISTANT DEAN SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, DR. BOLU OGUNYEMI**, was appointed to lead the office. With the Office of Social Accountability in place, the social accountability project team sunset.
- To build on the improved processes around meetings, a best-practices set of **GUIDELINES FOR REPRESENTATIVES ON FACULTY OF MEDICINE COMMITTEES AND PROJECT TEAMS** was developed.

## EMPOWERED PEOPLE

- To address urgent wellness and well-being issues resulting from the global pandemic, the **COVID-19 WELL-BEING TASK FORCE** continued its work.
- The **WELLNESS PROJECT TEAM** concluded its work after producing the summary report on the findings from the inaugural wellness survey.
- The **CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE TEAM** is tracking implementation of the unit assessment recommendations using a **HEAT MAP** (see below). Two primary initiatives of the team were the creation of professionalism moments for inclusion in the Dean's Notes biweekly update, and the creation of a working group to develop a respectful workplace and culture accountability progress report that will be issued from the Dean's Office at regular intervals.

## ENDURING LEGACY

- A series of four internal stakeholder feedback sessions were held to inform further development and refinement of the **BALANCED SCORECARD**.
- Working with the discipline chairs, a new **DISCIPLINE FUNDS** disbursement formula was developed to ensure sustainability of the funds.
- Several units within the Faculty of Medicine finalized their own **UNIT STRATEGIC PLANS AND/OR SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS**.

### Unit Assessment Heat Map (as of February 2021)

	Medial Learners	Graduate Learners	Faculty Members	Admin and other staff
1	11	19	27	32
2	12	20	28	33
3	13	21	29	34
4	14	22	30	35
5	15	23	31	36
6	16	24		37
7	17	25		
8	18	26		
9				
10				

■ Completed   
 ■ In Progress   
 ■ Pending

## RESPONDING TO A PANDEMIC

### COVID-19 TASKFORCE

When the pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization, it was clear that circumstances around education, research and life in general were going to change rapidly—and in many cases, unpredictably.

In anticipation of the need to make quick and informed decisions, Dean Steele formed a Faculty of Medicine COVID-19 Task Force, chaired by Vice Dean, Education and Faculty Affairs, Dr. Cathy Vardy.

The task force consisted of senior academic faculty and staff, who initially met daily to discuss issues related to educational and research programs, national medical school discussions and other university and provincial issues. As the province moved into different alert levels, the task force modified the frequency of meetings based on the urgency of the issues that arose.

### STAYING CONNECTED AND CONTINUING SERVICES

Throughout the year, virtual platforms were critical in facilitating many academic programs and activities.

In addition to moving curricula online, celebrations recognizing graduation and program completion for learners of all levels were held virtually.

There was an increase in online events like conferences, symposiums and town halls. The expanded access to virtual/online technology broke down geographical barriers, allowing faculty, staff, learners and members of the community to connect during a time when lockdowns and physical distancing left many feeling isolated.

### HEALTH SCIENCES INFORMATION AND MEDIA SERVICES (HSIMS)

When Memorial University campuses closed, the HSIMS eLearning team transitioned approximately 320 undergraduate medical students, 300 graduate students and 300 postgraduate residents to remote learning. All Faculty of Medicine faculty and staff transitioned to remote teaching, initially using teleconferencing and asynchronous delivery methods until June 2020. Over the summer, HSIMS prepared the Faculty of Medicine to use WebEx for synchronous learning in combination with Brightspace to store all learning materials, including lecture captures. Undergraduate and graduate studies transitioned for the fall semester, and postgraduate learners continued using WebEx and existing education technologies.

Timing was such that HSIMS had a number of leased laptops set to be returned to Dell. With a quick turnaround, they were able to re-image these computers and deliver them to faculty and staff so that they could remote-in to their desktop computers and effectively work off campus.

Once working from home, faculty and staff were supported by HSIMS PC Consultants via phone and email using newly deployed remote-support tools.

As weeks turned to months, and months turned to a year, everyone taught, learned and worked remotely. In addition, the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS) interviews were performed using WebEx, and interviews for the MD class of 2025 were conducted remotely.



## CLINICAL LEARNING AND SIMULATION CENTRE (CLSC)

During the 2020/21 academic year, the CLSC continued to support curriculum for undergraduate and postgraduate medical education, which included both virtual and in-person sessions. COVID-19 presented many challenges and the CLSC team—located in the Faculty of Medicine building on the St. John's, N.L. campus—adapted and supported the curriculum while adhering to the public health guidelines.

Considering that the CLSC was closed for six weeks due to COVID-19 restrictions, a significant amount of curricula continued to be supported.

### Undergraduate Medical Education

The CLSC staff supported 780 one-on-one in-person sessions. These sessions covered gastrointestinal (GI), head and neck, musculoskeletal (MSK), neurology, head-to-toe physical examinations, urology and breast-health sessions. CLSC staff also supported more than 300 virtual sessions covering areas including obstetrics, orthopedics, surgery, pediatrics and history-taking sessions with patients who have an existing (but stable) condition. These learners also had an eight-station virtual OSCE, consisting of both history taking and physical examinations (described, not performed), which was organized and supported by CLSC staff.

### Postgraduate Medical Education

A total of 57 High Fidelity and Skills labs, with a total of 403 in-person simulation encounters, were supported from July 2020 to June 2021. Two virtual OSCEs and four virtual simulation PGME events were also supported.

In addition to supporting UGME and PGME curriculum, the CLSC staff also supported a number of virtual events held by the Faculty of Pharmacy as well as the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. Two Eastern Health Advanced Trauma Life Support courses were also supported during this time, along with a national exam held for the Pharmacy Exam Board of Canada.



A medical learner training in the CLSC  
(Photo: Terry Upshall, HSIMS).



