

April 6, 2020

Dear members:

This past week has been the most demanding across our profession in recent history. We are called upon to face CoVID-19 while the Alberta government cripples our financial ability to keep practicing. I have seen your brave preparing for CoVID-19 to safely care for Albertans. I have heard from many colleagues across the province about the personal struggle of knowing Alberta needs you but this government is tying your hands. Many have desperately shook their heads with disbelief that this government would not agree with the Alberta Medical Association's solutions to reduce healthcare costs while not impacting the health of Albertans. Some of us are looking at our credit line, office bills and staff to pay while counting down the weeks until the money runs out. I have heard the various cuts impact you by up to a 20-50% cut. At a time when government should be supportive against the common CoVID-19 threat they are ending our ability to stay open.

The EZMSA is here with you. We understand how heart wrenching it is to be put in a position where government does not value healthcare. We know many are stressed and dispirited that, while across the country governments are pulling all resources to provide care, Alberta chooses to cut us off at the knees. We send our deepest sympathies to the [Sundre physicians](#) who had no choice but to resign their emergency room, acute care, and obstetrics privileges. We share your tears across Alberta. We know you cannot go into debt from government cuts to keep delivering care. We know this disproportionately affects some types of care over others.

The leadership and compassion of all physicians has been extraordinary these past few months. Everyone has rallied together, opened Twitter accounts, talked with their patients, wrote to their MLAs, set up drive by protests, and did everything humanly possible to replace detrimental cuts with reasonable savings across the system. You have made me proud to call you my colleagues. I am moved by your dedication to your patients and practice. I know your passion and dedication. I thank every individual who became a collective voice protecting public healthcare.

Your EZMSA has been side-by-side with you advocating. We have been tweeting, Facebook posting, writing press releases, interviewing with media, and speaking with leaders. We will continue to be with you. I am hopeful that virtual care will continue to be a service we can offer Albertans well past CoVID-19. In the chaos of CoVID-19 we have the opportunity to meet the evolving needs of Albertans. The EZMSA will be requesting the continuation of virtual care beyond CoVID-19 so that Albertans can have the convenience while maintaining continuity of care, privacy laws, a relationship with their physician and access to patient medical records. Your EZMSA remains standing here with you.

Please reach out to your colleagues, especially if you need help or a sympathetic ear. The Alberta Medical Association has the Physician and Family Support Program 1.877.SOS.4MDS (767.4637) for you to receive support.

I ask you to please send us stories of heroism and heart about our colleagues. Many of us and our patients need positive stories to encourage us during these difficult times. The EZMSA will share these on our social media sites of Facebook and Twitter on @EZMSA2. Thank you.

The following events have been moved to tentative dates due to CoVID-19:

- Golf Day Tentatively moved to Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, shotgun at 2:00 ~ The Links, Spruce Grove.
- EZMSA General Meeting & Award Dinner moved to Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 ~ ERNEST NAIT.
- The St. Albert Sturgeon Hospice Association event scheduled for May 4<sup>th</sup> is postponed to a later date in September.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Ernst Schuster  
EZMSA President