

## PROVINCIAL LEGAL SNAPSHOT

## Newfoundland and Labrador

Abortion law, funding, and access — one-page reference

As of Jul 13, 2026

Research completed Jul 13, 2026

Confidence: high



- Abortion is **legal at every stage of pregnancy** — Canada has had no criminal abortion law since 1988 — but **geographic gaps** limit access in this jurisdiction.

|                                         |                                             |                                          |                                              |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| LEGAL LIMIT <b>None (nationwide)</b>    | OFFERED LOCALLY TO <b>15 weeks (policy)</b> | ✓ INSURED SERVICE <b>Yes</b>             | ✓ CLINIC ABORTIONS FUNDED <b>Yes</b>         |
| ✓ MIFEGYMISO COVERED FOR ALL <b>Yes</b> | ✓ TELEHEALTH <b>Available</b>               | ✓ SAFE-ACCESS ZONES <b>Law in force</b>  | ✓ RECIPROCAL BILLING <b>Covered</b>          |
| ✓ TRAVEL ASSISTANCE <b>Yes</b>          | INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTION <b>No</b>           | PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT <b>Not required</b> | MINOR CONSENT <b>Mature minor common law</b> |
| PENDING CHANGE <b>See below</b>         |                                             |                                          |                                              |

## § Jurisdiction overview

Abortion is fully insured in hospitals and clinics and protected by safe-access-zone laws, but all procedural services are in St. John's, and the practical cutoff is 15 weeks.

Medical Care Insurance Insured Services Regulations, NLR 21/96, s 3(1)(a) · Access to Abortion Services Act, SNL 2016, c A-1.02 · Access to Health and Educational Services Act, SNL 2022, c A-1.03

## ☒ Funding &amp; coverage

Abortion is an insured physician service under the Medical Care Plan for all eligible residents, at both hospitals and clinics, with no gestational exclusions in the funding rules.

Medical Care Insurance Insured Services Regulations, NLR 21/96, ss 3(1)(a), 4(1)(u) · Medical Care Insurance Insured Services Regulations, NLR 21/96, s 4(1)(u) · Access to Abortion Services Regulations, NLR 79/16, s 3

## CLINIC VS. HOSPITAL FUNDING

Unlike New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador publicly funds abortions at the free-standing Athena Health Centre clinic on the same basis as hospital abortions.

## TRAVEL &amp; OUT-OF-PROVINCE CARE

The Medical Transportation Assistance Program reimburses eligible travel expenses for residents who must travel for abortion services not available in their community, but it is a reimbursement model requiring upfront payment.

## ● Where services actually are

All procedural abortions are performed in St. John's at two facilities; medication abortion is also available there plus through some primary care providers, but Labrador and rural areas have essentially no local procedural access. Newfoundland and Labrador imposes no legal gestational limit, but procedural abortion is only available up to 15 weeks as a matter of provider policy; later-gestation patients must travel out of province.

Eastern Health, 'Abortion' health information page · The Independent, 'Abortion is Legal in NL, But Access Remains Restricted,' May 6, 2022 · Planned Parenthood NL, 'Therapeutic Abortion in NL' pamphlet (revised July 2020)

## MINORS

The mature-minor doctrine governs consent to abortion in Newfoundland and Labrador, but in practice the Health Sciences Centre requires parental consent for patients under 19, while the Athena Health Centre does not.

## SAFE-ACCESS ZONES

The Access to Abortion Services Act (2016) creates buffer zones around abortion facilities (50 m), doctors' residences (160 m), and offices (10 m); the Access to Health and Educational Services Act (2022) extends 50-metre zones to all health-care facilities and schools.

Recent changes

|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jun 2023 | CPSNL issued its Virtual Care Standard of Practice, providing a regulatory framework for telehealth prescribing including for medication abortion.                                                                               |
| Apr 2023 | Provincial Health Authority Act came into force, consolidating the four regional health authorities into a single NL Health Services, centralizing governance of all public health-care facilities including abortion provision. |
| Jun 2022 | Access to Health and Educational Services Act received royal assent, creating 50-metre access zones around all health-care facilities and schools across Newfoundland and Labrador.                                              |
| Jun 2019 | Bill C-75 received royal assent, repealing Criminal Code ss. 287-288, the remaining federal criminal provisions related to abortion, removing all vestiges of criminal abortion law in Canada.                                   |
| Oct 2018 | Nurse practitioners across Canada, including in Newfoundland and Labrador, were confirmed as authorized to prescribe Mifegymiso within their scope of practice.                                                                  |
| Sep 2018 | Newfoundland and Labrador began universal coverage of Mifegymiso under the provincial drug plan for all MCP beneficiaries, regardless of private insurance status.                                                               |
| Nov 2017 | Health Canada eased Mifegymiso restrictions: gestational limit extended to 9 weeks; requirement for physician-only dispensing removed, allowing pharmacists to dispense; ultrasound requirement removed.                         |

Pending changes to watch

**Review of the Personal Health Information Act regarding minor access**

Policy · Premier announced review and commitment to new legislation in 2025; potentially affecting parental access to minors' health records including abortion records

If parental access to minors' health records aged 12-15 is expanded, a minor's abortion confidentiality could be compromised, though the mature-minor doctrine would still govern treatment consent.

Key authorities

|                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>R v Morgentaler (1988)</b>                                                                                                                                                                               | R v Morgentaler, [1988] 1 SCR 30                                               |
| Struck down Canada's criminal abortion law under s. 7 of the Charter, removing the federal prohibition that had restricted abortion access since 1969.                                                      |                                                                                |
| <b>R v Morgentaler (1993)</b>                                                                                                                                                                               | R v Morgentaler, [1993] 1 SCR 462                                              |
| Struck down Nova Scotia's attempt to restrict abortion to hospitals as ultra vires provincial criminal-law power, defining the constitutional boundary within which Newfoundland and Labrador must operate. |                                                                                |
| <b>Tremblay v Daigle</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    | Tremblay v Daigle, [1989] 2 SCR 530                                            |
| Established that a fetus has no legal personality and that a father cannot obtain an injunction to prevent an abortion.                                                                                     |                                                                                |
| <b>Winnipeg Child and Family Services v G</b>                                                                                                                                                               | Winnipeg Child and Family Services (Northwest Area) v G (DF), [1997] 3 SCR 925 |
| Held that the state cannot detain a pregnant person to protect the fetus, directly limiting child-protection authority in Newfoundland and Labrador.                                                        |                                                                                |
| <b>Dobson v Dobson</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Dobson v Dobson, [1999] 2 SCR 753                                              |
| Held that a child cannot sue its mother for prenatal injuries, confirming the born-alive rule's application in tort law.                                                                                    |                                                                                |

Generated from the structured legal focused deep-research record for NL, Canada (research completed 2026-07-13). This snapshot condenses a much larger sourced dataset — full citations, quoted statutory text, and plain-language explanations are in the full Newfoundland and Labrador survey. This document has not been reviewed by a lawyer and should not be used as legal advice.