Simulation session  
(Photo: Terry Upshall, HSIMS).

## MADE RIGHT HERE

A local 3D-printing company, PolyUnity, which got its start at Memorial's Faculty of Medicine, helped alleviate the personal protective equipment (PPE) shortage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by making their own.

PolyUnity was founded by fourth-year medical student Mr. Travis Pickett; Dr. Michael Bartellas (MD '19), an otolaryngologists (ENT) resident in Ottawa, Ont.; and Dr. Stephen Ryan (MD '18), a family medicine resident in St. John's, N.L.

In February 2020, PolyUnity signed on as an innovation partner with Eastern Health through its Living Labs program, which places entrepreneurs in its facilities to work with medical professionals on new products and solutions.

The MUNMED 3D print shop was just getting off the ground when the pandemic hit. They were already in discussions with PolyUnity about a collaboration when Eastern Health reached out to the company for help with PPE to protect their frontline workers.

After getting the contract to print for Eastern Health, which had an urgent need for 3D printers, Dean Margaret Steele granted permission to use the MUNMED facilities. A legal agreement was made to lend PolyUnity the printers, take them offsite and let them borrow some materials from the MUNMED 3D laboratory to speed up their printing capability. Teams from Memorial's Vice-President (Research) portfolio also played an integral role in setting up the agreement.

PolyUnity used the printers to produce headbands for face shields, while the visor was sourced from the Department of Technical Services at Memorial.



Dr. Travis Pickett of PolyUnity picks up a 3D printer from Dr. Patricia Cousins and the MUNMED 3D lab  
(Photo: Paul Tucker).



Dr. Doug Angel and Dr. Jamie Tibbo wearing PPE that includes Polyunity protective face shields (Photo: submitted).

The company collaborated with Technical (Tech) Services, thanks to ongoing relationships with researchers and staff within the Faculty of Medicine. Tech Services prepared prototypes and assessed production methods for the visors, which were then cut on their waterjet machine.

PolyUnity also used the printers to produce parts for pump adapters they created for the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation (NLC) hand sanitizer bottles that were deployed in hospitals across the province.

On March 31, PolyUnity learned that the shields were certified as a Class 1 medical device by Health Canada. They then passed Eastern Health's quality assurance process. On April 10, some of the 2,100 face shields were delivered to Eastern Health.

Within about a week, the team was contributing to reducing the PPE shortage.

## MEDICAL LABORATORIES (MED LABS)

The MED Labs provide research, educational, clinical, teaching and technical laboratory support in the Faculty of Medicine.

In March 2020, Memorial suspended on-campus research and scholarly activities across campuses. When research did begin, by way of research exemptions, most of the MED Laboratories staff worked through the province-wide public health Alert Level 5 to ensure that projects continued.

In December 2020, MED Laboratories was approached by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure the safe storage of Pfizer mRNA vaccines in our ultra-low freezers, once the vaccines began arriving in Canada.

Laboratory-based curriculum-recording sessions were also held in and supported by MED Laboratories. It was possible for the unit to organize and facilitate in-person labs while also maintaining all COVID-19-related protocols from a public health and Memorial University perspective.

MED Labs also supported new BMS faculty as they were hired and started their labs during the fall and winter semesters, including during the lockdown.

## HOW IMMUNE ARE YOU?

Faculty of Medicine researchers receive half a million dollars in funding for COVID-19 immunity studies

In fall 2020, a group of researchers began recruiting people in Newfoundland and Labrador with COVID-19 cases, both confirmed and suspected, to study their antibodies. The researchers hope those antibodies will tell them more about immune responses.

Dr. Michael Grant's study, Characterization of Cellular and Humoral Immunity Against SARS-CoV-2, received nearly half a million dollars from Canada's COVID-19 Immunity Task Force (CITF), in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Dr. Grant is a professor of immunology and associate dean in the Faculty of Medicine's Division of BioMedical Sciences.

Dr. Rod Russell, Professor of Virology and Immunology with the Division of BioMedical Sciences, and PhD candidate Kayla Holder are part of Dr. Grant's team, which is part of a network of seven teams across the country.

They plan to investigate antibody and T cell responses against SARS-CoV-2 in relation to the severity of infection they experienced, measure antiviral functions of the immune response and assess the durability of these responses over time. The results of the research may provide a global benefit for vaccine design and understanding the role of immunity in short- and long-term protection against infection. However, a better understanding of the durability of their immune responses and associated antiviral functions might help with protection against future infections.



Ms. Kayla Holder, Dr. Michael Grant and Dr. Rod Russell (Photo: Rich Blenkinsopp).



Dr. Natalie Bridger  
(Photo: submitted to The Gazette).

## HEROIC PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Dr. Natalie Bridger, Associate Professor of Pediatrics in the Faculty of Medicine, division head of Infectious Diseases and clinical chief for Infection Prevention and Control for Eastern Health—was recognized for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic 'in a heroic way' with a Pediatric Chairs of Canada (PCC) 2020 COVID Leadership Award.

As part of a Pandemic Preparedness Team mobilized early in 2020, Dr. Bridger educated Newfoundland and Labrador frontline staff and conducted patient tracers to test operating procedures and to highlight gaps in knowledge, infrastructure and policies.

Once the pandemic entered the province in mid-March, the team, in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine, Eastern Health and the Department of Health, shifted from planning to response mode.

## EXPERTISE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

For medicine faculty, many of whom are also physicians, and learners like medical students and postgraduate residents, who get much of their education in hospitals and other clinical sites interacting with patients, navigating the early days, weeks and then months of the pandemic was particularly tricky.

The Office of Professional and Educational Development created a robust online list of COVID-19 resources, with links to professional and faculty development happening throughout the country, focused on the latest evidence on teaching and practicing during the pandemic.

