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January 16, 2024

Dear Members,

On January 12 [Alberta Health released a Bulletin](#) committing themselves to address the current crisis in primary care. They re-iterated their promise to commit \$200 million from the Canada-Alberta Health Funding Agreement for stabilization measures over the next two years. They stated their intent to provide ongoing bridging support as work continues toward a new compensation model for family physicians providing comprehensive care to Albertans.

This Bulletin was received by the Section of Family Medicine with mixed response. First, it is gratifying to hear that AH seems to recognize the current precarious position in which many community family practices are finding themselves; however, we cannot help but recognize that there has yet been no actual assistance provided to family physicians.

Family medicine has been in a state of emergency since a previous MoH tore up the AMA/AH contract. The damages done by that action continue to reverberate through primary care. COVID exacerbated an already desperate situation. Clinics continue to close or operate on the edge of financial stability. Family medicine specialists are moving into other areas in the health system, which provide increased economic stability and reduced personal risk. Graduates from the Family Medicine Residency Programs choose areas other than comprehensive care, or simply leave the province for greener pastures. Medical students see the chaos, and discount Family Medicine as a viable career choice.

We cannot wait while the government seems to “slow walk” efforts to restore comprehensive community family medicine.

We are concerned that the pledged money for stabilization has been delayed until April 2024. Clinics are closing now.

We are concerned that AH has yet to commit any provincial funds towards ongoing stabilization. The current federal monies are insufficient to both immediately stabilize and bridge family medicine moving forward.

We are concerned about the advance of the Physician Comprehensive Care Model. Alberta Health has failed so far to commit any funding towards its development and implementation.

We have no choice but to take Alberta Health at its word. They say they are “100% committed.”

But Alberta family physicians require action. The time for words is long past. It’s time to ensure family physician and rural generalist practices are a priority for the urgent movement of funds and that Budget 2024 reflects the promises that have been made through the MOU.

To make that happen, we need your help to complete a three-minute survey this week that will convey the actual impact the wait for stabilization is having on family physicians and our system.

Today, Tuesday, January 16 you will receive an email from ThinkHQ Public Affairs with the subject line: *AMA survey: Is your practice viable?* Please watch for it and complete the survey.

I also encourage you to consider using this [video recording tool](#) to share your story as part of the AMA’s advocacy efforts. Use the provided link and tell us what you want government and the public to know about what you and your patients are facing right now.

Thank you for your help. As always, I welcome your thoughts and you can reach me and the SFM Executive at [FamilyMedicine@albertadoctors.org](mailto:FamilyMedicine@albertadoctors.org).

Sincerely,



Sarah Bates

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





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