



SGP BULLETIN

September 11, 2017

Fall Representative Forum – Income Equity Initiative Implementation Plan

Dear Family Physician,

At the end of this week, delegates will assemble for the 2017 Fall Representative Forum. One of the items that will be discussed is the review and approval of the Income Equity Initiative Implementation Plan that will move the income equity process forward.

If you have not had the opportunity to review the Implementation Plan, I would encourage you to do so and notify us if you have concerns: [Income Equity Initiative Implementation Plan](#) (login required).

Some of you from the Edmonton and Calgary regions may have received e-mails from zonal representatives that are asking physicians questions that challenge the integrity of the Implementation Plan and the income equity process.

As pointed out in the plan, there has been open consultation with all sections. The Section of General Practice has had several opportunities for input on your behalf. This consultation will continue as the project moves forward. Consultation will become more targeted and specific (i.e. work on key ANDI factors like hours of work, overhead, etc.). The Board and AMA Compensation Committee have committed to an iterative process and have indicated that input from sections is needed for both the design phases and the validation of preliminary results.

I would also like to reassure you that this income equity process will be continually reviewed and adjusted to ensure unintended consequences will be minimized. This includes reviewing financial impact on all sections, as well as any potential impact this process may have on patient care. We also intend that any reallocated funds will remain within the physician services budget.

I want to remind you why we feel this income equity process is so important:

1. As physicians in a publicly funded health care system, we have a social contract to ensure appropriate use of taxpayer resources.
2. Despite the ongoing debate by certain sections over the accuracy of the data, there are still some obvious trends that show income disparity is increasing in our

profession. We need to have a comprehensive review to have a better look at the data and adjust income in a fair and equitable way.

3. Income inequity, or the perception of inequity, has a negative impact on the social cohesion and collegiality of the profession.
4. Inequitable payments are also undesirable because they can skew the delivery of services; over-valued services are more likely to be provided, while under-valued services may be neglected.

On this last point, let us not forget the increasing importance of our role as family physicians in the health care system. The Auditor General himself has stated that effective primary care - with continuity - is the foundation of a high functioning health care system. Let us not undervalue the importance of our role within the profession and the health care system.

The Section of General Practice strongly supports the income equity process and moving forward with an implementation plan that seeks to gather data and contains a continual review process.

We recognize the importance of obtaining updated, objective data and realize that it will take time to do it right. We DO NOT support delaying the process in the hope that this important issue will 'die on the vine'. We are already seeing timelines stretching out past 5 years.

If you were contacted by a Zonal RF delegate questioning the implementation process, I urge you to e-mail them back with your opinion. It is important that they hear your concerns so they can advocate for what you feel is best for the profession.

As usual, we appreciate any feedback you may have. Please feel free to get in touch at gppres@albertadoctors.org.

Regards,



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