
The President's Letter

Dr. Darryl D. LaBuick



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October 11, 2007

Dear Member:

Negotiations 2008, allocation and fee equity were front and centre at the fall Representative Forum (RF) in Calgary, September 28-29. It also featured an in-camera session with Minister of Health and Wellness Dave Hancock.

And last week the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) sent a letter to Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW) and the regional health authorities (RHAs), officially notifying our intent to commence negotiations.

Negotiations 2008 is for the third and last fiscal agreement under the eight-year master agreement (April 1, 2003-March 31, 2011). The three-year term (April 1, 2008-March 31, 2011) will coincide with the end of the master agreement.

The trilateral agreement between the Alberta Medical Association, Alberta Health and Wellness and the regional health authorities is unique in Canada. It is a natural extension of our long-time approach to collaboration, the goal being to improve Alberta's health care system and to put Patients First®.

Representative Forum delegates held two one-hour, in-camera sessions to discuss Negotiations 2008.

- At the first, Negotiating Committee Chair, Dr. Richard G. Johnston, presented the proposed opening position that the Board of Directors had endorsed.
- At the second, the chairs of the Job Action Group and the Government Affairs Committee, Dr. Patrick J. White and Dr. John T. Huang, reviewed how members could become directly involved.

RF delegates approved the opening position in principle, as well as a number of other resolutions dealing with negotiations, allocation processes and policies, primary care networks, electronic medical records, and patient and physician advocacy.

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The Board of Directors will determine how to address these resolutions when it meets November 2.

In his September 21 *President's Letter*, Dr. G.N. (Gerry) Kiefer warned of the threat to the self-regulation posed by the unprecedented intrusion of government under Bill 41. RF delegates unanimously approved a resolution proposed by Dr. James E. Bell, President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, and seconded by Dr. Kiefer:

“THAT the Alberta Medical Association expresses its strong opposition to the Bill 41 amendments that threaten self-regulation of the health professions, and calls on the Minister of Health and Wellness to discard the offensive amendments.”

This issue is on the national stage with the Board of Directors of the Canadian Medical Association expressing “its strong support for self-regulation of physicians and opposes any legislation that undermines this principle.”

Retention Benefit

Almost 5,500 physicians have returned the consent form that is required to receive the newly negotiated Retention Benefit. Information packages were sent to over 6,000 physicians.

Reminders were mailed this week. If you do not receive one, you can assume that your registration is complete. The first payment is set for February 2008.

In closing, I would like to express, on your behalf, appreciation to Dr. Kiefer for his leadership over the past year. I welcome three new physicians to the 10-member Board of Directors, each elected for a three-year term: Dr. Pauline Alakija, Calgary; Dr. Michael J. Caffaro, Hinton; Dr. E. Sandra Corbett, Fort McMurray.

I look forward to serving you as the AMA's 2007-08 president. To help me stay tuned to your needs and your concerns, I invite you to keep in touch as we navigate the issues, challenges and opportunities ahead.

Yours truly,

Darryl D. LaBuick, MD, CCFP
President