



July 5, 2024

Dear Members,

Last week Dr. Paul Parks hosted a [virtual town hall as part of the member-only Inside Scoop series](#). The purpose was to share information on the progress of the Physician Comprehensive Care Model (PCCM), a new optional compensation model for community family physicians. It is the outcome of eight months of intensive discussions between Alberta Health and the AMA. Ideally, the PCCM will provide an option for compensation for many community family physicians who are struggling with providing comprehensive care under a fee-for-service model. For many community doctors, it will provide a significant increase in compensation and address many aspects of primary care that have previously gone unrecognized and uncompensated.

We are so close to seeing the model actualized!

While there is general agreement around the rates in the model, many details of the PCCM are still under discussion. Some of the questions include:

- How will the model allow for care of non-paneled patients?
- How will locums generate income in clinics where the PCCM is active?
- How will the PCCM incent new graduates, who as yet do not have a panel, to enter comprehensive care?
- What will be the entry requirements of the PCCM for participating physicians? There is every indication that CII/CPAR will be a requirement. How will Alberta Health and the AMA support members whose EMR cannot interface with the patient registry?
- And finally, what will be the base patient panel number required to participate in the PCCM?

Clearly, there is still much work to be done. The SFM and the Strike Team will be continuing this work over the summer months, with the hope of seeing the first physicians transition to the PCCM in the fall. As this work is being done through an ad-hoc process as part of our existing negotiated agreement, it does not require member ratification - the Minister of Health will have the ultimate decision-making power over many of the details discussed above. That said, your section representatives will continue to advocate on your behalf, to ensure that the PCCM is available to as many Alberta family physicians as possible.

The state of primary care in Alberta is as dire as it ever was. Recently, the community of Hinton declared a state of emergency upon learning that two of its dedicated physicians were leaving, and the town was unable to recruit new doctors to the vacant positions. Sadly, Hinton is not the only community struggling with this issue. Although the PCCM may offer some relief, it is important to note that rural generalists will need much more to stabilize primary care in their communities. Addressing compensation and support for hospital-based care, long term care, and so on, is necessary to keep those communities viable. The AMA's plan for [Acute Care Stabilization](#) speaks to some of these issues. The SFM recognizes the critical necessity of action in this part of the health system in order to keep rural generalism alive!

As we finalize the PCCM, the SFM and the AMA are dedicated to keeping our members informed. Each member needs the opportunity to evaluate the PCCM to determine if it is right for their practice, their patients and their families. We are committed to ensuring that the tools family doctors need to assess the economic, practical and logistical value of the PCCM are available and accurate. The section executive and Strike Team have been working with the proposed tools to ensure their precision, and we hope to make them available soon.

Finally, in my last SFM Bulletin, I emphasized that there is no "one-size-fits-all" in community practice, and no such thing as a "perfect" compensation model. I further emphasized that Alberta family physicians must have a choice in their compensation model, to ensure that all Albertans have access to individualized, appropriate primary care. I reiterate those statements. That said, we will continue to advocate on your behalf to ensure that Alberta Health representatives and the Minister of Health understand, and value, your perspectives and experience.

Again, thank you for all you do for the health of Albertans.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarah Bates, Acting President  
Section of Family Medicine  
*On behalf of your [SFM Executive](#)*

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## Mission

- Advocate fiercely for Family Medicine.
- Collaborate to drive health system improvement.
- Achieve compensation that reflects the essential role of family physicians in the health of Albertans.

## Vision

Alberta's family doctors are well-supported and financially equipped to provide accessible, quality team-based health care.

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12230 106 Ave NW  
Edmonton AB T5N 3Z1  
Canada*

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