



---

November 8, 2024

Dear Members,

### **SFM survey**

On October 22, the Section of Family Medicine Executive invited you to complete a survey to gather baseline information on who you are, how you practice and what matters most to you right now. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to complete the survey. Originally, the survey was supposed to close on November 5, but we have heard from some members that they would like a bit more time, so we've extended the deadline to November 12. If you have not yet completed the [survey](#), please consider sharing your thoughts.

### **SFM retreat**

Late last month, the SFM Executive held our annual strategic planning retreat. This is an important planning event that helps us understand where we are now and what members are facing so we can identify priorities for the coming year.

Much of our time was spent brainstorming our strategic priorities for the year ahead. Not surprisingly, advocacy for **physician compensation** emerged as an ongoing and urgent priority. As part of this, we will continue to push for answers on the stalled implementation of the Physician Comprehensive Care Model (PCCM). Government continues to insist that there are "processes" that need to be completed before the PCCM can be implemented and we have heard the Premier say – repeatedly – that the PCCM was always intended to be implemented in the next budget year, in April 2025. While this remains a surprise for those of us who heard her say at the Spring 2024 Representative Forum that it would be implemented in "weeks, not months," at least it is a date. Unfortunately, it's a date that may come too late for many of our colleagues.

We will also continue to advocate for the importance of government moving ahead with the distribution of the second \$100 million in **stabilization funding** that was first announced in December 2023. The Minister of Health mentioned this funding again during oral question period at the legislature on November 5. You can hear Minister LaGrange's comments regarding the stabilization funding, and the question that prompted her response, [beginning at around the 2:33:30 mark](#). We look forward to seeing this promised, much-needed stabilization funding flow out to members.

During this year's retreat, we were joined by members of the Primary Care Networks Physicians Lead Executive (PCN PLE) for a discussion of the many changes that will arise from the planned transition of Primary Care Networks to Regional Networks. There are still many questions about the structure and governance of these new networks, and our PLE colleagues shared their thoughts on how we can

advocate for the economic and professional well-being of primary care in the province. There is much work that must be done to get ready for this change and to **ensure the experience and insights of physician leaders are not lost.**

Our final key priority focuses on ensuring **family medicine representation is at all the key external governance tables.** So far, we have been successful in securing seats at the tables where issues that will impact physician-led primary care are being discussed. As the health system reorganization continues, we will do everything we can to make sure the voices of family physicians are heard.

Your SFM Executive will use the learnings from this retreat to guide our work over the coming year and to measure our success in achieving our priorities. I will keep you informed of our progress.

### **UCP AGM**

On November 1 and 2, I attended the United Conservative Party AGM to better understand the policies and priorities of the political party that currently governs Alberta. It was also an opportunity to connect with our political leaders in an informal setting. It was my first political party event, and I was pleased to be accompanied by a small group of dedicated physician leaders who were also curious to see the inner workings of a political AGM.

I took the opportunity to ask Minister LaGrange and Premier Smith a question about the PCCM during the bear pit session, and while their answer provided no new information, it sparked conversations with some of the other attendees. People told me stories about losing their family physicians, and I was able to explain the reality of the current situation. Throughout the event, I met many Albertans who genuinely didn't know about the crisis in family medicine and were eager to understand what is going on and why. While these types of events have the potential to be polarizing, I think it's important to engage and advocate for family medicine in any way we can, and I will look for more opportunities to share our messages. I will keep you informed about what I learn and what I hear.

As always, you can reach me with your questions and comments at [FamilyMedicine@albertadoctors.org](mailto:FamilyMedicine@albertadoctors.org).

Sincerely,

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