



December 2, 2021

Dear Family Physicians,

The past two years have been extraordinarily difficult for family physicians across Alberta. In the midst of a global pandemic, we also faced a growing number of challenges that have impacted the survivability of our practices and forced many of us to make difficult professional and personal decisions.

Earlier this fall SFM, along with the Section of Rural Medicine and Primary Care Network Physician Leads Executive, undertook an engagement initiative that set out to better understand the pressures and realities we are all facing. The engagement initiative included a series of informal member conversations in zones across the province, as well as a confidential member survey to help gather experiences about the issues impacting practice survivability, and a patient survey to capture patient perspectives. The final report is now available on the [Section of Family Medicine](#) and [Section of Rural Medicine](#) member pages (member login required).

The report includes a brief executive summary that outlines the high-level themes, including the impact inadequate remuneration has had on practice survivability. The need for adequate virtual care codes and better complex care compensation were mentioned frequently, as were physician losses and physician burnout. It is a sobering snapshot of the realities many family physicians are facing right now and the difficult choices we are having to make. I hope you will take the time to read the full report and will share your thoughts on whether this reflects your own experiences. I am grateful to everyone who took the time to participate in the initiative and assure you we will use this information to guide our advocacy efforts in the year ahead.

Recording from webcast with Minister Copping now available

I also want to thank everyone who attended *Primary Care in Alberta: A Panel Conversation with Health Minister Jason Copping & Primary Care Physician Leaders* on November 22. The moderated panel event, which was open to all primary care physicians, offered an opportunity to hear directly from Minister Copping as he responded to questions from physician leaders from the Sections of Family Medicine and Rural Medicine and the Primary Care Networks.

Not surprisingly, many of the questions asked by panel members during the 90-minute session reflected the priority issues identified in our engagement Initiative. This included discussing the realities facing family physicians and PCNs, the sustainability of rural care and the ongoing challenges of COVID-19. Although the moderated panel format did not allow attendees to ask questions directly, we are hopeful there will be future opportunities for conversations with the Health Minister.

If you were unable to attend the event, the recording is available on the AMA's [Section of Family Medicine](#) and [Section of Rural Medicine](#) member pages. Please note that member login is required to view.

I look forward to your feedback on both the webcast and the engagement initiative report and welcome your suggestions for issues that should be explored in any future discussions with Minister Copping.

As always, if there is anything you would like to discuss, please reach out to me directly at sfmpres@albertadoctors.org.

Best regards,



Dr. Craig Hodgson
President, AMA Section of Family Medicine



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