

**Regional Ambulatory Care
Patient Experience Survey Results
2022-2023**



**NL Health
Services**

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Background

Survey Instrument

The validated ambulatory care experience survey that was administered throughout the Western region was based on the approved Accreditation Canada Client Experience Survey based on the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey utilized during previous surveys, which was modified to meet the needs of the Western Zone of Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (formerly Western Health) in collaboration with stakeholders in ambulatory care. Modifications were made based on the experiences administering previous versions of the survey and comparison with the more recent 2021 HCAHPS survey tool, as well as the CAHPS Clinician and Group Survey (CG-CHAPS) and the Canadian Patient Experiences Survey – (CPES-IC) developed by Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). The survey also had the addition of standard questions regarding virtual care experience, which were developed with internal stakeholders (see Appendix A).

Method

The survey was available to complete electronically through the Alchemer survey platform or by paper from October 17th to December 11th, 2022. Staff promoted the survey to all patients who received ambulatory care services across the region by providing an information letter. The letter contained information about the survey as well as instructions on how to complete the survey electronically via a website link and QR code. Patients were also given the option to complete a paper version of the survey if they preferred. Based on low overall survey response rates, telephone surveys were conducted from January 20th to March 3rd, 2023. In an attempt to increase the response rate, a random sample of patients who received an identified ambulatory care service during the survey period were called and asked to participate in the survey over the phone. While the electronic survey remained available until March 3rd, 2023, the survey was not promoted by ambulatory care staff during this time.

Participants

The survey was promoted to all patients who received ambulatory care services including: blood collection, diabetes services, diagnostic/medical imaging, dialysis, EEG, EKG, endoscopy, fracture clinic, medical day care/outpatient treatment, orthopedic central intake clinic, outpatient physiotherapy, urology clinic, vascular testing, and wound care. These services are located across the region at the following facilities: Bonne Bay Health Centre (BBHC) in Norris Point, Calder Health Centre (CHC) in Burgeo, Deer Lake Medical Clinic (DLMC) in Deer Lake, Dr. Charles LeGrow Health Centre (LHC) in Port aux Basques, Rufus Guincharde Health Centre (RGHC) in Port Saunders, Sir Thomas Roddick Hospital (STRH) in Stephenville, and Western Memorial Health Clinic (WMHC) and Western Memorial Regional Hospital (WMRH) in Corner Brook.

Sample

Surveys were completed by 912 participants regionally. Based on patient volume regionally, this sample size provides a confidence level of 99% that the real values are within $\pm 3.20\%$ of the surveyed values.

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Data Security

Privacy and confidentiality were achieved as the patients voluntarily and anonymously completed the survey. The majority completed the survey online. Patients who completed the survey on paper or over the telephone did so with no identifying information on the envelope or within the survey to identify the individual. Any information that could potentially identify the patients was removed to maintain anonymity. The data was stored in the Alchemer platform and on password protected computers. Following online entry, paper surveys were destroyed using the approved Western Health grey bins.

Data Analysis

Survey data was entered directly into Alchemer by the participant or telephone interviewer and transcribed from paper copies by the survey administrators. Reports were developed and analyzed in this survey platform. Descriptive statistics were calculated on regional data to obtain a general perspective of patient experiences with ambulatory care services in the Western Zone. Statistics were also calculated for Corner Brook (WMHC and WMRH), the rural health centres (BBHC, CHC, DLMC, LHC and RGHC), and STRH, as well as the individual programs, to assist in quality improvement initiatives and planning at a site and program level. The following report provides a combined summary of survey results for all sites within the region.

Results

Demographics

A total of 912 surveys were completed by patients who received ambulatory care from all sites across the region. Participants were asked to indicate which health facility they visited for ambulatory care services and WMRH had the largest group of participants (50.2%). The number of participants from each health facility is indicated in Table 1 and the number of participants from each program is displayed in Table 2.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Site

Facility	Percent (%)	Frequency
Bonne Bay Health Centre	3.1	28
Calder Health Centre	3.3	30
Deer Lake Medical Clinic	4.5	41
Dr. Charles LeGrow Health Centre	15.2	139
Rufus Guinchard Health Centre	3.9	36
Sir Thomas Roddick Hospital	19.7	180
Western Memorial Health Clinic	17.9	163
Western Memorial Regional Hospital	32.3	295
Total	100	912

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Program

Program	Percent (%)	Frequency
Blood Collection	43.6	397
Diabetes Services	5.4	49
Diagnostic/Medical Imaging	14.2	129
Dialysis	4.9	45
EEG	2.5	23
EKG	3.7	34
Endoscopy	1.1	10
Fracture Clinic	15.4	140
Medical Day Care/Outpatient Treatment	7.5	68
Orthopedic Central Intake Clinic	4.3	39
Outpatient Physiotherapy	3.0	27
Urology Clinic	2.4	22
Vascular Testing	0.1	1
Wound Care	1.9	17
Other – Write In	4.1	37
Total	100	912

To gain a more thorough understanding of the demographics and health status of the survey participants, they were asked to report their gender, cultural or racial background, age group (see Table 3), and their highest grade or level of school completed (see Table 4). They were also asked to rate their overall health and overall mental or emotional health.

