

Family Medicine Review

July 21, 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 monthly.

Priority Notes

- ❖ *Update on negotiations (see Negotiations)*
- ❖ *Changes to PCR testing program (see COVID)*
- ❖ *Concerns about pharmacist-led clinics (see Advocacy)*
- ❖ *More Canadians struggling to find a family doctor (see Physician Supply)*

Negotiations

- The [July 15 President's Letter](#) included an update on negotiations, which has involved regular meetings with the negotiating teams and many informal discussions. Although both sides remain interested in achieving a deal and progress has been made, there are some challenges that must be addressed before an agreement can be reached.

Informatics

- The fourth wave of [Connect Care](#) launched on May 28 at sites in both the Edmonton and Calgary zones. You can find a list of the sites that will be impacted on the [Connect Care Implementation Timeline](#). These changes mean that family physicians who are listed as the Primary Care Provider will notice summative documents coming to their EMRs from Connect Care sites via eDelivery.

COVID-19

- [Starting July 20, Albertans 18 years and older can book appointments for second booster doses](#) five months after receiving their last dose. Book online by using the Alberta vaccine [booking system](#) or by calling 811. Select pharmacies will be accepting walk-in appointments.
- Effective July 18, [AHS will no longer require COVID-19 immunization as a condition of employment](#).
- [Several eligibility and operational changes to the province's PCR testing program came into effect on Monday, July 18](#). Going forward, tests to inform clinical treatment will need a referral from a medical professional and some testing locations will change. Presently, patients who try to book a PCR online are directed to call 811, who will guide them through the process. Only those eligible for treatment will be offered a test.

Advocacy

- The recent opening of a pharmacist-led health clinic in Lethbridge that offers similar care to that of physician-led clinics, raised many concerns for family physicians. While we recognize these types of clinics may benefit the community, we are worried about the episodic care they provide and the impact they will have on the Patient's Medical Home. SFM and SRM have written a

letter to the AMA Board expressing our concerns and asking them to seek out more information on the development of these clinics and the position other groups have taken on their creation.

- The AMA's [Care Deficit Assessment Series \(CDAS\)](#) continues to explore the delays Albertans are experiencing in accessing care across the health care system. So far, the series has addressed issues such as Pediatric Mental Health, Women's Health, Care of the Elderly, Emergency Departments and Dermatology. Several other issue papers are planned.
- The AMA has set up [PatientsFirst.ca](#) as a place where patients can share their own care deficit experiences. The next time you or your staff have to tell a patient that you aren't accepting patients or that they must wait for a service they need, please direct them to [PatientsFirst.ca](#) to tell their story.
- 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 [Sylvan Lake](#), [Cold Lake](#), and [Spirit River](#).
- A recent episode of [CBC's Cross Country Checkup](#) explored the challenges many Canadians are having in finding a family doctor.
- [Fewer medical school graduates are choosing to go into family medicine](#) and open primary care practices.

Upcoming Events, Opportunities and Deadlines

Section of Family Medicine - Annual General Meeting

To be held in person immediately preceding the Family Medicine Meeting

Date: Thursday, September 22, 2022
Time: 6:00 pm (dinner and registration at 5:30 pm)
Location: Hyatt Regency Calgary
700 Centre Street S
Calgary, AB T2G 5P6

Only active members of the section are eligible to vote on section business.

Mark your calendars and watch your inbox for more information.

Section of Rural Medicine - Annual General Meeting

Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2022
Time: 6:00 pm

To be held virtually – registration details to come

Only active members of the section are eligible to vote on section business.

Mark your calendars and watch your inbox for more information.

Dr. Craig Hodgson	Dr. Samantha Myhr
President	President
Section of Family Medicine	Section of Rural Medicine