



September 18, 2024

Dear Members,

I wanted to provide an update on the status of the Physician Comprehensive Care Model (PCCM) in advance of the AMA's Fall Representative Forum, this Friday and Saturday (September 20 and 21, 2024).

On August 1, you received an SFM Bulletin outlining my concerns regarding the government's delay in announcing the details of the PCCM. At that time, the government pointed to the wildfire disaster in Jasper as the rationale for delaying the announcement. There were informal reassurances from the government that a subsequent date for the announcement would be forthcoming, and we could expect it in September. The Premier went so far as to state, on her weekly radio show, "Your Province, Your Premier," that she wanted to make sure the announcement was made before the current AMA President, Dr. Paul Parks, completed his term. Dr. Parks passes the torch on his term this Saturday. At the time of writing this, there is no anticipated announcement.

I am beyond frustrated by this delay. Family physicians have been struggling for years and the government committed 11 months ago "to finalizing a sustainable physician comprehensive care model that will address the concerns of family physicians and rural generalists and ensure Albertans can access the care they need." At a December 21, 2023, news conference, Minister of Health, Adriana LaGrange assured us and all Albertans that, "We are committed to securing primary health care as the foundation of the entire health care system, and family physicians are fundamental to our plan." Sadly, there have been no actions to back up these empty words

I am also seeing the government indicating that they wish to deviate from their initial intent to provide appropriate physician compensation. There has been talk of renaming the PCCM, to take out any reference to "physicians" or "compensation," and instead naming it the "Primary Care Comprehensive Model." To what end? Once again, without information from government we can only speculate, but there have been signals that the government may want the money earmarked for the PCCM to be used to fund team-based primary care. This is utterly unacceptable. At no point in the development of the PCCM was there any intention that it should fund "teams" and the other essential elements of the Patient's Medical Home. That responsibility lies with government – not family physicians. The MOU, which compelled the

development of the PCCM, speaks only to creating a compensation model for family physicians commensurate to their clinical skills. I will not tolerate this clear attempt to “gaslight” my profession or move the goal posts on a model they announced in April. I would remind government that during that April 17 announcement, the Minister of Health promised that the PCCM would make us “national leaders and we will actually be compensating at the highest level compared to other provinces.” After months of stalling, we are not only not competitive with other provinces, but we are also falling further behind.

These developments will be a major focus of the upcoming Representative Forum. Family and Rural Medicine leaders will have the opportunity to meet face-to-face to discuss plans to address the disingenuous actions of the government. We will be discussing the strategy of both the AMA and the SFM moving forward. I intend to alert my physician colleagues at the RF to the plight of the PCCM. We know we will require the collective support of the AMA to insist government be held accountable to its commitments.

**Let me be clear – government is choosing not to act.** They have demonstrated poor faith and broken promises. Furthermore, I cannot see an honest intention to move forward. There is no room for political gamesmanship given the current and ongoing crisis in primary care. Alberta family physicians are out of patience, and many are out of time. It would appear we can no longer count on the PCCM to provide the respite that many family physicians were hoping for. Trust has been broken and any remaining hope is fading.

**At this point it is undeniable the government is not listening to physicians.** Your SFM Executive, alongside our family medicine delegates and leaders from all over Alberta, will be your voice at RF – and we intend to be heard. There is a scheduled session with the MoH on Saturday morning and your representatives will be vocal in expressing our unhappiness with government’s never-ending delays. We intend to table motions to bring awareness to the current reality. We intend to shine sunlight on the government’s lack of movement on their commitments and their gross neglect of primary care. We intend to ensure that the AMA and the SFM continue to advocate loudly for family medicine and the best interests of Albertans. And unlike government, we follow through on our intentions.

I will be sharing an update after RF to let you know what was discussed and what happens next. We will also be hosting a town hall soon to answer your questions. Watch your inbox for information on the date and time.

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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