

# Structural Inequality in NL's COVID-19 Recovery Plan

PRESS CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY THE ST JOHN'S STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL, THE PROVINCIAL ACTION NETWORK ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (PANSOW), AND THE GENDER AND POLITICS LAB (MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY)



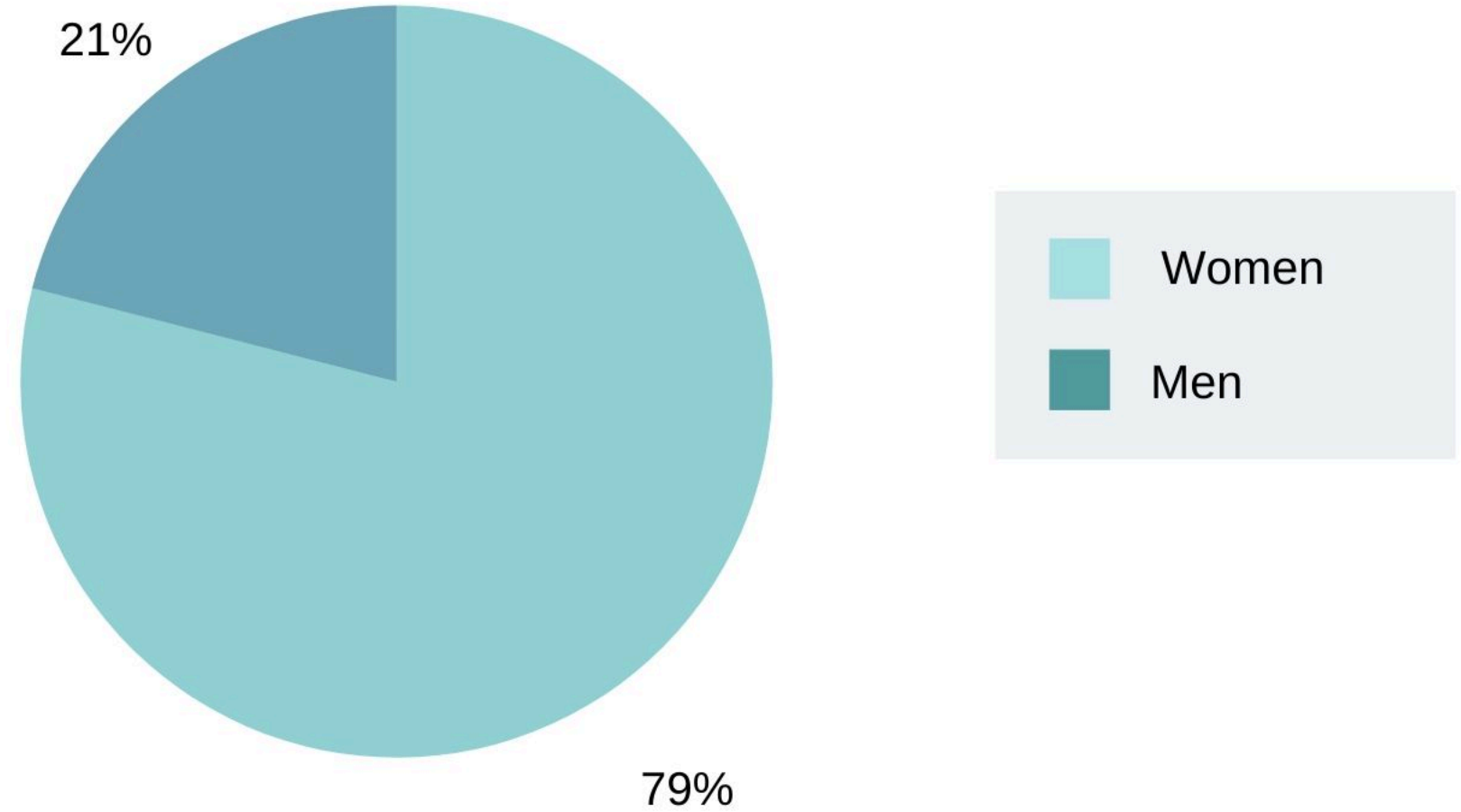
# Structural Inequality

- ▶ The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted (and exacerbated) the harms and gaps in healthcare, ecological, social, and economic policies in societies around the world
  - ▶ Daily gender-based violence, accentuated by this crisis
  - ▶ Challenges facing parents and caregivers
  - ▶ Poverty and precarity, systematically affecting some groups more than others
  - ▶ Low pay and high risk levels for front line and “essential” workers, often women
  - ▶ Wage gaps
  - ▶ Absence of voices of women and other marginalized genders