As the spread of COVID-19 increased and public health guidelines changed, often at a rapid rate, the Faculty of Medicine was able to provide expertise in the form of media interviews covering topics as broad as public health, examining pandemic responses, scientific modeling and more. Local, regional and national media spoke with faculty and graduate students with expertise in research related to community spread and they provided the latest information on vaccines and related research.

Dr. Proton Rahman at a provincial government COVID-19 update providing information on research-based modeling predictions. Heather Crane is providing sign language interpretation (Photo: CBC News screenshot).

# Update

gov.nl.ca/covid-19

Newfoundland  
Labrador

27, 2020



# EDUCATION

## ADMISSIONS: DOCTOR OF MEDICINE PROGRAM

The Admissions Office's cycle proceeded as scheduled, with the only major change being the elimination of in-person interviews for health and safety reasons due to the pandemic.

The Faculty of Medicine retired the former on-campus in-person process, Traditional and Multiple Mini Interview (also known as TaMMI), and implemented a revamped online method, MUNMed VIP (virtual interview process). This new approach was very successful and as part of the process, applicants completed the Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) as a one-way recorded interview, while the Panel Interview was conducted live using the VidCruiter platform.

## UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION (UGME)

The delivery of the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program at Memorial University was significantly impacted by COVID-19 throughout the academic year. Planning for the 2020/21 academic year involved a complete reconsideration of curriculum-delivery methodologies for all medical students.

Weekly UGME updates were provided to learners, faculty and staff by email. Working closely with student leaders, a subset of the Medical Student Society met biweekly with the Dean of Medicine and senior leadership to address learner concerns.

Curricula typically presented in a classroom setting was delivered remotely via pre-recorded lectures and live virtual didactic sessions. The number of in-person clinical skills sessions was reduced significantly, and any sessions which could be delivered remotely were facilitated through live learning sessions.

Clinical learning in Phase 4 (clerkship) provides an important foundation for hands-on learning. Guidelines developed for in-person clinical learning included direction relating to infection control, the use of PPE and learner participation in the care of COVID-19-positive patients.



## OFFICE OF LEARNER WELL-BEING AND SUCCESS (LWS)

The rebranding of the office from Student Affairs to Learner Well-Being and Success on July 1, 2020 symbolized a change in mindset from solely responding to immediate learner issues, to enhancing programming in multiple functional areas that aim to increase individual and institutional well-being, resiliency and ability to thrive under stress and changing circumstances. LWS doubled the size of the student population it serves by opening programs and services to all undergraduate and postgraduate medical learners in the Faculty of Medicine.

LWS developed a strategic plan for their unit and reviewed, updated and substantially enhanced all programs and services it offers in these areas:

- Mentorship and guidance sessions.
- Career advising and coaching sessions.
- Academic accommodations.
- Financial planning guidance and resources.
- Well-being and wellness support and resources.
- Wellness coaching and counselling sessions.
- Learner interest groups.
- Learner community initiatives.
- Learner, faculty and staff events.



To help meet the needs of the learner groups, LWS redesigned and enhanced their website and continued to provide information about all programs and services as well as process maps and links to resources. This includes presentations on topics of relevance in the area of medical learner well-being and success, which can be accessed online.

LWS also established a network of faculty leads for learner well-being and success in the Faculty of Medicine to increase engagement and communication between LWS, Clinical Disciplines and medical learners. Staying connected was very important for learners, and LWS recognized the need to have targeted communications for them. Presentations and initiatives focusing on medical learner well-being and success topics were regularly shared and made available online. This also included a session with the Office of Professional and Educational Development called Beyond Individual Resiliency: Creating a Culture of Well-Being, which was offered to faculty and learners.



## POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION (PGME)

PGME faced a number of challenges this year, including human resource shortages. The strength and dedication of our people, including staff, program directors and program administrators, was essential.

In addition to their role as frontline health-care workers, learners worked together to ensure appropriate distribution of work commensurate with level of expertise and support for one another in times of need, both for their current cohort and the incoming cohort that began their training on July 1.

PGME initiated mandatory learner town hall sessions, hosted by the PGME Associate Dean and PGME Coordinator, for each program. These were broken down by discipline and postgraduate year level. This initiative aimed to improve direct connections to postgraduate learners in order to enhance the quality of training programs. Based on the success of these events, this initiative will become an annual occurrence.

### Additional successes:

- Continued the launch of Competence by Design (CBD) across programs in 2020, including child and adolescent psychiatry, geriatric psychiatry and pediatrics. All programs will be CBD by July 1, 2022.
- Successful appointment by PGME of a number of new faculty leads to systemically enhance the institutionalization of its continuous quality improvement efforts.

## GRADUATE STUDIES

Early in the pandemic, communication was vital to keep up with the rapidly evolving situation and to reassure students about their academic program continuity. To serve this purpose, the Faculty of Medicine hosted virtual Orientation and Town Hall events.

In the past year, seven PhD oral comprehensive exams and 11 PhD defences were completed virtually for doctoral students in the Faculty of Medicine.

For the very first time, the Canadian Student Health Research Forum went virtual. Four PhD students from the Faculty of Medicine participated. Congratulations to Dylan Galloway, who received an Honourable Mention for their research poster presentation.

Research exchange continued, with visiting speakers providing research seminars to faculty and students virtually. Graduate student life coach Dr. Jen Polk was invited to give a virtual talk and career advice to graduate students in the health sciences.

The BioMedicine 2020 graduate research symposium, held virtually for the first time, featured graduate and undergraduate student oral presentations about their research and the annual illustration competition.

