



March 31, 2022

To:

**The Honourable John Haggie, Minister of Health and Community Services**  
**The Honourable Gerry Byrne, Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills**

The Anti-Racism Coalition Newfoundland and Labrador (ARC-NL) applauds the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (GNL) for their commitment to support Ukrainian people by guaranteeing Medical Care Plan (MCP) and Labrador Prescription Drug Plan (NLDP) coverage for the duration of their visa. ARC-NL urges the GNL to guarantee the same expedient action in granting MCP coverage to *all* migrants who call Newfoundland and Labrador home, regardless of country of origin, race, religion, gender, and type of immigration permit.

Currently, the qualifications for MCP leave many migrants out of the healthcare system and vulnerable as they avoid seeking medical assistance for fear of incurring insurmountable debt. Many migrants who are not covered by MCP are racialized and in many cases have been living and working in NL for many years without access to essential services such as health care. Migrants whose permits expire in less than one year, who are currently waiting for the arrival of a new immigration permit, and who do not have stable full-time working conditions are particularly challenged. They are not only being excluded from accessing MCP, but their lives are being endangered every day by a qualification system that imposes unrealistic rules and expectations.

The recent GNL initiative to ensure access to MCP to Ukrainian people is a testament that the government has the ability *and* willingness to execute rapid policy action to protect the lives of some vulnerable populations. However, the NL government continues to dismiss migrants and groups who advocate on behalf of migrant rights to enact similar policies. These dismissals lead us to believe that the GNL advocates for policies which support narratives of deserving versus undeserving migrants across racial lines.

Once again, ARC-NL calls on the GNL to guarantee the safety and the collective health of *all* people who call Newfoundland and Labrador home. We ask:

1. That the GNL protect the collective health of NL by ensuring that MCP coverage be available to everyone living and working in the province. This includes, but is not limited to

- Temporary Foreign Workers
  - Post-Graduate Work-Permit Holders
  - All international students regardless of full-time status
  - Undocumented People
  - Those waiting on Immigration Documents
  - Those who are stranded due to Covid-19
  - Asylum seekers
2. That the provincial government ensures that *all* medical care providers, staff, or healthcare administrators are bound by confidentiality agreements including non-disclosure of status, home address, ID, place of work, and field of work to immigration or any police agency. This will protect undocumented workers and other vulnerable communities from being penalized for seeking medical attention.
  3. That health authorities provide ongoing anti-racist and anti-discrimination training for healthcare professionals, including medical care providers, staff, and administration.
  4. That all healthcare educational and informational materials be translated into multiple languages and available at hospitals, clinics, and on the government websites. These materials must specify that all people are covered under MCP regardless of immigration status. These materials should also clearly identify legal rights and limitations to confidentiality (see point 2 above).
  5. Recognizing that literacy is not universal in our province, medical care providers, staff, administration, and translators must be prepared to read aloud any informational material and forms that require signatures from people accessing healthcare.
  6. That the key decision-makers of health care in NL, along with the Minister of Immigration, Population Growth, and Skills and the Minister of Health, commit to meeting with the ARC-NL to collaboratively develop and implement a plan to address/improve health care access for migrants in NL.

Sincerely,

**The Anti-Racism Coalition Newfoundland and Labrador**