Women were disadvantaged  
by structural inequality long  
before the COVID-19 crisis

# Percentage of Intimate Partner Violence by Gender, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2017



# Support Services for Domestic Violence, Canada, 2017-2018



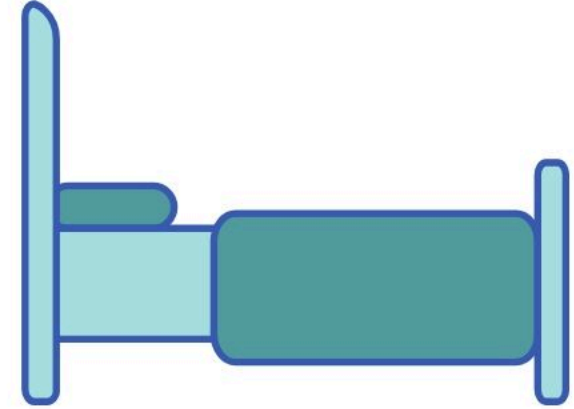
**552**

Residential  
Facilities



**~68,000**

Admissions in  
2016



**78%** of short-term  
beds were occupied  
on snapshot day

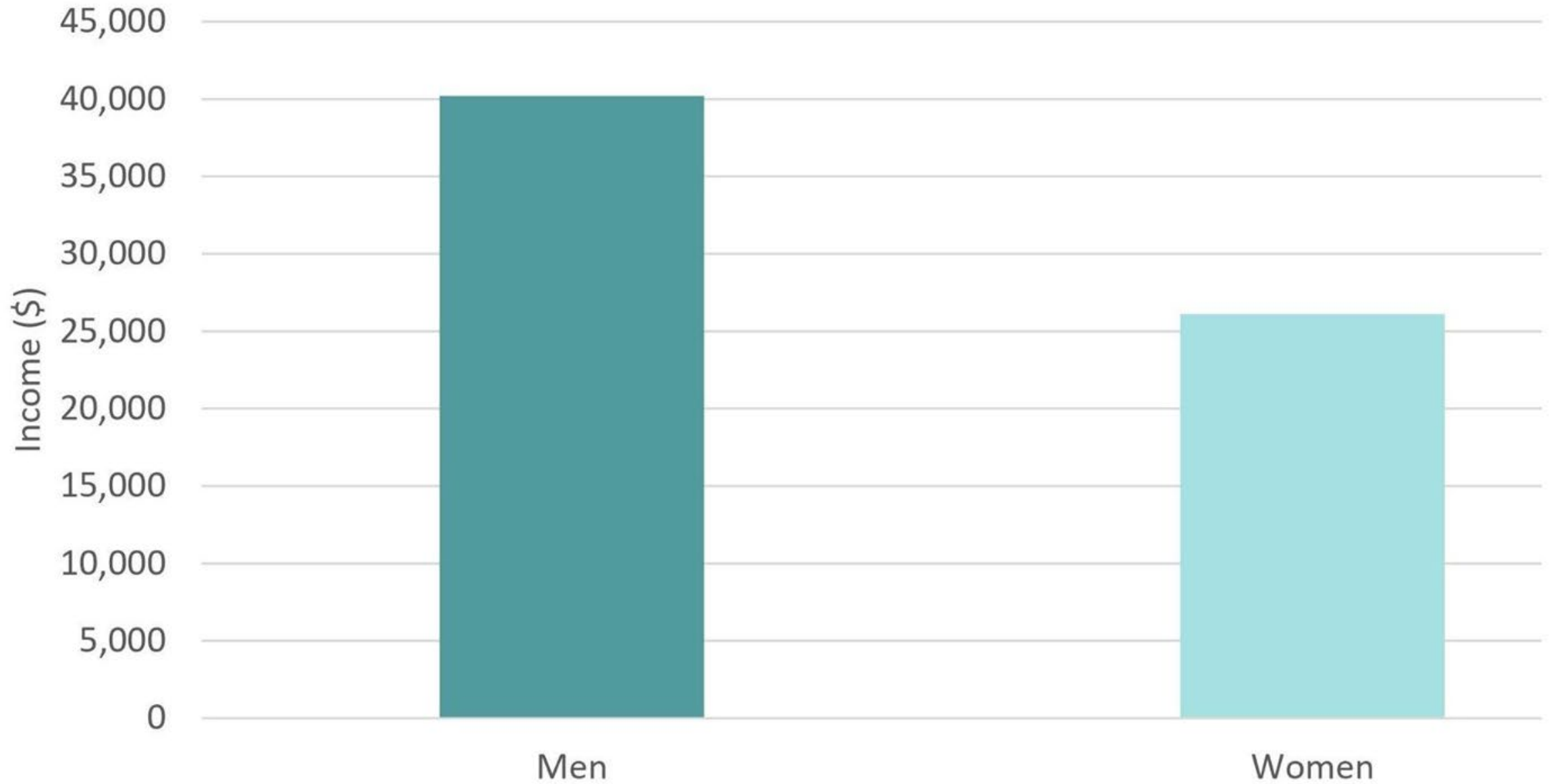