## NEW BRUNSWICK

Medical education in New Brunswick quickly adjusted to a new and constantly evolving social landscape. The management of learner travel issues was handled on a case-by-case basis, as isolation protocols changed regularly and often unexpectedly.

While remaining mindful of public health guidelines, the New Brunswick team organized in-person visits to all New Brunswick teaching sites in October 2020.

The team produced an inaugural biannual newsletter and completed a unit strategic plan as part of the Faculty of Medicine's *Destination Excellence* strategic plan.

Staffing updates include a new program manager being hired and located in Fredericton, and a new Learner Well-Being and Success site director.

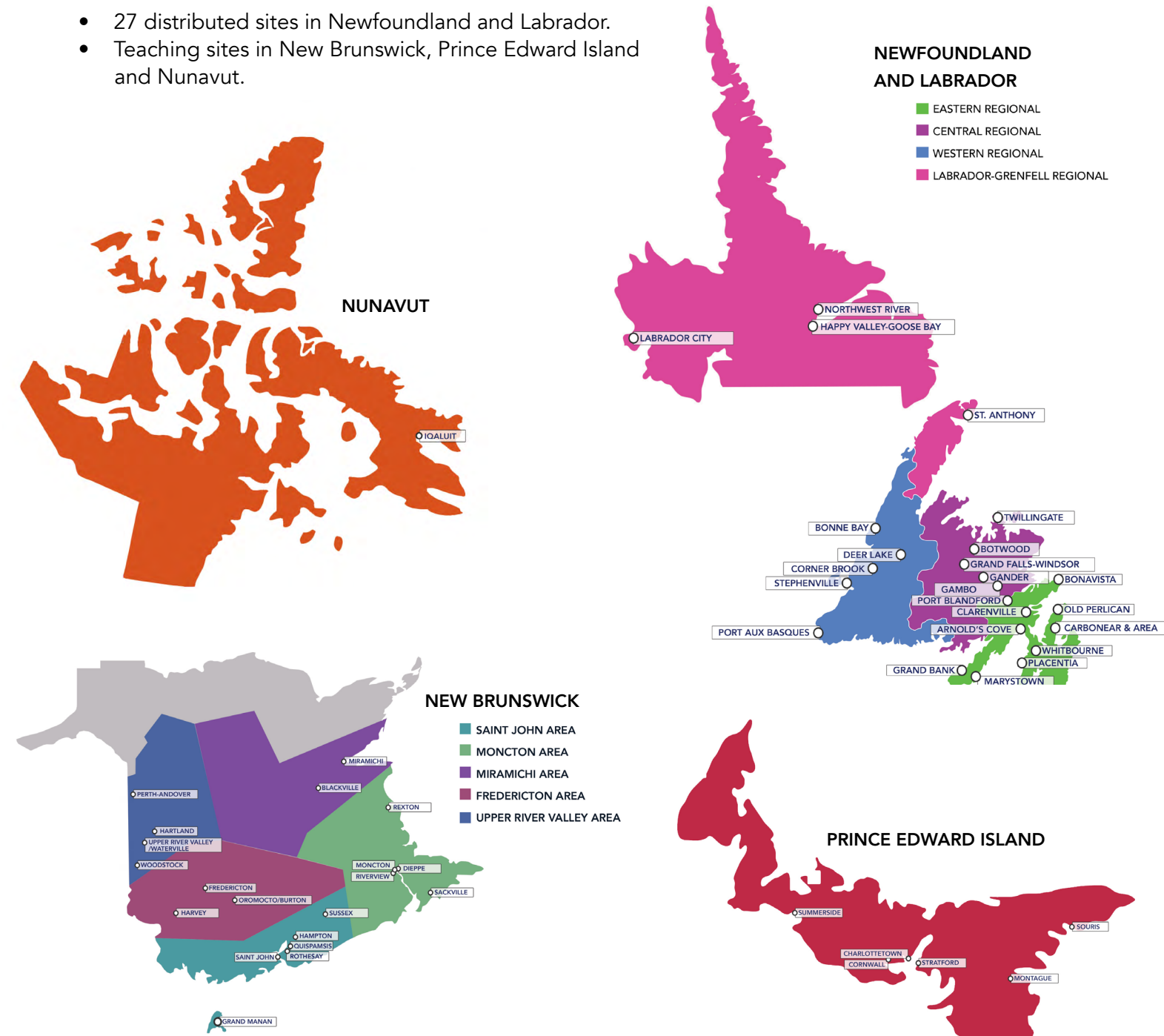
## DISTRIBUTED MEDICAL EDUCATION (DME) UPDATE

In November 2020, the DME Office welcomed Dr. Andrew Hunt, the inaugural Assistant Dean, DME, to the Faculty of Medicine.

DME is a realm of medical learning and teaching that strives to enhance medical education in rural, remote and underserved communities, including developing areas for growth, exploring opportunities for distributed research and engaging with community stakeholders.

The office worked diligently to ensure the safety of learners in distributed sites, with particular attention to providing housing arrangements that met with COVID-19 public-health restrictions. Faculty received support when they had questions regarding ongoing changes to delivery in care, PPE and the increased number of learner rotations.

- 27 distributed sites in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Teaching sites in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nunavut.





Joshua Taylor, Dr. Janna Androwski and Dr. Mike Wahl (Photo: Dr. Andronowski's Twitter)

## BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES (BMS)

BMS expanded by incorporating non-medical faculty previously housed within the former Discipline of Genetics. This recreates the original five graduate programs and research groups within BMS, including cardiovascular sciences, immunology and infectious diseases, neuroscience, genetics and cancer and development.

Dr. Janna Andronowski, a new faculty member in the Cancer and Development program, was hired in November 2020 to assume the leadership role in delivery of the undergraduate medical education anatomy curriculum.



## COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HUMANITIES (CHH)

CHH advanced the recommendations of the DEIST Social Accountability Project Team and established the new Social Accountability Office. This is home to two current programs: Global Health and Equity, and the Indigenous (previously Aboriginal) Health Initiative. They will be joined by the Service Learning and Community Partnership program, which will facilitate engagement of learners with community organisations.

Carolyn Sturge Sparkes, far left, stands with the Indigenous students who took part in the Healers of Tomorrow program (Photo: submitted by Carolyn Sturge Sparkes).

## OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (OPED)

Throughout the pandemic, OPED saw a sharp increase in demand for distance/virtual services, supporting many Faculty of Medicine initiatives designed to enable our learners, faculty and staff.

### Launching Providing Culturally Safe Care for Indigenous Patients in NL program

Provides Indigenous cultural competency training for physicians and surgeons in our province and is a direct response to Call to Action 23.iii of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report.

### Practice Ready Assessment – Newfoundland and Labrador (PRA-NL) program

Continued to accept and process applications during the ongoing public health emergency. In January 2021, the program recommended its first cohort of seven candidates for a 12-week clinical field assessment in April 2021. This assessment is required by the College of Physicians and Surgeons Newfoundland and Labrador and delivered in collaboration with the four regional health authorities.

### NL360+: Multisource Feedback and Peer-Coaching Pilot program

This program continued with ongoing peer coaching, implementation of the pilot evaluation and presentations of preliminary findings to various stakeholders.

## HONORARY WHITE COAT

On Thursday, Feb. 4, the first virtual White Coat Ceremony was held. Beginning as an in-person event at Memorial University in 2001, the ceremony welcomes the newest medical students into the medical profession.

This year was an extra special event, as a new tradition was established. An honorary white coat was presented to recognize a leader in the medical community who has been practicing medicine for some time and displays the qualities, passion and commitment to the profession.

Dr. William Pryse-Phillips, who has led the medical students in the recitation of the Declaration of Geneva since the first White Coat Ceremony, was the inaugural recipient. A mentor and leader in the medical community for decades, Dr. Pryse-Phillips has been at Memorial since 1972, a Professor of Medicine (Neurology) since 1980 and Professor Emeritus since 2004.



Dr. William Pryse-Phillips wearing his honorary White Coat (Photo: Virginia Middleton).

## GRADUATE STUDENT DOUBLE WIN



Gaylene Russell (Photo: submitted to Medicine News).

Gaylene Russell McEvoy is the recipient of both The Chancellor's Graduate Award and The Fry Family Foundation Graduate Leadership Award.

The Chancellor's award is the most prestigious leadership recognition award given by Memorial University, presented for outstanding leadership contributions to graduate student life and other areas of the community. The Fry Family Foundation Graduate Leadership Award is presented to the recipient who has been selected to receive The Chancellor's Graduate Award.

Gaylene completed her BSc in biology at Memorial before graduating in May with her MSc in medicine (cardiovascular sciences). She is now working on her PhD, focused on identifying blood-flow regulation mechanisms that are impaired in type 2 diabetes, under the supervision of Dr. Graham Fraser.

## MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY'S 2020



### CANADIAN MEDICAL HALL OF FAME AWARD

Given Mr. Hearn's accomplishments so far, it's no wonder he received this award for community leadership, superior communication skills, and demonstrated interest in advancing knowledge.

Mr. Hearn, a third-year medical student designed and developed a mobile phone-based remote management system for heart failure patients living in Uganda. Medly Uganda, a tech tool for self management for patients, enables patients to have better care for themselves through tailored self-care advice and direct access to their health-care team.

Working with medical students across the country, Mr. Hearn advocated to the Members of Parliament for improved seniors' care.

He also led the compilation and presentation of research evidence that medical students used to lobby Members of the House of Assembly, leading to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to lift the age restriction on insulin pump coverage.

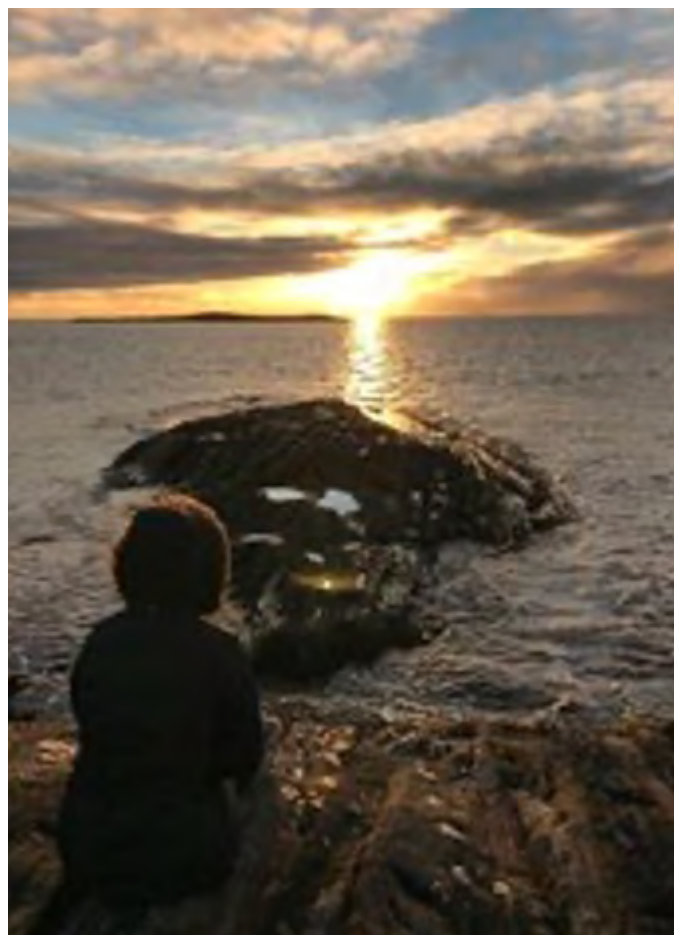
During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Hearn co-founded an initiative to collect personal protective equipment items for frontline health-care workers.

