ALBERTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION | Joint Task Force

UPDATE

December 23, 2020

Welcome to a special, year-end issue of the Joint Task Force Update. The AMA Joint Task Force (JTF), comprised of family physicians, specialists, and AMA support staff, represents a unified voice that supports and enables grassroots physician advocacy efforts. We wish you a safe holiday season and a new year that offers the hope of better days ahead. We will return with regular issues in January.

A year unlike any other

We're now officially in the final days of what has been described by many as "a nightmare year." Unfortunately, that's not hyperbole. Over the past couple of months, COVID numbers have been escalating across the province and Alberta finally implemented long-overdue restrictive public health measures. Alberta's physicians are doing everything in our power to protect Albertans from this relentless virus. We are also simultaneously trying to alert Albertans to the impact of government funding and policy changes that threaten the health of our patients and the sustainability of our health care system. That has been the focus of the JTF for much of the past year.

The JTF was created when the Specialty Care and the Family Medicine task forces, which had been created in early March to address government funding changes, combined into a single task force. Since the end of May, the JTF has worked to develop advocacy resources, organized webinars and townhalls, supported physicians with MLA/Minister meetings, drafted correspondence to other elected officials, and captured stories and experiences from physicians who have made the difficult decision to change their practice or leave the province. We've also built relationships with other physician advocacy groups, advocated directly with health officials and established new mechanisms to gather information on physician practice changes, including the reasons why physicians have made those changes. We've even created a soon-to-be-launched podcast series to share the voice of physicians.

The work done to date by the JTF has been impactful and rewarding, but it is just the start. As we move into the new year, it is more important than ever for physicians to use their collective voice to help influence the decisions that will shape the future of our health care system. Early in the new year, the JTF will be launching several new initiatives and we will be highlighting those efforts in future issues of the JTF Update.

This has been an exhausting year to be a physician in this province and we are immensely grateful for everything you have done and continue to do for Albertans and for our profession. As physicians, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to be stewards of our health care system. It's a challenge the JTF is committed to helping you fulfil in any way you choose.

Sincerely,

Dr. Darryl LaBuick
JTF Co-chair

Dr. Sidd Thakore
JTF Co-chair

Tell us about your practice and any changes you may be making
At the most recent Representative Forum, a motion was passed directing the AMA to develop a voluntary reporting process to gather information about physicians who are changing their practice and their reasons for doing so. The Joint Task Force has been working closely with AMA's Information Systems Group (ISG) and Public Affairs to create a mechanism to gather this important physician information – something no other organization currently collects.

A new feature called "My Practice Information" has been added to the member dashboard that asks you about your current practice information and any changes you have made or may be planning, including retirement, closing your practice, and reducing or increasing your hours, as well as the reasons for these changes. This data collection process is voluntary, and all information will be kept confidential. Information will be anonymized and used to create regular reports, that will also be available to members, if requested.

Our goal with this new dashboard feature is to capture member information and future plans, understand resource changes and identify additional support opportunities so we can better serve your needs now and in the future. If you have any questions or comments on the new dashboard feature, please let us know at jointtaskforce@albertadoctors.org.

Advocacy resources for physicians
The JTF has updated resources and tools to help you with your own advocacy efforts, which are now easier to find on the AMA website. If there are specific materials you feel would help you raise your voice and inform Albertans about what is at stake, please let us know and we will help you create something that will meet your needs.

Membership renewal
We are now entering the homestretch of our renewal period and physicians, resident physicians and medical students are keeping AMA membership renewal numbers climbing. As of December 21, 85% of our members have renewed.

Although these renewal stats are promising, there is still some ground to cover. If you haven't renewed, please do so before December 30. This will add your voice to a strong message of unity within the profession. Additionally, it will ensure that any renewable services that you may receive from AMA, such as personal insurance policies, are not affected.

For more information about your AMA membership, take a look at why you should renew. Every membership counts. Stand with us and renew now.

Please note, the AMA offices are closed from December 24 – December 29, but you can still renew online. If you need to talk to membership staff, please connect before December 24, if possible. Otherwise, you can email membership@albertadoctors.org.

AMA Membership Office:
Kirsten Sieben
kirsten.sieben@albertadoctors.org
780-482-0323

Upcoming webinars
ACTT has begun co-hosting a bi-weekly webinar series to help physicians address the many questions arising from Alberta's rapidly rising COVID-19 rates. The first session in the Adapting to Increasing COVID Care Needs in your Practice series ran on November 18, with the second held on December 2, and the third held on December 16. All three can be viewed on the AMA's Webinars & Online Learning webpage.

The fourth webinar in the bi-weekly webinar series will be held on January 6, from 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. and will respond to common and emerging questions from primary care and other generalist physicians (i.e., pediatricians, internal medicine) about the COVID-19 vaccine. Participants will have time to ask questions related to managing patient and practice needs during COVID-19, including:

- COVID-19 vaccine safety and efficacy
- Addressing vaccine hesitancy

The webinar will be recorded. If you are unable to join live, you can view the webinar on the AMA's Webinars & Online Learning webpage within a few days after the event.

If you are interested in joining the webinar you can register in advance.

Once registered, you will be sent the Zoom Meeting link and instructions on how to join.

Please contact Shelley.Russell@albertadoctors.org if you are experiencing any difficulties registering.

ALBERTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

© 2020 Alberta Medical Association; All rights reserved

Our mailing address is:
12230 106 Ave NW
Edmonton AB T5N 3Z1
Canada
Unsubscribe from this publication
Canada Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) - AMA compliance statement