



November 6, 2023

Dear Members,

I wanted to share an update on the work that your SFM Executive is involved in, along with some information that may be of interest.

### **Memorandum of Understanding and AMA's Strike Team**

As many of you know, AMA President, Dr. Paul Parks and Minister of Health, Adriana LaGrange announced on October 24 that they had signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Dr. Parks has said he views the MOU as a promise from the minister to the profession to work collaboratively toward solutions that will stabilize and support physicians practising comprehensive primary health care. It's a promise family physicians need government to make good on, as soon as possible. The crisis in family medicine is getting worse by the day, and many of our colleagues are barely hanging on. We appreciate that [Dr. Parks has been outspoken during his tour and in his interactions with media](#) and is helping Albertans understand the urgency of the crisis and why government needs to act now. His heart-felt advocacy for primary care and family medicine is sincerely appreciated, and I believe his efforts are paying off.

To assist with advancing the work outlined in the MOU, the AMA has formed a "Strike Team" that includes myself and other members of the SFM Executive, as well as physician leaders from the SRM and the PCN Physician Leads Executive. Over the next few weeks, we will be focusing on several key tasks, including immediate stabilization for primary care physicians, developing a new payment model for comprehensive longitudinal care, and looking at ways to decrease administrative burden. There's a lot of work to do, and timelines are tight as we are aiming to inform the 2024 provincial budget. I'll keep you updated as work progresses.

### **Attending the PCN Forum**

Last week, I had the opportunity to spend some time at the PCN Strategic Forum in Calgary. The annual, two-day event focuses on the PCN, zone and provincial contributions to the transformation of primary care in Alberta. Not surprisingly, this year much of the conversation was focused on the crisis in family medicine. In conversations with PCN colleagues, I heard about the pressures they are seeing and experiencing and how that is impacting the patient's medical home. I also heard about their thoughts on what the MAPS recommendations could make possible and the potential that lies in the MOU between the AMA and government. I look forward to more collaboration on our shared priorities.

On Saturday morning, the Minister of Health addressed the forum. She spoke plainly and openly, re-committing herself publicly to addressing the primary care crisis. She acknowledged that the money promised with the release of the MAPS report for the purposes of stabilization were insufficient. Further, she committed to the development of a new funding model for family physicians that would appropriately value the work being done. Finally, she insisted that physicians would be present at the table as system changes were

considered and implemented. I believe that this represents a new willingness in Alberta Health to work collaboratively with the AMA and physician leaders, and I am cautiously optimistic moving forward.

### **Update on third year of family medicine residency**

Earlier this year, when the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) announced that they intended to increase the length of family medicine residency from two years to three, many of us had serious concerns. In the midst of a health human resources crisis that has resulted in 650,000 Albertans and as many as 6 million Canadians living without a family doctor, it seemed counterintuitive to require medical learners to spend more time in residency. There were also concerns that adding an additional year to residency may dissuade students from choosing family medicine at all.

To the relief of many, during the CFPC AGM on November 1, members voted to pause the extension of the third year of a family medicine residency. As explained in a [recent statement](#), CFPC will be discussing the pause of the implementation at a Board meeting happening early this week. We will watch for further updates and share information as it becomes available.

### **New SFM email address**

Over the next few weeks, you may notice that SFM has consolidated its mailboxes to make it easier for members to connect with the section. Going forward, you can reach me and the SFM Executive at [FamilyMedicine@albertadoctors.org](mailto:FamilyMedicine@albertadoctors.org). I hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

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



© 2023 Alberta Medical Association; All rights reserved

*Our mailing address is:*  
12230 106 Ave NW  
Edmonton AB T5N 3Z1  
Canada

[Canada Anti-Spam Legislation \(CASL\) - AMA compliance statement](#)