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Dr. Darryl D. LaBuick

The President's Letter

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January 21, 2008

Dear Member:

I am pleased to announce that the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) is on schedule to issue Retention Benefit payments to eligible physicians in February.

Within the next week, the AMA will provide each eligible physician with information about the amount of the Retention Benefit payment he or she can expect to receive. A "Retention Benefit Statement" will detail the payment amount based on the information the AMA has collected (with physician consent) regarding the physician's eligibility, including income range and years of practice in Alberta.

In a number of cases, the information shows that a physician is not eligible for the full benefit. The letter to these physicians will outline the reasons that they are ineligible and will include forms and suggestions to remedy the situation, if appropriate (e.g., a consent form will be included if the physician did not complete a consent form to release income information).

AMA staff are working to ensure that all eligible physicians receive the benefits for which they qualify. The Retention Benefit was negotiated in the 2006 amending agreement to support and promote physician retention in Alberta by rewarding their continuous years of service to Albertans. For details about the benefit and eligibility requirements, go to the AMA website: <http://www.albertadoctors.org/RetentionBenefit/Program>.

Retroactive payments: Physician services for out-of-province patients

Based on fee increases in the 2006 amending agreement, retroactive increases were issued to physicians for claims for services provided to Alberta patients. Since then the AMA has advocated, through the trilateral Physician Services Committee, for retroactive increases to be applied to claims for services provided to out-of-province patients as well.

Alberta Health and Wellness will issue retroactive payments for all services provided to non-Alberta Canadian residents (with the exception of patients from Quebec) for the period October 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. Two separate adjustments will be made:

- The first for the October 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007 period
- The second for the April 1 through June 30, 2007 period

These retroactive payments will correspond to the two separate fee increases negotiated in the 2006 amending agreement, both of which were added to the Schedule of Medical Benefits since July 1, 2007.

Physicians will receive payment information on a claim-by-claim basis in their "Statement of Assessments." Two payment dates and two statements will be processed:

1. January 25: Physicians will receive retroactive payment for services provided from October 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007. The "Statement of Assessment" will be dated January 19, 2008.
2. February 1: Physicians will receive retroactive payment for services provided from April 1 to June 30, 2007. The "Statement of Assessment" will be dated January 26, 2008.

As you continue to work at or beyond capacity to keep your Patients First[®], the AMA continues to work on your behalf on a number of fronts. As always, I encourage you to share your concerns with me to keep me informed of issues across Alberta.

Yours truly,

Darryl D. LaBuick, MD, CCFP
President