# Childcare

- ▶ In Quebec, between 1997—shortly after the start of the universal childcare program—and 2016, the employment rate for mothers of kids age 5 or younger has spiked 16 percent, from 64 percent to 80 percent
  - ▶ Across the rest of Canada in that same period, that same demographic of mothers saw a more modest 4 percent increase in the employment rate (Fortin, 2018)

# Provincial Pay Gap Per Dollar, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2019



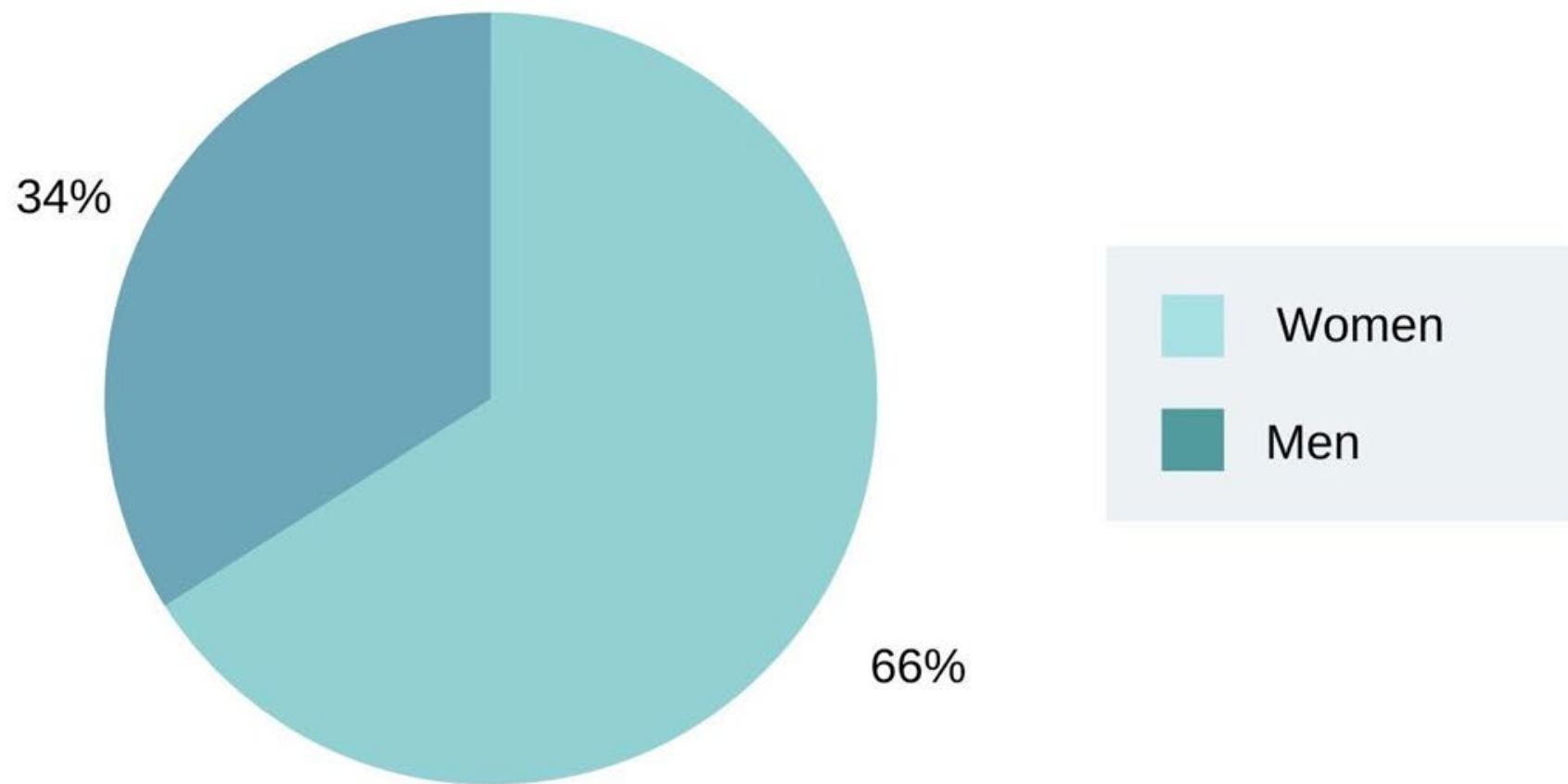
## Average Yearly Income by Gender, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2016

