



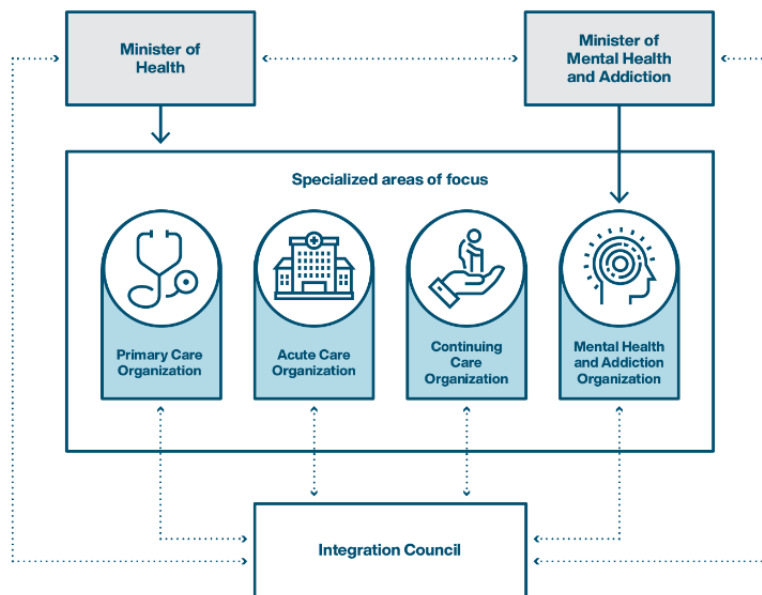
# Edmonton Zone Medical Staff Association

PHYSICIANS ADVOCATING FOR HEALTH

November 10, 2023

Dear Members,

The EZMSA has been left with questions after watching the press conference Tuesday and reviewing the leaked Cabinet slides on the healthcare system reorganization. [Details from the Government of Alberta announcement are available here.](#) At present the Government of Alberta has announced the health system will be organized as:



## Where is the focus on stabilizing primary care and resourcing hospitals?

The system has collapsed and need for action is well past overdue. In July, there were 197 family physicians accepting new patients in Alberta, a drop of 78% over the last three years. More colleagues are unable to accept new patients and there is a desperate need for funding healthcare appropriately. This week, two of our four major hospitals in Edmonton were at 150% capacity and unable to accept new admissions. The Grey Nuns Community Hospital was the last hospital built since 1988. Edmonton's population has grown 89% from 576,249 in 1988 to 1,087,803 in 2022. Edmonton, in particular, seems to have been forgotten by government and we have yet to see a will to build capacity in our city. Albertans need more hospitals and healthcare staff to provide care in general, but Edmonton needed a new hospital a decade ago.

## How will the new Primary Care Organization work with physicians?

The leaked slides state this organization will have "all publicly funded providers and clinics accountable to the Primary Care Organization", "be able to direct access to physicians" and "have a mandate of ensuring every Albertan is attached to a regular family physician, nurse practitioner or primary care provider". It is unclear how the relationship between physicians and the Primary Care Organization will function. It is also unclear how every Albertan will be attached to a healthcare provider without action from this government to attract and retain the workforce.



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## How will the Addictions and Mental Health Organization operate in a siloed organization?

Mental healthcare occurs in all settings. A new structure must be mindful of what it means to operationally remove acute psychiatric care from acute care and how separation will impact community mental health.

## How will physicians have representation under these four new organizations?

Currently, the Alberta Health Services Medical Staff Bylaws and Rules recognize the EZMSA, North Zone Medical Staff Association, Central Zone Medical Staff Association, Calgary and Area Medical Staff Society and South Zone Medical Staff Association as your representation. These organizations sit on various committees to ensure you have representation in bylaw amendments, hearings, immediate action reviews, the recruitment of medical leadership, quality and safe patient care issues and health system planning. I will work with the other Zone Medical Staff Associations and the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) to ensure you continue to have representation and find answers for how this will function under four new organizations.

Creating this new structure over the next year will require physician engagement to resolve many questions. The details and impacts of this announcement are unclear. I agree with the AMA that physician co-design is vital. For any structure to be successful it must support patient care and involve physicians in planning. In my opinion, the government's plan for health care is missing long-term planning and is too focused on taking action in this political cycle. It is Albertans who suffer and healthcare workers who continue to spread themselves thin trying to hold together our eroding healthcare.

Warmest regards,

Dr. Mona (Manpreet) Gill  
Acting President 2023

[ezmsa.president@gmail.com](mailto:ezmsa.president@gmail.com)

**Mission:** Physicians Advocating for Health

**Vision:** Engaged Physicians; Sustainable Healthcare; Health Community

**Values:** Advocacy; Integrity; Growth and Learning; Community Connection

**To contact the EZMSA Physician Advisor:** <https://albertazmsa.com/physician-advisor>