



March 5, 2024

Dear Members,

Late last week, the Government of Alberta unveiled Budget 2024, which sets out the spending priorities for the province over the coming year. As many of us expected, and government hinted at in the days leading up to it, it was an austerity post-election budget. Albertans were cautioned that “this isn’t the time for spending” and that “we should be investing oil and gas wealth for future generations”. While a rainy-day fund is important, without urgent action to stabilize and strengthen community family practices, those future generations may never know what it means to have a family physician.

From a primary care perspective, the budget earmarks \$475 million to support the continued implementation of MAPS, which includes \$200 million over two years “to improve access to family physicians.” We think this references the federal funding that was previously announced in December 2023, but are awaiting confirmation. Also included within that \$475 million is “\$15 million to further develop a compensation model for nurse practitioners.” We continue to have concerns and questions about what the NP funding will look like and how it will impact patient care.

The [Budget 2024 Highlights document](#) outlines some of the specifics, but right now it’s unclear if the items mentioned are new funds or previously announced increases.

I know many people are wondering about the Physician Comprehensive Care Model (PCCM), a proposal that was developed and submitted by the Strike Team to government late last year. It was the first thing I looked for and I wish I could say there was a line item dedicated to implementing it, but there isn’t. What we do have is a commitment from the Minister of Health, made to AMA President Dr. Paul Parks immediately after the budget announcement, to implement the PCCM as quickly as possible. She also promised to make family and rural medicine sustainable and to make us competitive with other provinces. You can read Dr. Parks’ [President’s Letter](#) for more details.

The fact that the Minister of Health was quick to make that commitment was due, in large part, to the tireless advocacy of the AMA and the many family physicians who lent their voice to the SOS campaign. Thank you to all of you who participated – I know your stories made a difference. If you haven’t made a [video](#) yet, I encourage you to consider

doing so because our advocacy isn't done. We need to make sure the minister follows through and turns those commitments into action. The urgency is not only still real; it's growing and we can't ease up yet.

I'm sure you have thoughts and questions about Budget 2024 and I want to remind you that the AMA will be hosting a member-only town hall, this Wednesday night, March 6 from 6 to 8 p.m. If you can't make it, a recording of the presentation will be available after the town hall on the AMA website (member login required). You can register [here](#) – I hope to see you there.

In the meantime, as always, we welcome your input and perspectives. You can always reach me at familymedicine@albertadoctors.org.



Dr. Sarah Bates, Acting President
Section of Family Medicine
On behalf of your [SFM Executive](#)



Mission

- Advocate fiercely for Family Medicine.
- Collaborate to drive health system improvement.
- Achieve compensation that reflects the essential role of family physicians in the health of Albertans.

Vision

Alberta's family doctors are well-supported and financially equipped to provide accessible, quality team-based health care.





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