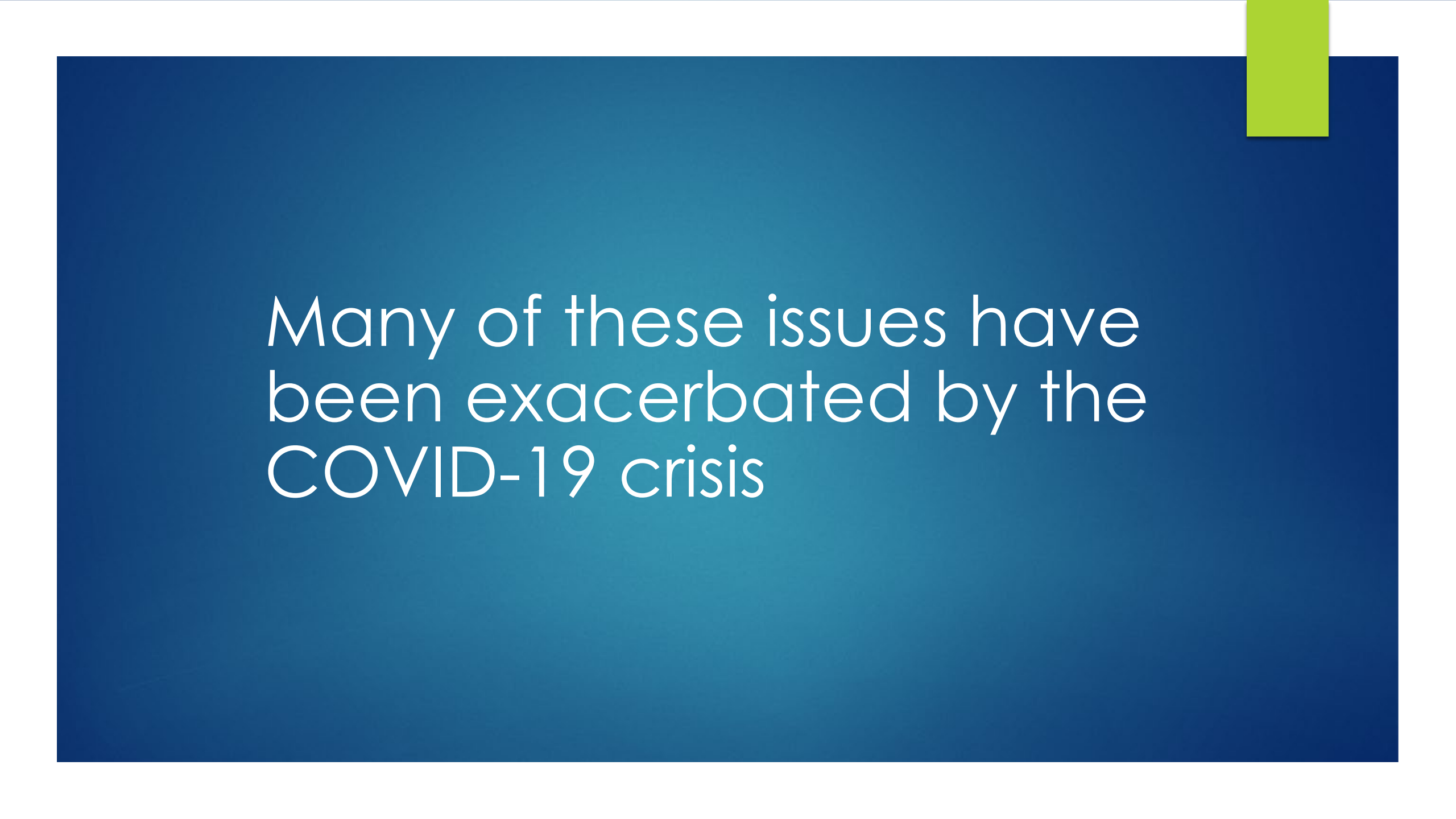


Source: Community Accounts Unit, Newfoundland and Labrador: Sources of Income by Gender, 2011-2016




