



April 5, 2020

Honourable Tyler Shandro
Minister of Health
Office of the Minister
Health
423 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

via: health.minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister Shandro:

Re: Alberta Health-Alberta Medical Association Grant Agreement

This is in regards to the Alberta Health (AH)-Alberta Medical Association (AMA) Grant Agreement, which serves as the foundation for several physician benefits and programs. I am requesting that the process for finalizing the agreement be expedited and that the funding for one of the programs, specifically the Medical Liability Reimbursement Program, be maintained at the level from last year.

In terms of expediting the signing of the agreement, we are already past the start date of April 1, 2020. There is considerable uncertainty in our health care system now and the timely conclusion of this agreement would provide an increased level of certainty as to what will continue.

In terms of the MLR Program, I am requesting that funding not be reduced from \$56m to \$33m. Such a reduction would place Alberta well below any other province.

We discussed the MLR Program when we met on March 27. I was encouraged by your willingness to look into the matter and AMA staff have been in touch with those at AH. While various options for distributing the limited funds were discussed, I remain concerned that the end result will not be adequate in ensuring access for Albertans for many high-risk services.

As we discussed at our meeting, medical liability insurance is a requirement for practice. The premiums are risk rated according to the type of practice, e.g., family practice or obstetrical services. Inadequate funding will threaten accessibility to high-risk services.

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In making this request I acknowledge government's requirement to meet their budget targets. AMA staff have suggested, for example, that a slight fee adjustment could potentially be used to capture the roughly \$23m that this program cut would result in. There may be other options, but with respect I suggest that this important program not be diminished.

Please feel free to call me directly on my mobile (403.870.6403) or email me to discuss the matter further (cpmolnar@shaw.ca).

Minister, I appreciate your consideration of this urgent request. I would be remiss if I did not restate the point I raised in my letter to you of March 24: the most effective and reasonable approach to offering physicians the support they need to address patient care is to suspend all elements of the new Physician Funding Framework during the duration of COVID-19 response and recovery. I am, however, well aware of your position on this and will not belabor it here.

Please be well and stay safe,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Molnar', written in a cursive style.

Christine P. Molnar, MD, FRCPC
President

cc: AMA Board of Directors
Lorna Rosen, Deputy Minister, Alberta Health
Mike Gormley, AMA Executive Director