### FACULTY OF MEDICINE MATCHES MOST RURAL RESIDENTS IN CANADA

Memorial's Faculty of Medicine is exceptional when it comes to producing rural doctors. In 2020, the faculty received the Rural Medical Education Award from the Society of Rural Physicians Canada (SRPC).

Coming from a community of about 300, Dr. Jenna Paul knows firsthand that not every doctor plans to practice in a rural community. But Dr. Paul is about to become part of the solution. She completed her Doctor of Medicine (MD) program in May 2020 and began her residency in central Newfoundland in July 2020.

The SRPC annually recognizes a Canadian undergraduate medical program that has excelled in producing graduates headed for a career in rural medicine in the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS) program. This is the second year in a row, and third time in 11 years, that Memorial has received the award.



Dr. Jenna Paul in Grand Bay West Bank, NL (Photo: submitted to Medicine News).

## RESEARCH



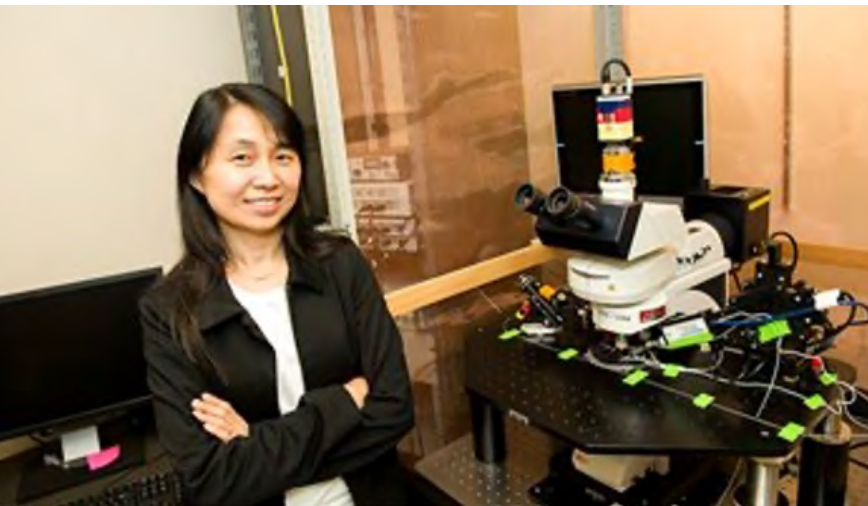
Drs. Moore and Ploughman (Photo: Rich Blenkinsopp).

### EMBRACING INNOVATION

Drs. Michelle Ploughman and Craig Moore have been renewed as Tier 2 Canada Research Chairs (CRC), one of the country's highest honours for research excellence. Tier 2 Chairs are five-year awards for \$100,000 each year.

Dr. Ploughman, Associate Professor of Medicine (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation), will continue her work as Canada Research Chair in Rehabilitation, Neuroplasticity and Brain Recovery. Her research focuses on developing new treatments that promote recovery in stroke and multiple sclerosis (MS), two of the most common neurological disorders in Canada.

Dr. Moore, Associate Professor (Neuroimmunology), has been renewed as Canada Research Chair in Neuroscience and Brain Repair. As one of the only neuroimmunologists in Atlantic Canada, his research will help identify novel treatment strategies for treating chronic neurological diseases, such as MS.



### ADVANCING NEUROSCIENCE

Dr. Michiru Hirasawa, Professor, Division of BioMedical Sciences (Neurosciences), was part of an \$8M investment in several Memorial recipients of research funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

She received \$210,000 to support her study, Neuronal and Non-neuronal Excitatory Transmission in the Hypothalamus, which will advance fundamental neuroscience by establishing a better understanding of chemical transmission in the central nervous system.

Dr. Michiru Hirasawa (Photo: Jennifer Armstrong, HSIMS).

### ONE STEP CLOSER

Dr. Guangju Zhai, Professor, Division of BioMedical Sciences (Genetics), was awarded \$971,550 in funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to study the causes of osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis and one that is expected to make 40 million people severely disabled by 2050.

His research focuses on identifying novel genetic and metabolic markers for predicting disease risk and progression, as well as discovering targets for the development of new treatments and medications for osteoarthritis. This significant funding will expand his studies focusing on a better understanding of osteoarthritis. Dr. Zhai and his team want to develop personalized medicine tools to help patients manage the condition.



Dr. Guangju Zhai (Photo: Rich Blenkinsopp).



(Photo: iStock.com)

## SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

### THE CANCER JOURNEY: ADDRESSING CULTURAL SAFETY IN INDIGENOUS CANCER CARE

Cancer has become increasingly prevalent in First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations in recent decades in Canada. In fact, it's one of the leading causes of death for Indigenous Peoples.

Dr. Jennifer Shea, Assistant Professor of Indigenous health, along with a team of community partners, is hoping to make cancer-care delivery more culturally responsive and respectful. Supported by the Canadian Partnership for Cancer (\$866,000 for four years), their project is led by the Nunatsiavut Government, in partnership with Memorial University, the NunatuKavut Community Council, the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation and the Mushuau Innu First Nation.

Based on the experiences of patients and family members, Dr. Shea and the team are hoping their project will bring to light the challenges and opportunities in the pre-diagnosis journey for Labrador's Indigenous communities, and identify tools and resources to make the journey more seamless.



Dr. Jennifer Shea (Photo: Jennifer Armstrong, HSIMS).

