



**Dr. Ernst Schuster, President- Edmonton Zone Medical Staff Association**  
**Dr. Fredrykka Rinaldi, President- South Zone Medical Staff Association**  
**Dr. Johannes Fourie, President- North Zone Medical Staff Association**  
**Dr. Scott Beach, President- Calgary and Area Medical Staff Society**

## **Physicians concerned with the UCP policy for a privately-funded and privately-managed health system**

The United Conservative Party (UCP) has put forward a “2020 UCP Annual General Meeting Policy and Governance Resolutions” document with which we have two issues. This document outlines policy for UCP members to vote upon at their annual general meeting on October 16-17, 2020. Policy 11 states “The UCP believes that the Government of Alberta should support the option of a privately-funded and privately-managed health system”. We find two concerns with Policy 11.

### ***Government is risking \$4.887 billion in federal funding***

We find it disturbing the UCP is pushing healthcare costs onto our patients and risking federal funding of \$4.887 billion. Alberta receives the Health Transfer fund from the federal government to pay for healthcare. In 2020/21 this amount will be \$4.887 billion. To receive these funds, the Alberta government must not violate the *Canada Health Act (CHA)*. Policy 11 violates the extra billing/user charges section of the CHA.

Policy 11 reads “Physicians should be allowed to accept/ take on more responsibility of supplying care to patients on a private fee for service that each feels will allow their practices to remain solvent and grow in scope (hybrid system).” The CHA clearly writes that extra billing and user charges must not be permitted by the province for insured services. If there are billings/charges, this amount will be deducted from the Health Transfer to Alberta. Essentially, the UCP are recommending that our patients pay out-of-pocket for their healthcare rather than the federal government paying for these services.

We have written a letter to the federal health minister, Honourable Patty Hajdu. We requested Minister Hajdu address this CHA violation. Physicians do not wish to risk \$4.887 billion in federal funding due to an ill-conceived UCP directive. Our patients must not pay for healthcare when the federal government provides funding for these services.

### ***A private or public system is a government decision***

This policy statement argues private healthcare is needed because of physician compensation. It states “Not only have physicians been upset that there is no more money in the public purse, the government is fiscally unable to spend more toward their billing fees. Patients are limited to treatment options as doctors threaten to leave.”

Let us be clear that the decision to use a public or private model is a government decision. The Government of Alberta holds the power and choice for system changes. Physicians do not hold any system responsibility or have the ability to change between a public or private model. Physician compensation is also not responsible for the public/private model. The responsibility for any changes to administration and financing lies solely with the government. Only the Government of Alberta must answer to Albertans for their decisions to choose one system or the other. To suggest that the move toward a private health care model is being done at the urging of physicians who are “upset that there is no more money in the public purse,” is simply not true.