

ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN NEW BRUNSWICK: STILL A CHALLENGE

Primary health care is the first point of contact between the patient and the health care system.



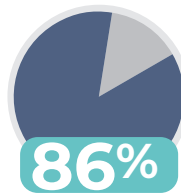
THE SITUATION WITH PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Primary health care providers are typically family physicians, but also include a wide range of professionals, with an increasing role for nurse practitioners and multidisciplinary teams.

They are essential for:

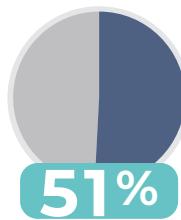


However, having a primary care provider does not guarantee appropriate access to health care services



of New Brunswickers report having a family doctor...

...but only



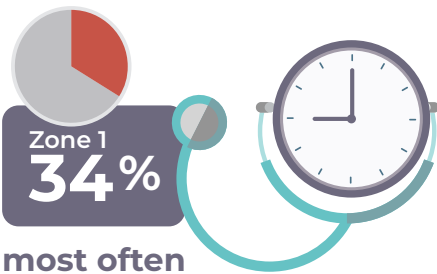
can get an appointment in five days or less

Many end up going elsewhere when they need care, such as:

- an after-hours clinic
- an emergency room



ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTH CARE VARIES FROM REGION TO REGION



most often go to an after-hours clinic when they need care



most often go to the emergency room when they need care

Several factors affect the availability of family physicians


In addition to seeing patients in their offices, many physicians:

- treat patients in emergency rooms
- treat patients in on-call clinics
- perform administrative tasks

All this makes them less accessible



In addition, about 1 in 2 family physicians work alone.


 (Well above the Canadian average of 15%)

Unfortunately, the **availability of physicians** does not always reflect **local needs**.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

In addition to improving our physician recruitment practices, there are other solutions that deserve our attention:

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A multidisciplinary practice in a team of physicians and non-physicians

Patients who receive team-based services are generally very satisfied.

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Geographic distribution of health professionals that is **more strategic**

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Improved technology and information exchange

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Appropriate use of virtual care



* All figures presented are from the 2020 edition of our Primary Health Survey.