The majority of participants identified female (57.5%), 42.1% identified male, and less than 1% identified as transgender and two spirit. Participants included representation across all age groups and educational backgrounds, with the majority of the participants being in the 65-74 age group (28.8%) and the most common education level being a college or other non-university certificate or diploma (32.8%). Participants were asked to indicate all of their cultural or racial backgrounds. The majority (81.7%) reported White, 29.6% reported Aboriginal/ Indigenous, and less than 1% reported Arab, Black, Filipino, Latin American, South and West Asian.

When asked to rate their overall health, 14.5% reported excellent, 33.1% reported very good, 31% reported good, 14.5% reported fair, and 6.8% reported poor. When asked about their overall mental or emotional health, 25.7% of participants reported excellent, 34.9% reported very good, 27.4% reported good, 10.2% reported fair and 1.8% reported poor.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Age Group

Age Group	Percent (%)	Frequency
0-15	3.2	28
16-24	2.6	23
25-34	4.9	43
35-44	8.2	73
45-54	13.4	119
55-64	23.8	211
65-74	28.8	255
75-84	13.5	120
85+	1.6	14

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Education Level

Education Level	Percent (%)	Frequency
8 th grade or less	9.7	84
Some high school, but did not graduate	15.2	132
High school graduate or GED	22.8	198
College or other non-university certificate or diploma	32.8	285
Undergraduate degree or some university	11.7	102
Post-graduate degree or professional designation	7.8	68

Health Care Providers

Participants were asked about their interaction with health care providers (HCPs) from their ambulatory care visit (see Table 5). The majority of participants reported that HCPs

always or usually treated them with courtesy and respect (96.8%), listened carefully to them (93.3%), explained things in a way they could understand (94%), and participants felt they were involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment (92.2%). When asked if the HCP had the information they needed about them during their visit, 98.7% of participants indicated yes definitely or yes somewhat, while 1.4% indicated no.

Table 5. Health Care Providers

Question	Never % (N)	Sometimes % (N)	Usually % (N)	Always % (N)
How often did HCPs treat you with courtesy and respect?	0.2 (2)	2.9 (26)	11.6 (104)	85.2 (762)
How often did HCPs listen carefully to you?	1.0 (9)	5.7 (51)	14.2 (127)	79.1 (706)
How often did HCPs explain things in a way you could understand?	1.1 (10)	4.8 (43)	17.5 (156)	76.5 (680)
How often did you feel involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?	1.7 (15)	6.1 (54)	15.8 (140)	76.4 (678)

Wait Time and Facility Environment

Survey participants were asked about the wait time and facility environment during their ambulatory care visit (see Table 6 and Table 7). The majority of participants indicated they were not told how long they would have to wait to be seen (53.1%), that the surroundings were clean (96.1%), the bathroom was clean (92.8%), and that they had enough privacy (95.2%).

Table 6. Wait Time

Question	Yes, but the wait was shorter % (N)	Yes, and I had to wait as long as I was told % (N)	Yes, but the wait was longer % (N)	No, I was not told % (N)
Were you told how long you would have to wait to be seen?	28.3 (216)	14 (107)	4.5 (34)	53.1 (405)

Table 7. Facility Environment

Question	Yes % (N)	No % (N)
Were the surroundings clean?	96.1 (824)	3.9 (33)
Was the bathroom clean?	92.8 (512)	7.2 (40)
Did you feel you had enough privacy?	95.2 (816)	4.8 (41)

Virtual Care Experience

Virtual care is defined as any health care appointment which was conducted by telephone (landline or cell phone) or video (on a computer/laptop, Telehealth unit, or mobile device such as iPad/tablet). Participants were asked if they had accessed any services through virtual care during their most recent ambulatory care (outpatient) experience and 11.6% reported yes. Those who reported utilizing virtual care were asked additional questions to further understand their experience with virtual care. When asked what type of virtual care they received, the majority (82.1%) reported telephone and 10.3% reported video (computer/laptop, Telehealth unit, or mobile device such as an iPad/tablet), and 7.7% reported another service. When asked to indicate all of the reasons why they accessed virtual care, the majority reported that they preferred not to travel (31.4%), while 28.6% reported that the service was not available in-person at their facility, 25.7% reported that the service was available more quickly from another facility/site, 11.4% reported that they preferred to receive service from a provider at another facility/site, and 2.9% reported that they were unable to travel.

Participants were also asked to provide feedback regarding their experience with virtual care (see Table 8). The majority strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that they received the support that they needed to connect and participate in the appointment (89.5%) and that the appointment was effective in meeting their health care needs (89.7%).

