

Good afternoon members,

On November 30, myself and the presidents of the other four zones met with Mr. Paul Smith, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Workforce Planning and Accountability, Alberta Health (AH). We brought forward the following concerns that we believe to be of highest priority for the medical staff:

1. Clinical stipends and the termination of contracts that was to begin January 2022. After hours care and care for complex medical issues is important and this work should be valued. Please see the most recent updates from Alberta Health Services (AHS) for current information on this issue.
2. The issue of z-codes. Note that we represent you on the AHS Overheard Working Group and we have emphasized that these changes should not negatively impact care provided to complex patients in hospital and rural sites. We have emphasized to both AH and AHS that we do not want physicians to take two financial hits if both the AHS overhead arrangement come into effect and z-codes are terminated.
3. The virtual care codes amount and fee structures. We emphasised to AH that these are urgent! Family medicine is not sustainable and it needs to be, particularly for the care of mental health, complex medical issues and seniors.
4. Physician recruitment and retention for rural Alberta is critical. The situation is dire. Our rural colleagues need support and this requires support from government and AHS.

We will be meeting with the Honourable Jason Copping, Minister of Health, in January. In addition to the priority issues above, we will bring forward the following issues:

1. Surgical recovery seems impossible with a wait list that has grown well beyond standards of care. This is exacerbated by the loss of anaesthetists and surgeons, limitations with lab medicine and ongoing redeployment from ORs to ICUs.
2. We will request initiatives to support the opioid crisis. We will be asking for neighbourhood-level mortality of opiate overdoses and opiate related EMS data to inform a community-based response and the re-instatement of Supervised Consumption Services (SCS).

We continue to advocate for you on these and other relevant issues.

Our medical staff associations are needed now more than ever. Please join and support your local MSA and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Regards,



Dr. Erika MacIntyre
President 2021