



# SGP BULLETIN

May 16, 2017

## PCN Governance Framework Vote

Dear Family Physician,

By now, you have received information regarding the vote for the PCN Governance Framework. PCN Boards, Leads and provincial Executive Leads have spent considerable time distributing information, stimulating conversation and encouraging all PCN physicians to vote on this issue.

I would like to echo that message and also encourage all eligible physicians to vote on this topic.

### **As the PCN Leads have communicated:**

The proposed PCN Governance Framework has been developed (under the AMA Amending Agreement) by the AMA and Alberta Health, in partnership with PCN member physicians and Alberta Health Services. The goal of the framework is to define requirements and relationships among all PCNs and your local, zonal and provincial partners. This will improve linkages between the different levels and provide ways to collectively make decisions and set priorities – with clearer roles and accountability.

What this basically means is there is a more formal structure of accountability that works both ways for all parties involved.

### **So what's so good about this new framework?**

This proposed structure indicates a commitment by this government to further build primary care on our present PCN foundation and not establish a separate structure. This has the potential for more collaboration between government and PCNs.

The three levels of governance (provincial, zonal, and local) will commit to a **bi-directional** flow of communication and input. The intention is to avoid a 'top-down' autocratic approach with a governance structure that will reinforce compliance.

More information regarding the potential benefits of the new governance structure are available on the AMA website: [www.albertadoctors.org/pcngovernance](http://www.albertadoctors.org/pcngovernance).

### **So what about the risks?**

The biggest risk is likely the same as the biggest benefit – this structure has the potential to increase accountability of all parties to the process. Accountability, input and influence must be shared and equitable. Government and AHS must avoid pushing their own agendas and share the platform with issues we, as physicians, feel are important to help patients in our communities.

There is also the potential risk that family physicians and our clinics will start to become 'sidelined' in primary care. Our AMA President even stated that PCNs are the foundation of the primary health care system. I arguably differ. Family physicians and the success of our clinics are also critical foundations to the success of primary care.

Government would like to see PCNs as the sole foundation and deliverer of primary health care and they ignore the significant amount of primary care delivered within the walls of our clinics. PCNs are a resource to our 'medical homes'. This government has failed to acknowledge this, which indicates physicians sit low on the agenda.

### **So what if PCN Governance Framework is NOT successful?**

The framework gives all parties the opportunity to collaborate and potentially make great strides in primary care. It gives us a seat at the table.

We need to realize that government likely has some firm issues they wish to move forward that may not be friendly to physician's professional autonomy, independent practice and even our self-regulation. An unsuccessful vote could enable government to move their own agenda forward in a unilateral way.

### **Leadership**

If the PCN Governance Framework is passed, it will be critical that physicians have strong leadership at all three levels of governance for reasons noted above.

All family physicians will need to contribute a bit more to leadership – both in our PCNs and the Section of General Practice – to ensure issues that are pertinent to our clinics and patients are brought forward and addressed.

Please take the time to vote before June 13.

As usual, we look forward to any comments or feedback regarding family practice issues. Please e-mail: [gppres@albertadoctors.org](mailto:gppres@albertadoctors.org).

Regards,



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President - AMA Section of General Practice

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