

May 6, 2021

Dear Albertans,

As the AMA representatives for Alberta's family physicians, we were immensely relieved by Tuesday's announcement of stricter COVID-19 public health measures. For weeks, experts have implored the province to take stronger action to combat this third wave of COVID-19, which is pushing our healthcare system and frontline staff to the breaking point. No physician wants to be in a situation where we cannot appropriately care for our patients, yet without strong action now, this is the reality we face. We have worked hard to keep our patients safe over the past 14 months, and we are asking you to please help us get through this last wave. Our best evidence suggests that a short period of heightened restrictions, coupled with high vaccine uptake, will allow us to get back to a more normal life soon. This will only happen if Albertans take this responsibility seriously - including government enforcement of current restrictions.

Despite Alberta having the grim distinction of achieving the highest number of COVID cases per capita in all of North America, we continue to see mass gatherings and anti-lockdown protests. It is difficult to comprehend the callousness of these individuals or anyone who blatantly ignores guidelines or minimizes the danger of COVID-19. To not take this virus seriously is a slap in the face to every health care worker risking their lives on the front lines. It trivializes the pain of every Albertan touched by the more than 2,100 lives already lost, and the suffering of those who have been left with lasting medical problems from this disease. Since when does our "right" to gather mean more than the health and safety of our friends, neighbours, and loved ones? And why - when the end is in sight - would Albertans take actions that continue to set us back?

As family physicians, we understand the toll restrictions have had on your health and your lives - we are seeing the effects on our patients daily and we too are eager to return to some sense of normalcy. We know from our experience with other highly contagious diseases (like measles) and COVID-19 data from other countries, that vaccines are the path forward. This is especially true in the face of the more transmissible variants of concern, which can result in severe infections even in younger, otherwise healthy individuals. We encourage you to protect yourself and others by getting immunized as soon as you are able. The available vaccines are effective, and safe for most people, but if you have specific concerns, please discuss them with your doctor - we are here to answer your questions.

Finally, while we thank you for staying home as much as possible, we urge you to not postpone seeking care for acute or chronic conditions. When in doubt, we are happy to speak with you virtually to help you decide if something requires a more urgent in-person assessment.

Thank you for taking your responsibility to your fellow Albertans seriously and for helping those working on the frontlines, to continue providing appropriate, essential care.

In your service,



Dr. Craig Hodgson
President, Section of Family Medicine



Dr. Samantha Myhr
President, Section of Rural Medicine