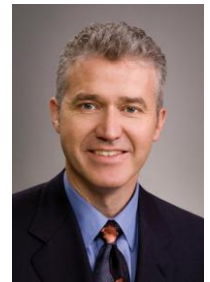




The President's Letter

Dr. Christopher J. (Chip) Doig



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June 5, 2010

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Dear Member:

Provincial medical staff bylaws – and why they matter

Over the past year, you have received several issues of the *President's Letter* and seven *Focus on Bylaws* bulletins, advising you of progress toward a new, single set of provincial medical staff bylaws to replace the nine that currently remain from the former regional health authorities.

I am happy to report that the drafting process by an Alberta Health Services (AHS)/ Alberta Medical Association (AMA) Provincial Medical Staff Bylaws Working Group is nearing completion and, therefore, it's time for all of us to understand the details and their impact.

Many colleagues I've spoken with recently are aware that new bylaws are coming, but these physicians also say they're still not sure how they will be affected, and I have heard this message from both hospital- and community-based physicians. "Just how important are these bylaws?" seems to be the common question.

I want to emphasize that these bylaws have implications – direct or potential – for every physician in the province, and every physician should give them due attention. Here are only some of the ways they may impact you:

- Outlining who will be a member of a zone medical staff
- Allowing physicians to work with a province-wide medical staff appointment

- Confirming that physicians without appointments will have access to basic lab, diagnostic imaging, homecare, community rehabilitation, and Netcare
- Clearly outlining what medical staff and AHS administrators are responsible for – and the rules of respectful working relationships between us
- Making the *Canadian Medical Association (CMA) Code of Ethics* and self-regulation (*College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta [CPSA] Code of Conduct*) the basis of physician conduct
- Streamlining and significantly improving peer review, credentialing and other processes – based explicitly on fairness

There are many more important matters involved and **I have attached a [highlights summary for your review](#)**.

The complete draft of *The Alberta Health Services Medical Staff Bylaws* can be viewed at <http://www.albertadoctors.org/ProvincialBylaws/Comment>. *The Alberta Health Services Medical Staff Rules* are still being finalized and will be posted on the AMA website as soon as they are available. If you have any difficulties accessing the documents, or if you would prefer to receive a paper copy, please contact Myrna Patterson, Administrative Assistant, AMA Professional Affairs, at myrna.patterson@albertadoctors.org.

Once the bylaws and rules are finalized and posted on their site, AHS will also send a letter to all physicians with AHS appointments.

Tell us what you think

The draft bylaws and rules, the result of extensive and commendable efforts by the AHS/AMA bylaws working group, are being provided for consultation purposes. Before developing a final set of provincial medical staff bylaws and rules, we very much need your feedback on this version. Comments will be collected until July 15.

Provincial bylaws tour – and other ways to engage

To encourage consultation on the draft bylaws and rules, the AMA is sponsoring a cross-province tour, June 8 to 28. At tour meetings, AMA bylaws working group members and AHS representatives will outline how you will be affected. You will have the chance to ask questions and provide input.

Timelines of bylaw development have necessitated a fairly short turnaround in arranging the tour meeting dates. If you are unable to attend a tour meeting or would rather reply in writing, please email your comments to AMA Assistant Executive Director, Professional Affairs, Dr. William S. Hnydyk, at william.hnydyk@albertadoctors.org.

The tour schedule follows on the next page.

Location	Date and Time
FORT MCMURRAY Northern Lights Regional Health Centre Ron Wolff Auditorium	June 8 7 - 8:30 p.m.
EDMONTON Misericordia Hospital Auditorium	June 10 7 - 8:30 p.m.
CALGARY Foothills Medical Centre Coombs Lecture Theatre	June 16 6:30 - 8 p.m.
MEDICINE HAT Medicine Hat Regional Hospital Centre Dining Room, Level 1	June 21 6 - 7:30 p.m.
GRANDE PRAIRIE Queen Elizabeth II Hospital Auditorium	June 23 6:30 - 8 p.m.
RED DEER Red Deer Regional Hospital Auditorium	June 28 6 - 7:30 p.m.
LETHBRIDGE Chinook Regional Hospital County Hall	June 28 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Videoconferences

In addition to the meetings above, two videoconferences will be conducted to enable physicians who do not live in cities on the tour circuit to participate and provide feedback. To ensure that videoconference sites are reserved, physicians interested in attending either of the sessions **must RSVP to Myrna Patterson by phone or email: 780.482.2626 or 1.800.272.9680, ext. 223, or myrna.patterson@albertadoctors.org.**

For the southern videoconference, please RSVP by noon June 9.
For the northern videoconference, please RSVP by noon June 18.

SOUTHERN VIDEOCONFERENCE (former health regions 1, 2, 3 and 4)	June 15 6:30 - 8 p.m.
NORTHERN VIDEOCONFERENCE (former health regions 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)	June 24 6:30 - 8 p.m.

Throughout the month of June, the AMA website bylaws page will contain not only the draft bylaws and rules, but also significant physician feedback (as we receive it) so that you can see what other members are saying: <http://www.albertadoctors.org/ProvincialBylaws/Comment>.

What happens next – and when you can weigh in

We are planning the steps outlined below following the consultation period on the draft bylaws, which ends July 15:

1. AMA and AHS take all physician input to the AMA/AHS bylaws working group for consideration and the working group prepares final version.
2. Final version is presented to AMA Council of Presidents for consideration and the council's recommendation regarding support or rejection.
3. AMA board considers the Council of Presidents' report and recommendation and then makes its own recommendation.
4. All "practitioners" (including dentists and podiatrists) receive the final version of the bylaws (August). Physicians will be advised of the AMA board's recommendation to support or reject.
5. Physicians with appointments vote on acceptance of the bylaws (September).
 - To help the AHS and the AMA boards truly understand the general acceptability of the bylaws for all physicians, feedback will also be gathered from those without appointments.
6. Vote results from appointed physicians are sent to the minister of health and wellness for consideration. The minister has final decision-making authority, i.e., votes are not binding upon the minister, but obviously will be seen as an indication of support for the new bylaws.
7. Assuming ministerial approval, the new bylaws would likely come into force on January 1, 2011.

The AMA and the Council of Presidents feel that the proposed bylaws and rules accomplish a great deal toward improving physician engagement, fairness in process and promoting trust and respect between physician practitioners and AHS. We have been thorough, but we want to ensure that we have truly been exhaustive. Your careful review of the draft bylaws and rules will provide that final check.

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Whether by email or in-person at a tour meeting, please let us know what you think and provide any suggestions you have for improvement. We look forward to your opinions.

Yours truly,

Christopher J. (Chip) Doig, MD, MSc, FRCPC
President