

Good afternoon members,

This week our Opioid Poisoning Committee (OPC) wraps up and our Election Platform Committee (EPC) begins. I am very grateful to our 16 colleagues who rose to the occasion for these committees to help us with short-term and more in-depth advocacy issues. While leadership is rewarding, it also requires more from our colleagues. Your commitment and input is much appreciated by the whole Executive and membership. We value and recognize that you have gone the extra mile to give your time.

### **EPC**

Dr. Katherine Kasha and Dr. Jennifer Minsos will co-chair the work of the EPC. Thank you for stepping up to lead and thank you to the rest of the committee who will carry out this invaluable work.

Alberta will have a provincial election sometime between March 1 to May 31, 2023. In advance of the election, the political parties are expected to release election platforms in the summer of 2022. These platforms are a set of principles, goals and strategies designed to address pressing political issues. When a party is elected, their platform becomes part of their governing mandate. This sets the direction and priorities of government for the next four years.

The EPC will fulfill the following responsibilities on behalf of the zone medical community:

- 1) Identify priority areas for government to address in the health system.
- 2) Survey members to gather broad input and inform an EZMSA and Calgary and Area Medical Staff Society 2023 health platform.
- 3) Produce two products, each with a written document and public press conference:
  - a. a health election platform by physicians intended to influence the political party platforms for the 2023 election, released on the last week of June; and
  - b. a critique of the party platforms, that are anticipated to be announced over the summer of 2022, producing an analysis by the end of September.
- 4) Be a trusted source for solutions to challenges in the health system.
- 5) Raise public awareness of issues in the health system that government can take measures to improve.

### **OPC**

A huge thank you to all the committee members who have delivered excellent advocacy over the past eight months. Dr. Ginetta Salvalaggio and her team punched above their weight to bring awareness to the issue and advocate for evidence based solutions to this crisis in our community. I am proud of your work and thankful for your expertise. Over the past eight months the OPC has focused on:

#### Events

The OPC has hosted two events to bring awareness to opioid poisonings in the community. The [Memorial Weekend](#) was from October 13 to 17, 2021 to recognize all the opioid poisoning deaths across most of Edmonton's neighbourhoods. This received 22,312 impressions on Twitter and 19,195 on Facebook. [Just say KNOW](#) was a contest for Albertan youth to submit art on the issue from February 11

to March 11, 2022. It received 880 website visits, 285,117 impressions on Twitter and 65,347 impressions on Facebook.

Congratulations to Elliot and Minnow who submitted art for the Just Say KNOW contest and each won \$1,000 as a prize. [Visit here to view their video and art submissions.](#)

#### Policy Advocacy

The OPC wrote three policy papers on decriminalization, safer supply and supervised consumption sites. [The papers are available here.](#) The policy paper on safer supply was submitted to the provincial Legislative Assembly of Alberta's Select Special Committee to Examine Safe Supply on March 8, 2022. The recommendations of this provincial committee have not been released yet. Dr. Salvalaggio also presented to Edmonton City Council on March 28, 2022 about the policy papers and more specifically decriminalization. A motion to decriminalize "simple personal possession" of illegal drugs was approved 11-2 by city councillors. [You can view Dr. Salvalaggio's presentation here at 42:00.](#)

The OPC also wrote to Alberta Health to request local geographic area data for opioid poisoning deaths and calls to EMS to be released and information to be more timely. Alberta Health responded with the attached letter.

#### Speakers

The first speaker was Dr. Elaine Hyshka to give an overview of the Alberta opioid crisis on November 16, 2021. The second was a lawyer, Caitlin Shane, to present on drug decriminalization, legalization and policy reform on March 16, 2022. The third was a lunch and learn with three speakers on April 4, 2022 about safer supply. [All the presentations are available here.](#)

The EZMSA is very fortunate to have passionate, engaged and motivated members who answer our call for help on these advocacy committees. I thank everyone for giving their time and energy to advocate for the EZMSA.

Regards,



Dr. Cheryl Mack  
President 2022