

Family Medicine Review

April 8, 2022

Welcome to the most recent issue of the *Family Medicine Review*. Brought to you by the Sections of Family Medicine and Rural Medicine, the *Review* offers an at-a-glance summary of information, resources and events for Alberta's family physicians. New issues will be shared twice a month.

Priority Notes

- ❖ *Webinar on negotiations (see Negotiations)*
- ❖ *Paxlovid™ coming to primary care (see COVID-19)*
- ❖ *Webinar on prescribing Paxlovid™ (see Upcoming Events and Deadlines)*
- ❖ *SFM Outstanding Service Award nominations due April 13 (see Upcoming Events and Deadlines)*

Negotiations

- The Section of Family Medicine, Section of Rural Medicine and Specialty Care Alliance co-hosted a webinar on Tuesday, April 5 to update members on negotiations. The event included presentations from the AMA President as well as members of the AMA Negotiations Committee. A recording of the webinar will be available soon.
- The [April 1 President's Letter](#) shared a [joint statement](#) from the AMA and Alberta Health that any pending changes to payment rates or programs will be halted until negotiations conclude.

Compensation

- On March 25, the AMA and Alberta Health [jointly announced](#) changes to virtual care billing codes that will allow psychiatrists to provide additional indirect care as part of a psychiatric consultation and will cover time spent discussing a child's treatment with their guardian. The SFM and SRM had previously expressed support for increasing mental health virtual care codes and welcomed this change.

Informatics

- An important enhancement to Netcare will occur in April with the primary provider from the Central Patient Attachment Registry displaying in a patient's content banner in Alberta Netcare Portal. This will be a key enabler for continuity of care for Albertans. For family physicians participating in CPAR now, their March panels upload to the registry will be displayed in April in Netcare. To learn more, see [FAQ for CPAR Participants](#) or [FAQ for Netcare Users](#).

COVID-19

- Prescribing Paxlovid™ to eligible Alberta COVID-19 patients at high risk of severe outcomes will begin transitioning to primary care providers later this month. AHS will continue to provide testing and will operate a dedicated Health Link line (1-844-343-0971) and the Monoclonal Antibody Prescription Program (MAPP) for Albertans wanting to access Paxlovid™. MAPP will be important in coordinating and providing care for unattached patients. The Ontario Science Table has created a [comprehensive resource](#) with information for prescribers and the AMA will host a webinar on April 27 designed to support physicians and their teams in prescribing Paxlovid™ (see below). Please email phc@ahs.ca with any questions.
- Prescription criteria for Sotrovimab and Paxlovid™ have now been expanded to include people living in Long Term Care and most Designated Supportive Living settings (levels DSL4 and 4D), regardless of vaccination status. Indigenous patients who are 45 years or older and have received either one dose

of vaccine or are unvaccinated are also now eligible for treatment. For more information visit [COVID-19 Outpatient Treatment | Alberta Health Services](#).

- The [Government of Alberta announced](#) that effective Tuesday, April 12 Albertans aged 70 and older, First Nations, Métis and Inuit people aged 65 and older, and all seniors in congregate care will be eligible for a fourth dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- The Canadian Society of Clinical Chemists (CSCC) issued [a practice alert regarding global shortages in laboratory supplies due to supply chain disruptions](#). The practice alert includes recommendations on conservation efforts that promote sustainable practices within the healthcare system.

Advocacy

- The Canadian Medical Association [released a statement on the importance of physician advocacy](#) and of safeguarding physicians from reprisal and retaliation when speaking out for their patients and communities.
- SFM and SRM leadership continue to meet with partners and policy makers to advocate on the key concerns that matter to family physicians. This includes issues such as practice survivability, compensation, physician supply and informatics.

Physician Supply

- Several communities across the province continued to experience acute care and ED bed closures including, most recently, the communities of [Athabasca](#), [High Prairie](#), and [Barrhead](#).
- The Section of Rural Medicine is now accepting [applications](#) for the 2022 Tarrant Scholarship. The Tarrant Scholarship honours the late Dr. Michael Tarrant and is awarded to students who demonstrate a strong interest in developing a career in rural medicine. Applications are due by June 1, 2022.
- Alberta Health Services is moving its physician career site to a new website and platform on March 31. The recruitment site's web address will change from [www.doctorsjobsalberta.com](#) and visitors will be automatically redirected to the new recruitment platform.

Governance

- The second part of the Spring 2022 Representative Forum meeting will be held May 13-14 in Calgary.

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

- The deadline for this year's nominations for the Section of Family Medicine Outstanding Service Award is Wednesday, April 13, 2022. Nominations are to be submitted in writing to Dr. Craig Hodgson, President, Section of Family Medicine, by active/voting members of the SFM, accompanied by a detailed letter of support, outlining why the candidate should be considered. Please submit your nominations by email to sfmpres@albertadoctors.org.
- **Webinar #9: COVID Talks for Docs – What you need to know about Paxlovid™**
April 27, 2022: 12 – 1 pm
This webinar is designed to support physicians and their teams as prescribing Paxlovid™ for COVID-19 begins transitioning to primary care providers. [Register here](#) for this webinar. If you are unable to join live, you can view the webinar on the AMA's [past COVID-19 webinars](#) webpage within a few days after the event.
- **AMA Achievement Awards nominations due April 30**
The AMA is seeking nominations for its highest awards: the [Medal for Distinguished Service](#) (awarded to a physician[s]) and the [Medal of Honour](#) (awarded to a non-physician[s]). The awards will be presented at the AMA's fall 2022 annual general meeting. [Learn more and nominate](#).

Best regards,

Dr. Craig Hodgson
President
Section of Family Medicine

Dr. Samantha Myhr
President
Section of Rural Medicine