### FOOD INSECURITY: SINGLE PARENTS AND SENIORS PARTICULARLY CHALLENGED

Income-related food security is an important public health issue in Canada and is a key social determinant of health, according to Health Canada. But a paper published by Dr. Atanu Sarkar, Associate Professor of environmental and occupational health, reveals that single parents and seniors living alone in particular have serious challenges when it comes to food security.

With questions adapted from a Canadian Community Health Survey developed by Health Canada, Dr. Sarkar—along with Dr. Martha Traverso-Yeppez and Dr. Veeresh Gadag from the Division of Community Health and Humanities—asked participants about nutritional awareness, household meal practices, challenges and coping strategies.

According to the study, single parents are more constrained by money and time. In fact, 86 per cent of them had a limited budget for groceries and most check flyers for sales, while one-fourth did not have sufficient money or a high enough credit limit.

Some participants were especially vocal about the need for higher incomes and full-time employment, as the nature of their jobs meant limited attention to the quality of their children's diets and accessing information about affordable, yet healthy, diet alternatives.

On a positive note, the majority of respondents were interested in community-based solutions, such as having a vegetable garden and developing skills to prepare fast, easy and low-cost recipes.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, about one in seven individuals are 65 or older. By 2026, that age group is expected to make up more than one-fourth of the total population.

The study indicated that senior women, the majority of them living alone, are constrained by mental and physical health, such as loneliness and mobility issues. In addition to poverty, physical disabilities and loneliness limit the use of public transportation to grocery stores and affect their ability and motivation to prepare balanced, homemade meals.

It is noted that the study was conducted before the pandemic and that the situation has become dire, making these population sub-groups more vulnerable.

# DONOR RECOGNITION AND ALUMNI PRIDE

## VIRTUAL DONOR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT VIANNE TIMMONS AND DEAN MARGARET STEELE

Memorial's President and Vice Chancellor, Dr. Vianne Timmons, along with Dean Margaret Steele, met with Faculty of Medicine donors in March 2021 to have a roundtable discussion on their thoughts as Memorial alumni about moving the Faculty of Medicine and Memorial into the 21st century.

*"Having an opportunity to connect with our donors, many of whom are alumni, was important for both myself and Dr. Timmons. They have important insights into current and emerging issues which are of interest and benefit to the Faculty of Medicine and Memorial University." ~ Dean Margaret Steele*

Some highlights from the discussion included: identifying the importance of continued focus on social determinants of health; looking for opportunities to link government and health together to find innovative ways to address health concerns in our communities; and acknowledging the importance of research funding for new emergent issues like the pandemic's impact on mental health.

## THREE DECADES OF GIVING

Dr. Lynn Noseworthy (MD'79) has been giving monthly to Memorial University and the Faculty of Medicine for 30 years. Her regular giving has added up to more than \$40,000.

She says she is very grateful for having been given the opportunity to have a career in medicine. A life-long believer in philanthropy, Dr. Noseworthy wanted to give back to Memorial—and specifically the medical school—for providing her the opportunity to achieve her goals, have a fulfilling career and meet many remarkable people along the way.

"I think that it is very important to give back to the medical school, to support students to achieve their goals and improve the health of their communities."



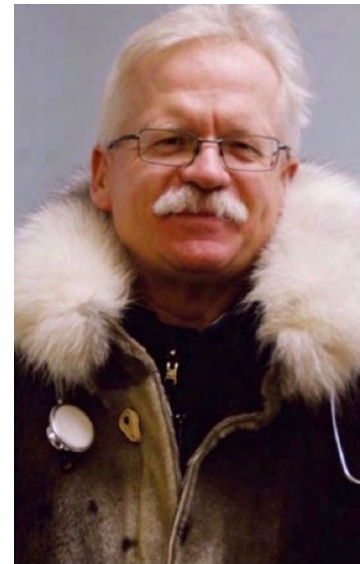
Dr. Lynn Noseworthy (Photo: submitted by Dr. Noseworthy)

## CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION COVID-19 SUPPORT FOR MEDICAL LEARNERS BURSARY

The Faculty of Medicine received \$250k from the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) Foundation, a gift that has provided medical learners with bursaries ranging from \$200 to \$1,000.

The CMA Foundation COVID-19 Support for Medical Learners Bursary has assisted learners from both the Undergraduate Medical Education program and the Postgraduate Medical Education program who have faced hardship during the pandemic.

*"The COVID-19 pandemic created many new challenges for the health-care system including in the journey for today's medical learners, who are the next generation of physicians," said Allison Seymour, president, CMA Foundation. "The CMA Foundation felt an urgency to respond by providing relief, and we are very pleased that the bursaries for medical learners have allowed medical students and residents to focus on their studies and stay healthy during this critical time."*



Dr. Alexander (Sandy) MacDonald (Photo: submitted).

## DR. W. ALEXANDER (SANDY) MACDONALD BURSARY FOR INDIGENOUS LEARNERS ENDOWMENT FUND

This is the first Indigenous award in the Faculty of Medicine, and it is provided through a generous gift from Dr. Alexander (Sandy) Macdonald (MD'86, B.Med.Sci.'84).

Dr. MacDonald provided care to Indigenous people in Subarctic Canada and Nunavut for most of his career. As Medical Director/Chief of Staff in Nunavut, his leadership helped stabilize the physician workforce and greatly increased the quantity and quality of physician care for the population of Nunavut.

The bursary will be awarded annually to an Indigenous learner from Newfoundland and Labrador or Nunavut enrolled beyond the first year of their undergraduate Doctor of Medicine program, on the recommendation of the Dean of Medicine's advisory committee on scholarships, bursaries and awards.

