



September 27, 2024

Dear Members,

Last week, the Section of Family Medicine held our annual general meeting in Calgary where I officially assumed the role of SFM President for a two-year term. I want to say how honoured I am to serve the section and its members and that I look forward to continuing the work we have done over this past year.

One of the first tasks I was privileged to undertake as president was to present the SFM Outstanding Service Awards at the AGM. This award recognizes SFM members who have made an outstanding contribution, by way of special representation or a special project, on behalf of the section. The 2024 recipients of the Outstanding Service Award are Drs. Allan Bailey and Fred Rinaldi, two physicians who have demonstrated unwavering dedication to the profession of family medicine and the section. We were delighted that both recipients were able to be there in person to receive our congratulations and thanks.

Immediately following the AGM, the SFM and the Section of Rural Medicine held our Family and Rural Medicine Meeting (FRMM), which provides an opportunity for family medicine AMA Representative Forum (RF) delegates to discuss the key issues in advance of the RF. Not surprisingly, the delay in the implementation of the Physician Comprehensive Care Model (PCCM) was one of our main topics of conversation. SRM President, Dr. Rithesh Ram, and I presented an update on the PCCM, including what has happened to date and what we have heard from government. We also received a presentation from the AMA Board.

It would be an understatement to say that most of those in attendance at the FRMM are exasperated by yet more government inaction and excuses as to why the PCCM will not be implemented any time soon. I discussed some of my thoughts around government choosing not to act in [my last SFM Bulletin](#) and cautioned that there is no room for political gamesmanship amid an escalating crisis in primary care. The Board clearly shares this frustration and recounted some of the many conversations they have had in recent days to push government to uphold its responsibility to see the PCCM cross the finish line. It was a frank and at times disheartening discussion.

The 2024 Fall RF, which took place on Friday, September 20 and Saturday, September 21, provided opportunities to discuss several other important topics, including

advocacy, government relations, negotiations, the Acute Care Stabilization Proposal and navigating physician liability in the current environment. In addition, delegates received an update from the CMA, including their reconciliation journey and their recent apology for harms to Indigenous Peoples. The resolutions passed by delegates will be available on the [RF navigator](#) in the coming days.

The RF also offered more details on the PCCM delay, including a presentation from the Minister of Health on Saturday morning. Many family medicine delegates took the opportunity to share their own experiences with the Minister, telling her about their clinic closures, colleagues who were preparing to leave the province and patients who were so desperate for care that they were willing to trade their place on a family physician's panel for loved ones who need care even more than they do. While we made sure the Minister heard us, we don't know if it had any impact.

AMA President, Dr. Shelley Duggan, and Past President, Dr. Paul Parks, held a news conference earlier this week to detail how serious the crisis is and to make clear that government is choosing not to act. There have been [countless media stories](#) since and the Minister of Health has been asked repeatedly to explain why the PCCM is being delayed. She was asked again at an unrelated press conference on September 25, where she indicated that they were "working faster than the speed of government," but that she "still has a few processes to go through." You can listen to those comments [here](#).

As I mentioned in my last SFM Bulletin, we will be hosting a town hall to offer you a chance to hear some of the same information that was shared at the FRMM and RF. The town hall will take place next Thursday, October 3 from 7 to 8 p.m. and you can [register now](#). I hope to see you there and look forward to answering your questions and discussing what happens next.

It is essential at this point that you share how the delay in the PCCM is impacting your clinical practice, the care of your patients and your future plans. The government does not believe AMA representatives when they speak about the plight of family medicine. Your voice may make the difference. Please forward any thoughts or responses regarding the lack of government action to FamilyMedicine@albertadoctors.org.

Sincerely,

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

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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