## Percentage of Minimum Wage Workers by Gender, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2019





Many of these issues have  
been exacerbated by the  
COVID-19 crisis

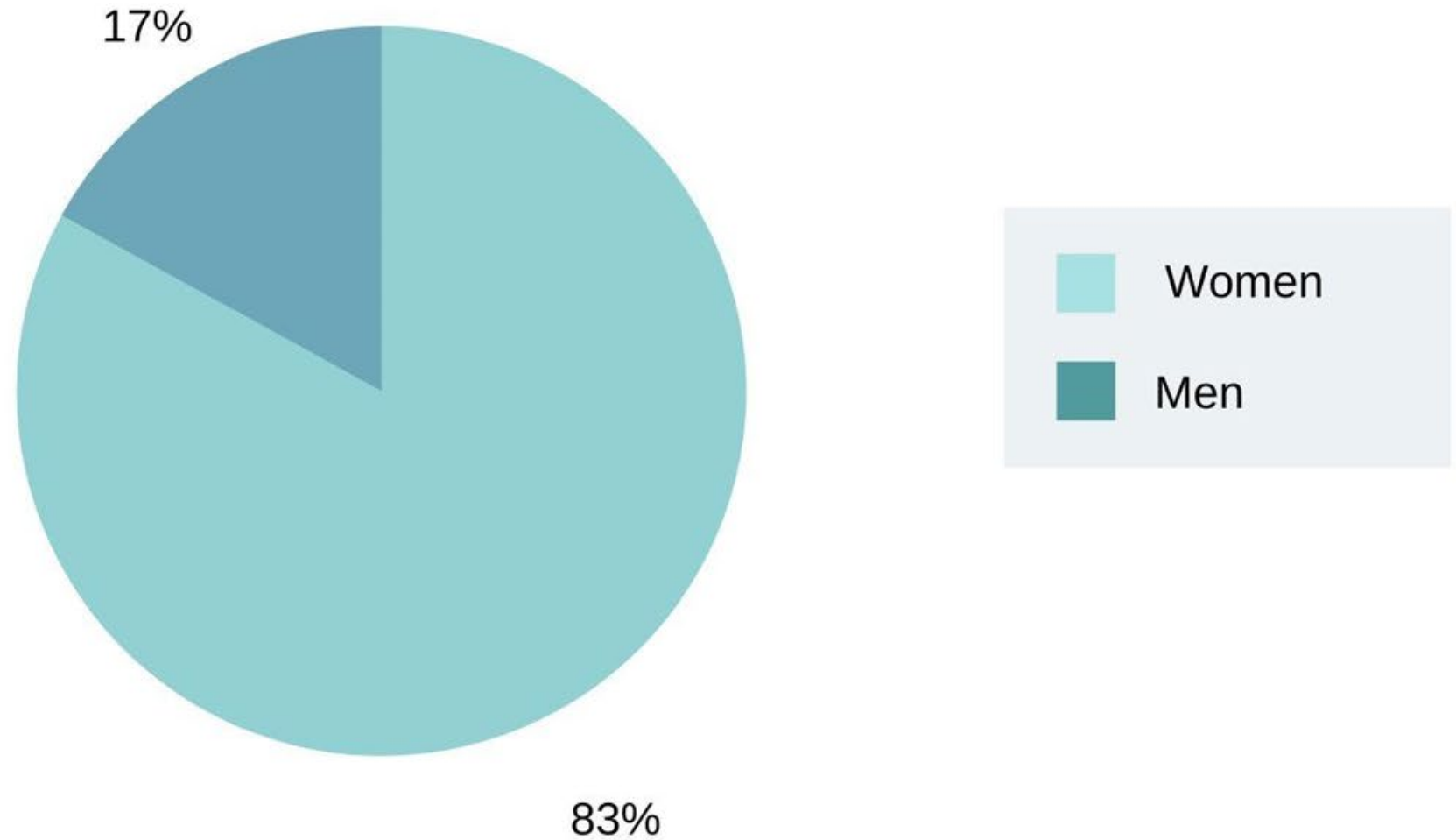


Women perform a “second shift” of unpaid work after their paid work.

When we account for unpaid work, women’s total work burden (per day) is an average of 1.2 hours greater than men’s.

(Statistics Canada, 2018)

## Percentage of Healthcare Workforce by Gender, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2015-2018





83% of the health workforce is female and  
women form the majority of unpaid  
caregivers

(Newfoundland and Labrador Strategic Workforce Health Plan 2015-2018)

# COVID-19 Related Job Loss is a Gendered Phenomenon

- ▶ While healthcare and social assistance is the largest sector for women's employment, retail also employs many women in NL. Here, employment has decreased from 18,600 women employed in Nov 2019 to 14,400 women in March 2020 (a 23% drop). Many of these jobs are near or at minimum wage. (Labour Force Survey)

# What services are available now?

- ▶ There are many services available to women and other marginalized genders in the province right now, including Women's Centres and Transition Houses, or shelters specifically for women and children fleeing violence.
  - ▶ These resources are available across the province

# Women's Centres Across the Province

## **The St. John's Status of Women Council and Women's Centre**

St. John's and surrounding areas

Tel: (709) 753-0220

## **Gander Status of Women Council**

Gander and surrounding areas

Tel: (709) 256-4395

