



# The President's Letter

*Dr. Noel W. Grisdale*



**Patients First®** *Patients First® is a registered trademark of the Alberta Medical Association.*

February 25, 2009

Dear member:

## **Allocation**

Although it's been only a few weeks since the 2008-11 fiscal agreement was ratified, the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) is already working on the allocation for the final year (April 1, 2010 – March 31, 2011).

At its February 6 meeting, the AMA Board of Directors discussed a report from the Physician Compensation Strategy Steering Committee (PCSSC) regarding allocation – where we are now and a recommended approach with goals, objectives and strategy for allocation over the longer term.

The committee has established goals to ensure:

- Relative fairness of physician compensation
- Patient access through appropriate physician resources (family physicians and specialists)
- A fee schedule that supports innovation, comprehensive primary and secondary medical care, and new services

It is overseeing several initiatives to improve the factors that influence allocation including:

- Reviewing the definition of full-time-equivalent (FTE)
- A study on physician business costs, e.g., overhead
- Policies for selecting priority items for macro-allocation
- Materials to guide section representatives and members through the allocation process

The detailed PCSSC strategic framework will be discussed with delegates at the Representative Forum (RF) March 6-7 in Edmonton to seek their input into the recommended approach. Following RF, I will update you on the next steps.

During the ratification process of the current three-year fiscal agreement, the AMA improved transparency about the prospective allocation. For the first time, we were able to post the sectional allocations on the AMA website prior to members casting their votes on the agreement. As a result, the AMA received far fewer queries and comments about the allocation than in previous years.

### **Medical staff bylaws**

One result of a single, province-wide health authority, Alberta Health Services (AHS), is the need to create a new single set of province-wide medical staff bylaws that could affect community-based physicians as well as hospital-based physicians. The goal is to have these new bylaws in place 13 months from now on April 1, 2010.

With the nine regions, which legally cease to exist this April 1, there are nine different sets of medical staff bylaws that handle medical staff processes differently. A decision is expected shortly on how the 12-month interim period will be bridged.

In a one-region, all-encompassing system, bylaws processes must be rigorously defined and entrench principles of equity and justice.

To engage the medical profession, the Council of Presidents (representatives from each of the former nine regional medical organizations) and the AMA have established a web page on bylaws within the AMA's website at <http://www.albertadoctors.org/ProvincialBylaws/Comment>.

Currently on this page is Version 10, which is a discussion document only and not a set of final proposals. It was produced by an Alberta Health and Wellness group as groundwork for a joint working group of AMA/regional medical organizations and AHS representatives that will have the mandate to continue the work of bylaws development.

Medical staff bylaws are also part of a major two-hour session, "Relationship with Alberta Health Services," at next week's Representative Forum.

AMA members are already posting comments in the discussion forum on the bylaws page. These opinions and suggestions will be valuable as we endeavor to draft an exemplary set of medical staff bylaws. I encourage you to provide your views ASAP.

Yours truly,

Noel W. Grisdale, MD, CCFP  
President