

Good afternoon EZMSA members,

I write today with an update on our advocacy and celebrating in-person again. As the pandemic has reached a consistent low daily new number of cases, more Albertans vaccinate, and the urgent need for strong advocacy subsidies, we have winded down our temporary Strategic COVID-19 Pandemic Committee (Pandemic Committee). We are redirecting our resources to stand up a new committee focused on the opioid overdose crisis.

COVID-19 Pandemic

I thank the Pandemic Committee for their time and dedication as we faced one of the largest challenges in our careers. The EZMSA benefited greatly from the collective advocacy and perseverance of the nine EZMSA members on this committee. COVID-19 was not easy to tackle with a government that did not favour medical evidence. The pandemic was tough to stay up-to-date due to the quickly changing environment and battling misinformation. I know the presentations the Pandemic Committee gave to city council, press conferences, letters to government and myth busting of information made Alberta safer for our community. I thank the committee for providing evidence-based medical advice for Albertans and advocating for us.

As this committee winds down, the EZMSA will continue our regular advocacy as various issues arise. This week we have sent the attached letter to the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta regarding the mask mandate directive they sent on July 6th.

Opioid Overdose Crisis

Many colleagues have asked us to direct our advocacy toward the overdose crisis that has become a public health emergency. [Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario accounted for 85% of Canadian opioid toxicity deaths in 2020](#). The number of Albertan deaths increased 90% from 602 in 2016 to 1,144 in 2020. The need for physician leadership continues as the situation becomes graver in Alberta. This committee will begin on August 30th and conclude December 24th.

The Committee will advocate for evidence-based public information, government policy and health system services that support our community's health and well-being to reduce the number of adverse outcomes among people who use drugs. The mandate of the committee will be:

1. Advocate for patients and the health system to reflect medical evidence.
2. Research and recommend medical guidance to the public and government.
3. Be a trusted source of medical advice to Albertans.
4. Raise awareness of issues for patients and the health system.

Over the next few weeks we are assembling the committee and laying the ground work for them to begin August 30th. We have seven of the ten committee members confirmed and are looking for two more to join the committee. We are looking for rural and indigenous representatives. The committee will meet once a week for one to two hours each meeting. Honoraria will be provided at the regular rate of \$117/h. If you are interested please contact bobbiejo.hawkes@albertadoctors.org.

We welcome input from you about this mandate for the committee and the task in front of them. If you have comments to share please also email bobbiejo.hawkes@albertadoctors.org.

End of Year Celebration

I look forward to seeing you in-person at our end of year celebration!

Finally we can come together again. We are planning an end of the year evening with dinner, awards and a party. Please save the following date with more details to come:

December 2, 2021

J.W. Marriot Edmonton Ice District
10344 102 St NW, Edmonton
5:30 to 9pm

I hope you all have a much deserved break over the summer. I thank every one of you for your hard work over the last few months as we battled COVID-19. Better days are ahead with a party in December.

Regards,



Dr. Erika MacIntyre
President 2021