## **Status of Women Central**

Grand Falls-Windsor and surrounding areas

Tel: (709) 489-8919

## **Bay St. George Status of Women Council**

Stephenville and surrounding areas

Tel: (709) 643-4444

## **Labrador Status of Women Council**

Labrador City and surrounding areas

Tel: (709) 944-6562

## **Corner Brook Status of Women Council**

Corner Brook and surrounding areas

Tel: (709) 639-8522

## **Gateway Status of Women Council**

Port Aux Basques and surrounding areas

Tel: (709) 695-7505

## **NorPen Status of Women Council**

Port Saunders and surrounding areas

Tel: 709-861-4842

## **Mokami Status of Women Council**

Happy Valley – Goose Bay and surrounding areas

Tel: (709) 896-3484



# Transition Houses Across the Province

## **Gander & Area**

Cara Transition House

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-877-800-2272

## **Corner Brook & area**

Willow House

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-866-634-4198

## **Marystown & Area**

Grace Sparkes House

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-877-774-4957

## **St. John's & Area**

Iris Kirby House

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-877-753-1492

## **Carbonear & CBN Area**

O'Shaughnessy House

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-888-596-8709

## **Labrador City-Wabush**

Hope Haven

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-888-332-0000

## **Happy Valley-Goose Bay**

Libra House

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-877-896-3014

## **Nain**

Nain Transition House

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-866-922-1230

## **Rigolet**

Kirkina House (Rigolet)