Table 8. Virtual Care Support and Effectiveness

Statement	Strongly disagree % (N)	Somewhat disagree % (N)	Neither agree nor disagree % (N)	Somewhat agree % (N)	Strongly agree % (N)
I received the support that I needed to connect and participate in the virtual care appointment/ service	5.3 (2)	0 (0)	5.3 (2)	21.1 (8)	68.4 (26)
The virtual care appointment/ service was effective in meeting my health care needs	5.1 (2)	0 (0)	5.1 (2)	17.9 (7)	71.8 (28)

Discharge

The survey asked participants about support, getting information, and receiving contact information as part of their discharge (Table 9). The majority of participants report being talked to about whether they had the help they needed after they left (82.4%) and that HCPs told them who to contact if they had a problem after they left (75.1%). It is important to note that while 56.8% of participants indicated they were verbally told the information about what symptoms or health problems to look out for after they left the facility, an additional 25.9% indicated they were given this information in writing. Participants were asked if they had received enough information from their HCP about what to do if they were worried about their condition or treatment after they had left the facility. The majority of participants (55.1%) indicated they received completely enough or quite a bit of the information needed from their HCP, 13.4% indicated they partly received enough and 31.5% received not at all enough information.

Table 9. Discharge Planning

Question	Yes % (N)	No % (N)
Did HCPs talk with you about whether you would have the help you needed when you left?	82.4 (370)	17.6 (79)
Did you get information about what symptoms or health problems to look out for after you left the facility?	82.7 (406)	17.3 (85)
Did HCPs let you know who to contact if you had a problem after you left the facility?	75.1 (492)	24.9 (163)

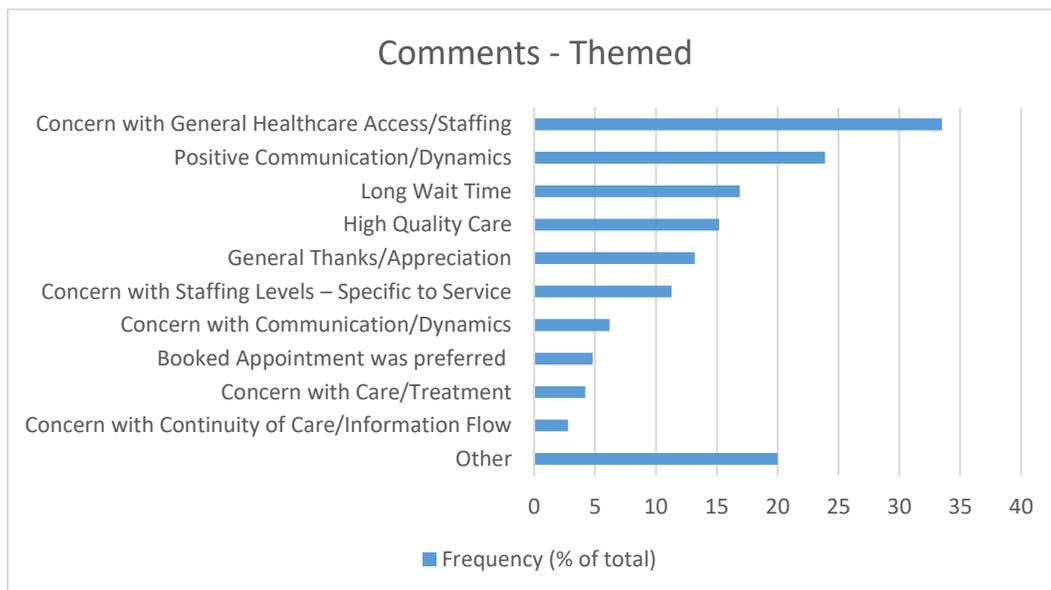
Overall Experience of Care

Participants were asked to rate their ambulatory care experience on a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 being the worst care possible and 10 being the best care possible. On average, participants ranked their experience at 9.0. Participants were also asked whether they would recommend the service to their friends and family. The majority (76.5%) reported definitely yes, 18.2% reported probably yes, 3.2% reported probably no, and 2.1% reported definitely no.

Overall Comments

Survey participants were given the opportunity to comment on their overall experience and 540 respondents provided additional comments (see Figure 1). Participants provided comments related to one or more themes. The most common theme in the responses was concerns with general healthcare access and staffing across all health services, rather than specific to ambulatory care. This was followed by comments about positive communication and dynamics. There were also common themes pertaining to long wait times for some services, high quality care, and general thanks and appreciation for the staff and services provided.

Figure 1: Participant Comment Themes (% of all comments)



Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

Overall results indicate that Western Health's ambulatory care services have many strengths such as the care received from health care providers, including their courtesy and respect and ensuring that they have the necessary medical information about patients during their visit. Other strengths identified was effective communication, discharge planning including education and supports, the cleanliness of facility surroundings including bathrooms, and patient privacy.

Opportunities for improvement were identified for those questions that had less than 80% of respondents reporting a positive response (i.e., always and usually combined or yes).

Regionally, opportunities for improvement include:

1. Explore opportunities and methods to better communicate wait times for patients.
2. Explore opportunities and methods to ensure all patients are given adequate information about what symptoms or health problems to look out for after their visit.
3. Facilitate ways to provide patients with the appropriate contact information in the event they have concerns after their visit.
4. Explore opportunities to provide or advocate for additional supports for patients connecting to services via virtual care to ensure patient needs are met.

Appendix A

Ambulatory Care Patient Experience Survey