



Health Human Resources

Handle with Care



How will we fix what's ailing our health care system?

Issue

We are in an unprecedented time when pre-existing demographic changes causing a reduced workforce have been worsened everywhere by the pandemic, accompanied by fatigue and burnout. The shortage of physicians, nurses and other health professionals is the number one challenge facing our health care system. With ongoing shortages, we will continue to struggle to deliver the care Albertans need, when and where they need it.

- We have never faced such a shortage of health care workers in Canada. Alberta is competing against other provinces and countries for physicians while we are beginning to recover from several difficult years in this province.
- We need to plan for both the short and long-term to attract/retain/grow our supply of health human resources as quickly as possible – with priority on retaining the people we have now.
- Retaining physicians means keeping practices stable. We also need to support physicians to have healthier work-life balance and avoid/recover from burnout.
- Health care work environments have become less safe through the pandemic. We must ensure safe working environments where health care workers are treated with respect can provide the highest quality care possible.
- Alberta requires a physician resource plan that is needs-based to identify how many physicians our province requires, what kind of physicians we need and where they are needed.
- A needs-based physician resource plan must include attracting and retaining medical students and residents.
- Strategies to succeed in a competitive environment include:
 - > Removing legislative impediments – either on the books or in effect – such as restrictions on billing numbers that determine where and how physicians practice.
 - > Removing barriers to improve mobility.
 - > Attracting new physicians to the province from outside of Alberta and Canada.
 - > Alleviating pressures in areas where there are acute shortages, particularly rural areas.
- We need integrated physician-led teams, efficiently working together to support a medical home for every Albertan.
- We need to be more self-sufficient in our physician supply and less reliant on international medical graduates.
- The newly announced federal health funding could assist with supporting retention of Alberta physicians as well as recruitment of new physicians in the immediate term.
- The province has taken some actions that will factor into eventual solutions. These include:
 - > Ongoing implementation with the AMA of the 2022-26 agreement that will include needs-based physician resource planning.
 - > [MAPS](#) investment in primary care.
 - > Supporting doctor training programs in smaller centres to address rural physician shortages.
 - > Supporting the CPSA pilot project that will accelerate registration for eligible internationally-trained physicians.
 - > Adding residency spaces to train more physicians.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES & PARTIES SHOULD THEY WIN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION

- What strategies will your government employ to make Alberta an attractive place for physicians and medical learners to come and stay?
- How will your government identify and remove impediments to practice in Alberta for medical learners and practicing physicians?
- To help re-establish safe, respectful working environments for health care workers, will your government commit to upholding federal legislation (Bill C-3) to protect our providers in Alberta?