Business line: 709-947-3334

## **Sheshatshiu**

Nukum Munik Shelter

Crisis Line: 709-497-8869

## **Natuashish**

Natuashish Safe House

Crisis Line: 709-478-2390

## **Hopedale**

Selma Onalik Safe House

Phone: 933-3420

# What emergency services do we still need (immediately)?

- ▶ While there are a number of organizations providing key services, there are still major gaps that need to be filled immediately.
  - ▶ We need a central phone and text line in the province to provide support to victims of domestic violence
  - ▶ We need special funds and infrastructure for high risk groups including: undocumented immigrant women; women who were previously engaged in the sex industry; women with disabilities; domestic workers (including home care workers, house cleaners, etc.); elderly women
  - ▶ We need release programs to support women who are currently incarcerated



This is an opportunity to build  
a system that is capable of  
delivering gender equality



Thinking about our future:

What could a Feminist  
Recovery Plan look like?

# Key components of a Feminist Recovery Plan

- ▶ The voices of marginalized women must be prioritized; we must work from the margins to the center
- ▶ Avoidance of austerity of fiscal consolidation measures as these will exacerbate the recession; ensure no cuts to social services, especially services for domestic violence
- ▶ Diversify the economy via alternatives to extractive, male-dominated industries

# Key components of a Feminist Recovery Plan

- ▶ Use federal stimulus funds to promote reform and programs in the following areas:
  - ▶ Economic Support
  - ▶ Special funds and infrastructure for high risk groups
  - ▶ Parents and caregivers
  - ▶ Health and healthcare programs
  - ▶ Release programs
  - ▶ Housing, shelter and public services
  - ▶ Digital and ICT access
  - ▶ Indigenous supports and services

# Key components of a Feminist Recovery Plan

- ▶ Diversify and reshape the economy by:
  - ▶ Identifying new opportunities for more sustainable economic livelihoods
  - ▶ Building the province's social infrastructure (childcare, education and healthcare)
  - ▶ Providing free, publicly funded childcare for all workers
  - ▶ Raising the minimum wage to a living wage (higher rates for single mothers); adopt minimum basic income
  - ▶ Restructuring the tax system through increased property taxes and corporate taxes once the recession ends to lessen the burden on low wage earners and shift to corporations and those who can better afford it
  - ▶ Harness the role of midwifery to improve deficits in maternal and neonatal healthcare, especially in rural areas
  - ▶ Fully incorporate gender-based violence prevention in the immediate response and long-term recovery



# 5-point action plan for NL (key priorities)



## 5-point action plan

- 1) Women in leadership roles, Gender Based Analysis
- 2) Central phone line for the province for victims of domestic violence
- 3) Task force on domestic violence
- 4) Living Wage
- 5) Childcare

# Calls to Action



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Over the last few weeks, COVID-19 has made more apparent many underlying inequities existing in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're calling for these immediate changes to be made to ensure any steps to re-open or rebuild the economy have equitable outcomes for all.

# Adopt Gender Based Analysis+ for all policy development

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Racialized women, marginalized genders, folks living with disabilities, and migrant communities must not be sidelined in recovery plans, and a strong gender-based response is an important part of that.

# Launch a Help Line for Domestic Violence

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Cities across Canada offer people seeking support a centralized, simplified resource. Given the distribution of the population in our province, we are calling for a province-wide help-line.

# Launch a Taskforce on Domestic Violence

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Many women throughout Newfoundland and Labrador are currently locked in with their abusers. We know that times of high stress and economic instability increase rates of domestic violence.

We need a taskforce to immediately address these concerns and develop a longterm plan for prevention and reduction.

# Adopt a Living Wage

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A living wage in NL is \$18.85/hour. Women made up 66% of all minimum wage workers in 2019, and thousands make up the front line, essential workforce for grocery stores, home care and child care.

# Affordable, Quality Childcare for All

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Women effectively work a second shift everyday performing unpaid domestic labour in the home. With schools and childcare centres closed, this has likely increased significantly for many. When safe to reopen, we need a long-term plan to increase the number of quality, publicly-funded childcare spaces so women can fully participate in work, education and civil life.

# Adopt Gender Based Analysis+ for all policy development

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