

Good afternoon EZMSA members:

Your EZMSA Executive continues to advocate for you and there has been much activity over the first few months of this year.

### **Alberta Medical Association (AMA)- No Vote for the Agreement**

I thank every colleague who voted. It was important for each of us to vote to give direction to the AMA and send a message to Alberta Health (AH). Change is needed and I look to the AMA to provide leadership in navigating these dark waters to a point where we can get an agreement. Thank you to our AMA colleagues and Dr. Paul Boucher for their efforts and I support them in their path forward.

### **Clinical Alternative Relationship Plans (ARPs)**

On May 11<sup>th</sup> our Executive met with AH. We have also urged the AMA to prioritize supporting our colleagues with the creation of fair and transparent ARPs. These are the main points we brought forward on ARPs:

1. ARPs are being created and approved by AH.
2. ARPs are superior to fee for service for some practices but not for all.
3. Navigating the process is complex and without support for physicians this is not possible for most of us.
4. We are concerned that without AMA oversight ARPs may worsen the already significant inequity that exists across the profession.
5. The government classification of “low value” and “high value” care is highly questionable.
6. Complex care must be supported.

Now may not be the time to enter an ARP. If you or your colleagues are considering entering an ARP we advise you to use caution. Do not rush into a contract when quick timelines are forced on you. Consider all aspects of the process and know that there are resources within the AMA to assist you. [This website provides details from the AMA.](#)

### **Virtual care**

On May 5<sup>th</sup> our Executive met with the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA). We shared our concerns that virtual care is operating in a silo with physicians and practices that have no ability to pair virtual care with in-person examinations. We are concerned that this will result in fragmented care, lack of follow-up and a greater burden to the system including more emergency department usage and ordering of labs and diagnostics. Often this gap in follow-up falls back on the primary care provider.

As a profession we must do our part to ensure that patients are physically examined when needed, follow up is provided, and virtual care is delivered in the context of the patient’s medical home and there are not unintended consequences of increased health care utilization.

The CPSA is developing standards of practice around virtual care. We encourage you to contact the CPSA with any concerns you have on the current operating of virtual care.

Here are a few links you may find of interest:

- [Is Virtual Care Here to Stay? – The Agenda](#)
- [Telemedicine, Advice to the profession- The CPSA](#)

### **COVID-19**

Our Strategic COVID-19 Pandemic Committee has done a truly amazing job since November. Through this pandemic we have needed a steady voice guiding by evidence from our medical community. They have played a major role in accurate information dissemination to the public and strongly encouraging government to act when case loads were rising and hospital capacity was at an extreme. I personally thank them for the amount of hours and dedication they have given to this advocacy.

### **Mask Exemption Directive from the CPSA**

This was a disappointment. Much of our advocacy is centered around encouraging the public to keep themselves and others safe. This further adds to the confusion. We encourage you to use your best clinical judgement and that includes declining requests for exemptions if you feel that is the most appropriate action.

Thank you to Dr. Ernie Schuster, Past-President of the EZMSA, for speaking on behalf of our colleagues in the media to express our concerns. [The article is available here.](#)

### **Stay Positive**

We are dealing with so many challenges right now. You are working more for less and dealing what seems like a mountain of negativity over the last year. The weather is warmer, the COVID-19 cases are coming down, the vaccines are working and I am optimistic that better days are ahead. I wish you a much brighter summer.

Regards,



Dr. Erika MacIntyre  
President 2021