

Heart Force 1

Optimizing Access to Cardiac Catheterization

Overview



Improved cardiovascular outcomes are a strategic priority for Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Health Services, as well as a Call to Action in Health Accord NL. Accordingly, timely and equitable access to cardiac catheterization is an operational priority for the provincial Cardiovascular and Stroke Program. Patients visit the 'cath lab' to have a dye test which diagnoses heart vessel blockages for stenting (to open blocked vessels), and to have devices, such as pacemakers, implanted.

There is one cardiac catheterization lab in Newfoundland and Labrador, located at the Health Sciences Centre (HSC) in St. John's. When admitted patients outside of St. John's need to access the cath lab, they traditionally have travelled one-by-one, by air or road ambulance. Those coming by air were typically admitted and stayed an average of five days at the HSC. The combined impact of bed and transport capacity, along with Newfoundland and Labrador's weather and vast geography, has resulted in challenges in accessing the cath lab.

NL Health Services established **Heart Force 1 (HF1)** to decrease longer wait times experienced by patients in Labrador-Grenfell and Western Zones.

HF1 is a same-day, scheduled, air transport service for stable heart patients. Since 2022, HF1 has improved equitable access, reduced wait times, and enhanced the experience for inpatients waiting for heart cath.

Progress

As of September 9, 2024, **28** HF1 flights have been completed and 209 patients have been transported to the HSC.



Journey Highlights



Impacts

Health Outcomes:

- Reduced cardiac catheterization wait times, enabling faster diagnosis and treatment for inpatients in Labrador-Grenfell, Western, and Central Zones.

Patient Care Experience:

- Reduced wait times and predictable transportation enhances patient and family satisfaction.

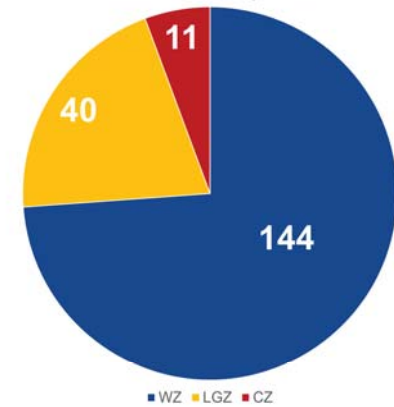
Provider and Staff Impact:

- Reduced the demand on air ambulance, resulting in increased capacity for less stable patients requiring emergency flights.

Systemic Benefits:

- Helped avoid an inpatient stay in approximately 75% of cases. This has saved an estimated 750 bed days at the HSC, to date, and has returned air ambulance capacity to the system for more urgent patients.

Patients Transported



Next Steps and Opportunities



Evaluate and Expand:

Assess performance, gather feedback from patients, clients, providers and partners and expand concept to other programs within NL Health Services.

