



April 29, 2022

Dear Family Physicians,

The Canadian Medical Association has declared Sunday, May 1 as National Physicians' Day in Canada – a day intended to recognize and celebrate the work physicians do every day to care for their patients and their communities. I know for many of us, the idea of celebrating anything right now may seem strange. After more than two years of working through a pandemic and dealing with continuing practice survivability challenges and growing issues around physician supply, it can be hard to remember that there are things worth celebrating. I believe National Physicians' Day is an excellent opportunity to remind ourselves of why we do what we do, even when the work can seem overwhelming.

Over the years, I have heard from many colleagues who chose medicine for the same reason I did – because we wanted to care for people. Although the pandemic has made that work harder, it has not changed our commitment to our patients and the profession of medicine. It has, in some ways, made us more tenacious in our fight to deliver the care our patients need and deserve. The pandemic has also illustrated how much our patients rely on us and how important primary care is to the health care system. Without primary care, there really is no health care. We've known that truth for years and now the public is recognizing it too.

Of course, we know how difficult the practice of medicine has become for many physicians. Recent news articles and studies have explored the growing incidence of physician stress and burnout. [A November 2021 study by the Canadian Medical Association](#) showed that 53% of physicians and medical learners have experienced high levels of burnout, and 59% of the physicians who responded said their mental health had gotten worse during the pandemic. We heard similar comments from Alberta physicians during our engagement strategy that was conducted last fall. If you are feeling overwhelmed, I encourage you to reach out to your colleagues and friends, and to access the services and supports available through the [AMA's Physician and Family Support Program](#), which is available 24/7, 365 days a year at 1.877.767.4637.

In the midst of this current reality, it's more important than ever to recognize the efforts of our friends and colleagues who care for their patients, day in and day out. We need to celebrate the resiliency and compassion of physicians who have worked through previously unimaginable circumstances and remind ourselves why we chose to dedicate our lives to advocating and caring for others.

On this National Physicians' Day, I want to say how proud I am of what you do and how grateful I am to each of you.

As always, if there is anything you would like to discuss, please reach out to me directly at [sfmpres@albertadoctors.org](mailto:sfmpres@albertadoctors.org).

Best regards,



Dr. Craig Hodgson  
President, AMA Section of Family Medicine

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