



Edmonton Zone Medical Staff Association

PHYSICIANS ADVOCATING FOR HEALTH

September 7, 2023

Dear Members,

Please take a minute to recognize important recent and upcoming dates:

International Overdose Awareness Day	– August 31
World Suicide Prevention Day	– Sept. 10
World Patient Safety Day	– Sept. 17
Gender Equality Week	– Sept. 24 to 30
National Day for Truth & Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day	– Sept. 30

It is sobering to note the sheer number of people in Alberta severely affected by the opioid poisoning crisis, as per the [Alberta Health Analytics website](#). This is a crisis that is impacting young people, with the highest rate of deaths in the 25 to 44 age range. From January to May 2023:

Provincially

Opioid related deaths – 770
Emergency room visits – 3554
Hospitalizations – 1180

Edmonton Zone

Opioid related deaths – 251
Emergency room visits – 1330
Hospitalizations – 439

In support of the Indigenous community and those affected by the opioid poisoning crisis, the EZMSA is:

- releasing our "Support for Healing Centered and Indigenous-Forward Approaches to Opioid Poisonings" policy recommendation paper from the Opioid Poisoning Committee;
- hosting a talk by Drs. Cassandra Felske-Durske and Ginetta Salvalaggio, on the "Colonial Origins of the Opioid Poisoning Crisis;" and
- hosting Dr. Esther Tailfeathers to speak about "Indigenous Health in Alberta."

Please note **these speaking events will not be recorded** to respect Indigenous teaching that stories have spirits and recording could interrupt or corrupt those stories. I hope you will join me to listen and learn from these speakers. I also encourage you to read the previously-released policy recommendations on safer supply, decriminalisation and supervised consumption sites by our [Opioid Poisoning Committee](#).

The Colonial Origins of the Opioid Poisoning Crisis

Date: September 28, 2023

Time: 5:30-7pm

Location: [Register for zoom here](#) by September 27



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Presentation Objectives:

- Key definitions
- Coloniality in Medicine
- The Misrepresentation in the Medicine Chest
- Living legacy of chemical restraint practices: modern day opioid poisoning crisis
- The Opioid Poisoning Committee's Indigenous-Forward Policy

Speaker Biographies:

Dr. Felske-Durksen is a GP with the Alberta Health Services Indigenous Wellness Program, and her home clinic is the Indigenous Wellness Clinic located at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in ᑭᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ (settler Edmonton). Cass is the Co-Director of University of British Columbia's Indigenous Family Practice Site.

Dr. Salvalaggio is a professor with the University of Alberta Department of Family Medicine, Co-Associate Scientific Director of the Inner-City Health and Wellness Program. She received her degree at the University of Alberta and completed a family practice residency in Thunder Bay, Ontario and a Master of Science in Population Health through the University of Alberta School of Public Health.

Indigenous Health in Alberta with Dr. Esther Tailfeathers

Date: October 2, 2023

Time: 5:30-7pm

Location: [Register for zoom here](#) by October 1 at midnight

Description:

Dr. Esther Tailfeathers will address the current situation of Indigenous health in the province and measures that were taken prior to her resignation. She will elaborate on the importance of including Indigenous voices in the decision-making process, as opposed to political decision making from non-informed politicians.

Speaker Biography:

Born and raised on the Blood Reserve, Dr. Esther Tailfeathers graduated from University of North Dakota School of Medicine, and completed her Family Medicine Residency in Edmonton at the University of Alberta. She was the Medical Lead of the Indigenous Wellness Core with Alberta Health Services until her resignation in June 2023, and is currently back to clinical practice on the Blood Reserve.

As always, feel free to contact me directly with any concerns.

Warmest regards,

Katherine Kasha, MD CCFP FCFP
President 2023

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Staff Association

PHYSICIANS ADVOCATING FOR HEALTH

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>