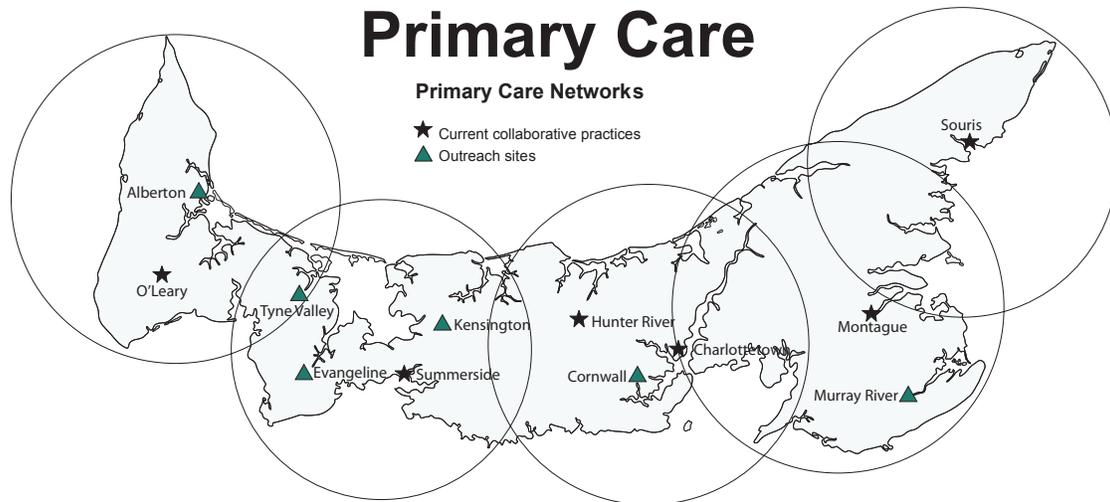


Primary Care



- Primary care is the first point of contact a person has with the health system – the point where people receive care for most of their everyday health needs. Primary care is typically provided by a family physician, or by a team of nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians and other health professionals working together. One of the greatest advantages is that if one primary care provider leaves, the patient still has access to the team.
- Primary care includes the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of various health conditions. It also includes referrals to specialists and diagnostic services such as laboratory tests or X-rays.
- In Prince Edward Island, primary care is provided in physician offices and health centres. Services include diagnosis and treatment, health promotion, illness and chronic disease prevention and management. Some health centres also run walk-in clinics.
- One of the most important features of a good primary care system is having a regular care provider who knows you and sees you for most of your care close to home.



- Primary care networks are being established in West Prince, East Prince, Queens West, Queens East and Kings County. This will ensure that all Islanders are within 30 kilometres of a primary care site and have access to a family physician. A primary care network is a geographic area that defines where programs and services are provided.
- Primary health centres play a powerful role in keeping people healthy and out of hospitals. Through collaborative practice and integrated chronic disease prevention and management initiatives, Harbourside Health Centre patients made 1,000 fewer trips to the ER last year and had 70% fewer unplanned hospital admissions. A COPD management and education program at Harbourside Health Centre helped reduce Emergency Room visits by participants by 30% and repeat visits by 50%.
- Over the past three years, many primary health care services have been enhanced or expanded; for example, more than 5,500 Islanders participated in the new colorectal screening program for men between the ages of 50 and 74.
- A new eight-week Strength program offers day treatment and supervised housing to youth who need help with mental health or addictions issues. More than 110 youth have benefitted from the program, as well as their families who took part in family support sessions.
- Public health nursing has introduced a more comprehensive screening for children aged 18 months and four years old. The new assessment enables more parent participation.
- New community-based programs are available to help COPD patients and those with high blood pressure to manage their conditions.
- Over 30 additional primary care staff were recently trained to deliver smoking cessation programs, and all provincial diabetes educators were certified to adjust insulin dosage.
- New vaccines have been introduced to protect against whooping cough, rotavirus and HPV.
- An independent expert review of Mental Health and Addictions Services is being done to meet growing needs and to improve the delivery of these important primary health care services.