## DR. IMRAN HACK UNDERGRADUATE MEDICINE AWARD

This award was established by a generous donation from Dr. Imran Hack (MD'79).

The then-Mr. Hack came to Canada in 1974 with \$600 in his pocket. In order to put himself through medical school, he worked as a photographer and swept floors. Now a general practitioner in Nova Scotia, Dr. Hack never forgot the support he received in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Dr. Imran Hack Undergraduate Medicine Award is granted annually to one student from each year of the Doctor of Medicine program who has graduated from a high school in Newfoundland and Labrador and requires financial assistance. Preference will be given to students who are working part-time to support their education and are involved in off-campus volunteer activities.



Dr. Margaret Steele, Dr. Imran Hack, Diane Hack and Dr. Mark Berry (Photo: Jennifer Armstrong, HSIMS).



### ALUM NAMED TOP DOCTOR

Dr. Janice Fitzgerald (MPH'16, MD'94, B.Sc.'90), the face and voice of Newfoundland and Labrador's COVID-19 updates, has been recognized nationally with the Family Physician of the Year Award from the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC).

Growing up in Trinity, Bonavista Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador's Chief Medical Officer of Health always wanted to study medicine. She initially pursued community medicine and enjoyed getting to know her patients.

However, working in family medicine from 1996-98 allowed her to see her patients more regularly, and she liked being able to know and care for a family as a whole. After completing her Master of Public Health degree, she worked as the clinical chief of long-term care with Eastern Health.

Deciding she wanted to work at a broader level to effect change more widely, in 2017 Dr. Fitzgerald began working in public health policy development at the provincial Department of Health and Community Services.

Dr. Fitzgerald's passion for family medicine is closely tied to her interest in public health. She says she has observed that much of a person's health is affected by more than a one-time injury or

illness, and that she wanted to be able to influence these factors positively at the population level.

Dr. Fitzgerald took over as the province's chief medical officer of health on an interim basis in August 2019. She accepted the job permanently a year later.

Canada's Family Physicians of the Year, the Reg L. Perkin Award, recognizes family physicians who exemplify the best of what being a family doctor is all about. The candidates are known for providing exceptional care to their patients and making meaningful contributions to the health and well-being of their communities, among other attributes.

*"Dr. Fitzgerald embodies what we teach all of our learners: that advancing the health of the people and communities we serve is of the utmost importance. Given the uniqueness of our population and the pandemic, this is important now more than ever. Dr. Fitzgerald's commitment makes her a role model for generations of physicians to come."*

*~ Dean Margaret Steele*

## OUR SHINING STARS



Dr. Susan MacDonald (Photo: Rich Blenkinsopp).

### PASSION FOR TEACHING

Dr. Susan MacDonald, an Associate Professor of Medicine and Family Medicine, was recognized by the Canadian Association for Medical Education (CAME) with its 2020 Certificate of Merit, an award that promotes, recognizes and rewards faculty committed to medical education in Canadian medical schools.

Considered to be a pioneer in palliative care in Newfoundland and Labrador, she is passionate about teaching future physicians about the importance of taking care of the dying.

### JAMES H. AWARD OF MERIT AWARD

Dr. Kim St. John was awarded the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada James H. Graham Award of Merit, which is given to a person whose outstanding career achievements reflect the aims and objectives of the Royal College.

Spanning more than 20 years in total, her service includes creating specialty standards for psychiatry, aiding in the development and recognition of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty, being a member of the Psychiatric examination board and reviewing other specialties' standards and accreditation.



Dr. Kim St. John (Photo: Jennifer Armstrong, HSIMS).



# FORWARD THINKING



## UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION ACCREDITATION

Due to COVID-19, the undergraduate medical accreditation, originally scheduled for 2021, has been postponed to April 4-6 and May 11, 2022, as a virtual visit by the survey team designated by the Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS).

The Memorial University accreditation leaders include Dr. Taryn Hearn, Faculty Undergraduate Accreditation Lead (FUAL), and Brian Kerr, Accreditation Advisor. They, along with faculty, staff and learners, are preparing documentation and other information that will be reviewed by the survey team.

The process of accreditation ensures we are delivering high-quality, dynamic and innovative academic programming to our learners while enabling our faculty to be exceptional teachers.

Accreditation of every Canadian medical school occurs every eight years and is based on guidelines by CACMS. Our accreditation is set for April and May, 2022.

## FACULTY OF MEDICINE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Volunteers are critical to the Faculty of Medicine, especially in helping us achieve our fundraising goals. In 2019, six individuals representing the community joined our Development Council. Together, they bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise from the corporate, legal, financial and health-care sectors. The Development Council, co-chaired by John O'Dea and Dr. Peter Collingwood, meets quarterly to share knowledge and lend support to our development team. Their commitment to the Faculty of Medicine is crucial as we move forward with our fundraising plans.

## REIMAGINING HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

On Nov. 5, 2020, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced that Dr. Pat Parfrey, Professor of Medicine (Nephrology) and Clinical Epidemiologist, and Sister Elizabeth Davis, congregational leader of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland and Labrador, will co-chair a task force known as Health Accord NL.

Their vision is two-fold: to create awareness of, and interventions in, the social factors that influence health; and to achieve better balance and higher quality in community-based care (primary health care, elder care and social care) and acute hospital services.

Quality of Care NL, a Memorial-based program, is helping produce the evidence on health system performance and quality of care, and will provide the secretariat for the Task Force. The Faculty of Medicine has faculty, staff and learners on committees and will bring its experience on promoting health, delivering care and educating providers, as well as its role in strengthening the province's health and health system.

Health Accord NL is planning to deliver a 10-Year Health Accord with short-, medium- and long-term goals, developed in consultation with communities, Indigenous leaders and health-care professionals.

