



September 29, 2021  
MEDIA RELEASE

**Letter to Albertans from your ER physicians: The time to act is now. Dire times call for drastic measures.**

EDMONTON – The Alberta Medical Association Section of Emergency Medicine, which represents over 450 emergency physicians across Alberta, has written a letter to Albertans to plea for their help in calling on government to institute immediate fire-break measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 across the province.

The letter outlines the urgent state of our health care system and the consequences that will occur if no action is taken and the unabated spread of COVID continues.

Dr. Paul Parks, President of the Section of Emergency Medicine says, “We understand that implementing province wide public health restrictions should be a last resort measure, used only in the direst of times. As we face the largest wave of COVID-19 infections ever seen in our province during this pandemic, we cannot understate how dire the times have become.”

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**For more information, contact**

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**Letter to Albertans from the Alberta Medical Association Section of Emergency Medicine:**

Dear People of Alberta,

On behalf of the approximately 450 emergency physicians across the province, we feel compelled to add our voice to the increasing calls and pleas for an immediate firebreak to reduce the spread of COVID-19 across our province.

Simply put, our system is on the verge of collapse. Throughout the entire acute care system our team members and colleagues have continued to give more and more. They have performed heroic efforts to expand capacity, but their efforts are not infinite, and expansion of critical care beds cannot continue endlessly.

Our healthcare system has taken drastic measures to do everything we can: operating our ICU capacity on a provincial basis, cancellation of scheduled surgeries for more than three consecutive weeks, stretching our nursing workloads to the absolute extreme, and caring for extremely sick Albertans in more and more



non-traditional environments. We have reached maximal efforts that can be added. If the raging fire of infectious COVID-19 cases is not met with a meaningful and effective firebreak, our system will be overwhelmed and cease to be effective for ALL Albertans - whether they suffer from COVID-19 related severe outcomes or not.

Those of us who work on the frontlines of the health care system will continue to show up every day and will continue to work our hardest to care for every single Albertan in need. If you or a loved one are ill or in pain, you should still seek care at your nearest emergency department. We are here for you. Our team of skilled allied health care professionals are doing our absolute best in these extraordinary times, but we need your help. We need every Albertan to continue to mask, to avoid mass gatherings, to get vaccinated, and most importantly to add their voices to call on the government to implement an immediate firebreak.

We understand that implementing province wide public health restrictions should be a last resort measure, used only in the direst of times. As we face the largest wave of COVID-19 infections ever seen in our province during this pandemic, we cannot understate how dire the times have become. Our health care system is on the verge of being pushed over the edge of the cliff. There have been concerns raised that restrictions will only punish those who have already done their part, but it is important to emphasize that the absence of a functional acute care medical system will impact every Albertan in the most drastic of ways. At the absolute extreme, it could mean life or death for many Albertans.

Some province wide restrictions have been implemented by our government. Unfortunately, they are currently easy to circumvent and are not being supported by any meaningful enforcement. As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase, and as our government insists on a watch and wait approach, the entire medical profession is sending out an SOS. Physicians of every specialty are pleading for an immediate firebreak. We need help to preserve safe and timely acute care delivery for all Albertans. Please call on government to take action. As Albertans, we're all doing our best. It's time they do the same.

The time to act is now. Dire times call for drastic measures.

Dr. Paul Parks  
President, Section of Emergency Medicine, Alberta Medical Association

Co-signed Section of Emergency Medicine Executive (representing all regions within Alberta):

Dr. Arun Abbi - Calgary	Dr. Shazma Mithani - Edmonton
Dr. Deji Akintola – Grand Prairie	Dr. Dave Murray – Fort McMurray
Dr. Stephanie Brass - Lethbridge	Dr. Angela Naismith - Edmonton
Dr. John Colebrook – Red Deer	Dr. Ryan Oland – Stony Plain
Dr. Timothy Gash – Red Deer	Dr. Warren Thirsk – Edmonton

CC: Premier Jason Kenney  
Minister of Health, Jason Copping  
AMA President, Dr. Michelle Warren