



Section of Family Medicine

# Bulletin



October 27, 2023

Dear Members,

My name is Dr. Sarah Bates and I am honoured to introduce myself as the Acting President of the Section of Family Medicine.

As many of you are aware, Dr. Jon Hilner resigned from his position as president on October 16. I was appointed to the role on October 19 and will remain in place as acting SFM president until our annual AGM on September 19, 2024. I want to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Hilner for his many contributions to the Section of Family Medicine. He has dedicated countless hours to exploring how to improve financial stability for members and has been an impassioned advocate for Alberta's family physicians.

I have been a family physician for over 20 years, practicing in both Calgary and Edmonton. Currently, as an assistant clinical professor for the Department of Family Medicine, Cumming School of Medicine, I work at the Central Teaching Clinic in Calgary. There I provide full scope family practice and help to oversee the next generation of family doctors. Throughout my career I have worked closely with the AMA and the Section of Family Medicine, including serving as a Representative Forum delegate for SFM, and on the Board of Directors from 2009 to 2016.

### **Family medicine crisis, MAPS and a MOU**

We all know family medicine is in crisis. The Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System (MAPS): Strategic Advisory Panel Final Report, released last week, highlights the urgent need to invest in primary care and acknowledges pressures that are unique to Alberta family and rural medicine practice. It includes 11 recommendations that hold some promise for change. Your executive is reviewing it in detail and will share more thoughts with you soon.

Although the announcements which accompanied the release of the report failed to provide all we were hoping for, they did include, among other things: long-awaited changes to virtual mental health codes and good faith claims; the creation of a task force for primary care; and the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the government and the AMA. That MOU was signed on October 24 and commits the parties to work together on a longitudinal family practice (LFP) model. Such a model may prove critical to the sustainability of comprehensive family medicine in the province. As Dr. Paul Parks explained in his most recent [President's Letter](#), "I view this new MOU as a promise from the minister to the profession to work collaboratively toward solutions that will stabilize practices and allow them to thrive in the service of patients. The input of front-line physicians is essential to making any improvements in primary care."

## **Your input matters**

Now it is up to all of us to help provide that input. Send your questions, your comments and your ideas for solutions to [sfmpres@albertadoctors.org](mailto:sfmpres@albertadoctors.org). I also encourage you to [email your local MLA](#) and the [Minister of Health](#) to share what is happening in your practices. I will be in contact regularly over the coming weeks to keep you updated. We have a lot of work to do and we can't do it without you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarah Bates, Acting President  
Section of Family Medicine  
*On behalf of your [SFM Executive](#).*