



August 12, 2021

Welcome to the most recent issue of the Joint Task Force Update. The AMA Joint Task Force (JTF), comprised of family physicians, specialists, and AMA support staff, represents a unified voice that supports and enables grassroots physician advocacy efforts. The JTF has put together this list of events, resources and news items that may be of interest to physicians.

## Week in Review

In case you missed it, here's some of what's happened over the past couple of weeks:

- The [August 11 President's Letter](#) unveiled the [Where We're Going discussion paper](#), which was informed by feedback from members following the No vote on the Tentative Agreement Package (TAP) and outlines the issues and challenges that will shape any future agreements government. The letter also encourages participation in the new [AMA Member Engagement Survey](#), which addresses how members are feeling in their practices and our health care system, changes they have made or are planning, impacts on patients and how the AMA can best offer support.
- [On Friday, August 6, the province released a long-awaited report by KPMG on its handling of the first wave of the pandemic](#), after initially saying they were not going to release it unless it was combined with future reports. [Some health critics noted the report was not as critical or rigorous as public inquiries.](#)
- On Wednesday, July 28 Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health announced that [despite rising case numbers, the province is removing most remaining public health measures by mid-August.](#)
- The [July 30 President's Letter](#) outlined the AMA's concerns about Dr. Hinshaw's announcement of significant changes to COVID-19 public health measures, including the need to see the evidence that supports this decision and the pressure on community clinics that are being tasked with taking over testing once provincial assessment centres close on August 31.
- [The Canadian Paediatric Society wrote a letter to Dr. Hinshaw](#) expressing their significant concerns with removing COVID-19 isolation and testing requirements.
- [The AMA's Section of Pediatrics wrote a letter to Premier Jason Kenney imploring him to keep COVID-19 health measures in place to protect Alberta's children.](#) The letter noted public health measures should stay in place until at least 85% of the population is vaccinated.
- [A group of rural Alberta health care providers has penned an open letter to patients](#) alerting them to the dangers of lifting public health measures and encouraging vaccinations.
- [Federal Health Minister Patty Hajdu sent a letter to Health Minister Tyler Shandro saying she agrees with the Canadian Paediatric Society](#) that Alberta's decision is an "unnecessary and risky gamble." [Minister Shandro responded on social media](#) and [Premier Jason Kenney said he would not "take lectures"](#) from the federal health minister.
- [Some of Canada's public health officials have expressed concerns about Alberta lifting public health measures](#) just weeks before school resumes and at a time when our province's vaccination rate remains among the lowest in Canada. [Ontario medical experts also cautioned that the lifting of restrictions is premature.](#)
- In response to criticism from physicians, health experts and the public, Alberta's [CMOH released an op-ed where she apologized for creating "feelings of confusion, fear or anger for some people."](#)

- During webinars with primary care physicians on both July 28 and August 5, Alberta's CMOH said she had consulted with the Alberta College of Family Physicians (ACFP) on the changes to COVID-19 public health measures. [ACFP was quick to clarify that they were not, in fact, consulted.](#)
- Dr. Joe Vipond, an emergency physician at the Foothills Hospital helped [mobilize protests in Edmonton and Calgary](#) in an effort to raise awareness of the dangers that will result from lifting public health measures. Protests are scheduled to continue for the next few days.
- [CTV Calgary received backlash on social media for running a story discussing Dr. Vipond's donations to the NDP.](#) The story originally included unnamed sources but was later updated to note that the Premier's Director of Issues Management was one of the critics.
- [Rallies were held at hospitals across the province on Wednesday, August 11](#) as Alberta nurses protested a proposed a 3% wage rollback.
- [Alberta's privacy commissioner found Telus Health ignored provincial privacy laws when it launched its Babylon virtual health care app.](#) The commissioner found Telus collected more personal information than necessary, including photos, and used facial recognition technology without notifying the patient.
- On July 30, [Alberta Health Services launched a new tool that tracks bed and ER closures](#) across the province.
- The province reported 501 new COVID cases on Wednesday, August 11 bringing the total number of active cases to 3769. There are currently 138 people in hospital, with 31 in ICU beds. In total, 105 of the 138 people in hospital are unvaccinated.

### ***Alberta, This is Going to Hurt will return this fall***

In the meantime, you can listen to previous episodes [here](#) and subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.

### **Understanding Clinical Alternative Relationship Plan Proposals**

Are you facing changes to your AHS stipend arrangement and being asked to consider a Clinical Alternative Relationship Plan (cARP)? Is your AHS stipend arrangement ending as of December 31, 2021 with no other payment alternative being proposed? Is your AHS stipend arrangement being eliminated and being proposed for funding under the Physician On-Call program? If so, the AMA has compiled some [information and resources that may help](#) (log-in required).

### **Tell us about your practice and any changes you may be making**

As part of our ongoing efforts to gather information about practice changes, a "My Practice Information" feature has been added to the [member dashboard](#). This confidential, voluntary feature asks about your practice and any changes you might be making, including retirement, closing your practice, reducing, or increasing your hours, as well as the reasons for these changes. If you have any questions or comments on the new dashboard feature, please let us know at [jointtaskforce@albertadoctors.org](mailto:jointtaskforce@albertadoctors.org).

### **Webinars and Events**

The EZMSA Fall Speaker Series is now open for registration

- **What is the Role of Arbitration in Labour Relations?** [Register Here](#)  
September 7, 2021, from 5:30-7pm
- **Edmonton Mayoral Candidate Town Hall** [Register Here](#)  
October 5, 2021, from 5:30-7pm
- **The Alberta Opioid Crisis** [Register Here](#)  
November 16, 2021, from 5:30-7pm



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