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November 13, 2019

The Honorable Tyler Shandro
Minister of Health
423 Legislature Building
10800 97 Avenue
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister:

I am writing to you with respect to Bill 207 Conscience Rights (Health Care Providers) Protection Act. Although we recognize that it is not a government-sponsored bill, we wish to state some concerns relevant to your ministry.

The bill has generated attention and anxiety among physicians and patients. This is regrettable since it is avoidable. From our perspective, the bill is unnecessary.

There are already protections in place for health care providers. Respecting physicians, the process currently in place under standards of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta is appropriate and effective. From this perspective at least, Bill 207 is redundant and potentially confusing.

The more serious issue is that the bill may have unintended consequences in limiting patient access to services. For physicians, the current state protects conscience rights, while also ensuring that patients are given information or referral to allow them to pursue access to the desired service. This arrangement has served Albertans well and should be maintained.

Thank you for considering our position and sharing it within your caucus as you find appropriate.

Sincerely,



Christine P. Molnar, MD, FRCPC
President

cc: Jason Kenney, Alberta Premier
Dan Williams, MLA, Peace River
Michael A. Gormley, Executive Director, AMA