



## Section of Chronic Pain

To:

Dr. Christine P. Molnar

President Alberta Medical Association

Date: December 8, 2019

**We as the AMA Section of Chronic Pain are very concerned about the recent changes being proposed by Alberta Health which may be unilaterally implemented as early as Jan/Feb 2020.**

**The proposals put forward by Alberta Health constitute an estimated \$262 million being abruptly taken away from healthcare. Of that, 85% of the proposed reductions are directed at family physicians. These proposals, if implemented unilaterally, will have significant negative consequences for our patients, and will also be a negative burden to the health care system in years to come.**

**This poor foresight will unfortunately increase emergency room visits by the chronically ill, and hospital admissions and specialist care will also increase resulting in overall cost to Alberta Health. Most importantly, there will be a surge of chronic pain patients and /or patients with opioid use disorders visiting emergency rooms as their medical home will not be able to care for them. These cuts, rather than being cost effective will cost our healthcare system more and will contradict the mandate of the current Alberta government to shorten wait times for Albertans.**

**We as chronic pain physicians, family doctors and specialists alike, fear for our already marginalized & vulnerable populations such as the elderly, the disabled, and those suffering from complex diseases with symptoms of chronic pain.**

**The wise decision of the past to establish a Medical Home for complex patients by adding in complex care fee codes for family physicians were put in place to provide better care for Albertans. The proposed cuts will compromise not only quality care for our patients, it will also add to the burden on the system.**

**It should be noted that Alberta chronic pain patients are already struggling with access to medical care. We are facing the largest opioid crisis to date, and the increased scrutiny of family physicians caring for chronic pain patients has resulted in both urban & rural community physicians withdrawing from caring for these patients. The unilateral proposed cuts on family physician fee code billing will only add more fuel to this fire and further isolate tax-paying Albertans who require in-depth supportive care in their communities.**

**We as the AMA Section of Chronic Pain strongly advocate for Albertans suffering in chronic pain, and we will continue to strive for the delivery of quality care to this vulnerable patient population.**

**We insist on further negotiations with all stake holders in order to prevent any unilateral uninformed decisions being imposed upon physicians practicing family medicine.**

**Sincerely,**

**Dr. Yasmin Majeed  
President AMA Section of Chronic Pain**

**Dr. Sana Ara Ahmed (President Elect)  
Dr. Ted Findlay (RF Rep)  
Dr. Marc Klassa (Past President)  
Dr. Greg Boughen (Treasurer)  
Dr. Omar Rahman Director at Large**

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