

October 5, 2022

Alberta Medical Association
12230 106 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB
T5N 3Z1

Attn: Michael A. Gormley, Executive Director

Dear Mr. Gormley:

RE: Commitment for collaboration between Alberta Health (AH) and the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) regarding primary health care

AH recognizes that top performing health systems are organized around and prioritize investments in primary health care. These health systems deliver better outcomes and more cost-effective care. Primary health care has a strong foundation in Alberta, due to Alberta's historic leadership in primary health care, including the establishment of Primary Care Networks (PCNs). It is important to continue to build on these successes to evolve our health care system. AH is committed to working collaboratively with the AMA to further strengthen primary health care.

As part of this commitment, AH and the Provincial Primary Care Network Committee (PPCNC) will establish a PCN review working group (Working Group) to assess the on-going funding requirements of PCNs. AH and PPCNC will develop the Working Group's terms of reference which will include the following:

- 1) *Purpose:* The purpose of the Working Group is to develop written recommendations for the Minister regarding PCN funding, including:
 - adjustments to the \$62 rate for per capita funding for PCNs;
 - reviewing the current PCN funding model to determine if there are more effective approaches than the current panel rostering approach to better meet the needs of different populations and demographics throughout the province; and
 - enhancing PCN performance metrics and accountability mechanisms.

In developing the written recommendations for the Minister, the Working Group shall inform and be informed by the Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System (MAPS) initiative. The Working Group's timelines for providing recommendations to the Minister will parallel the MAPS' timelines which are expected to include an interim report in November 2022 and a final report in March 2023. Throughout fiscal year 2022-23, the AMA and its membership will be engaged in the MAPS initiative. MAPS will provide recommendations to the Minister of Health regarding the modernization of primary, rural and Indigenous health care to improve equity of access and equity of care for all Albertans.

If the Working Group cannot reach consensus on a recommendation to the Minister, the co-chairs will report on the different views expressed among the Working Group's members and provide these to the Minister.

- 2) *Membership:* The Working Group's membership will include:
- two members from AH;
 - one member from Alberta Health Services;
 - two members from the AMA; and
 - two PCN executive directors appointed by the PCN Physician Leads Executive.

The MAPS executive lead will attend in an ex officio non-voting capacity to ensure integration between the Working Group and MAPS, while the initiative is on-going.

- 3) *Co-Chairs:* The AMA and AH will co-chair the Working Group.
- 4) *Duration:* The Working Group will formally conclude on March 31, 2023, when remaining work, including any evaluation, will be included under the PPCNC.

By way of a substantive financial commitment, while PCN funding and the broader primary health care system are being reviewed, AH will invest \$20 million (Investment Amount) in PCNs in each of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 fiscal years. The Minister, with written recommendations from the PPCNC, provided by November 30, 2022, will determine the use and distribution of the Investment Amount, according to the following principles:

- Improving team-based care in areas of highest need, especially in rural Alberta;
- Enabling provision of higher quality of care for patients, greater patient access and safety while maximizing value for public funds;
- Providing solutions to well-defined issues;
- Targeting the Investment Amount to PCNs and patient populations based on demonstrable need; and

- Consideration of the overall context of physician compensation and service delivery challenges in Alberta.

The Investment Amount may be utilized on expenses currently covered by per capita funding to provide incremental supports to PCNs in need or to provide improved service delivery for Albertans where there is currently a shortfall. This is a temporary measure until a more appropriate funding model is developed for PCNs, taking into account fiscal restraints and responsibility.

We look forward to working collaboratively with the AMA on these items.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bryce Stewart', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bryce Stewart
Associate Deputy Minister
Alberta Health