

# ADVOCACY BRIEFING NOTE: State of primary care & how Albertans can help

## Background

The AMA has opened a dialogue with Albertans about the COVID-19 care deficit, its effects and possible solutions. Part of this advocacy includes talking about the state of primary care. We have been working with the Joint Physician Advocacy Committee.

Members received a *President's Letter* on this issue on February 3 that contained links to two posters and an op-ed piece. This may trigger conversations with your patients.

We need to engage in public communication to help Albertans understand:

- the state of our health care system
- how/why primary care and the system at large are in trouble
- what to expect when seeking care
- how they can help/what they can do

## Key Messages to Patients

- Omicron is happening when the system is already severely strained and at risk of being overwhelmed.
  - Patients should seek hospital care if they need it, but most COVID care is managed in the community. Our hospitals are already overloaded and community care is essential.
- We need to ensure sustainable and safe community practices.
  - Right now my practice is .... (Tell your own story, e.g., booking patients two weeks out, having trouble seeing everyone who needs to be seen, short staffed and having to reduce hours, having trouble covering business costs, just lost a physician or other care team staff, etc.)
- We are still here for you, but we may have to do things a little differently for a while
  - For example, explain any changes to processes or services in your clinic.
  - We thank you for your understanding.
- Albertans can help
  - Stay vigilant, follow public health advice, get boosters, limit contacts/travel, isolate if you have symptoms, use rapid tests where possible, not everyone needs confirmatory lab test and document positive rapid tests with a time-stamped photo.

## More Information

- COVID Resource center for physicians [www.albertadoctors.org/about/COVID-19](http://www.albertadoctors.org/about/COVID-19)
- Patient Resources for COVID [www.albertadoctors.org/about/COVID-19/patient-resources](http://www.albertadoctors.org/about/COVID-19/patient-resources)
- If you require more information or help with further advocacy on this, or any other issue, please reach out to the Joint Physician Advocacy Committee (via AMA's Public Affairs department) at: [jpac@albertadoctors.org](mailto:jpac@albertadoctors.org).