



June 8, 2022

Dear Family Physicians,

May was a particularly busy month for the SFM Executive and I wanted to give you a quick update on some of what has been underway. The second part of the Spring RF was held in Calgary from May 13-14 and our Family Medicine Meeting was held the day before, to help delegates prepare for RF. The SFM Executive also attended our Strategic Planning Retreat at the end of May, where we explored the issues and priorities for family medicine going forward.

RF Update

Part two of the Spring RF was packed with a number of important presentations on issues that impact family medicine, including the [Income Equity Initiative](#) and the interim approach the AMA Board has taken to move the initiative forward. Presenters from the AMA Compensation Committee walked attendees through key elements of the initiative and the work that remains. It was clear during RF and at FMM, that there continues to be widespread support for IEI. While implementation is dependent upon an agreement, it is encouraging to see the work that has been done to move the initiative forward.

During RF, we also heard from our colleagues that much of our health care system is in crisis. The [May 17 President's Letter](#) outlined some of what was discussed, including the growing care deficit that is impacting Albertans across the province. While many issues predate the pandemic, the past two and a half years have exacerbated access challenges. We heard repeatedly that physician supply challenges are a common theme and are contributing to burnout amongst physicians and the entire health care team.

Physician supply is a critical issue for family medicine, with thousands of Albertans currently searching to find a family physician, often because their doctors have made the difficult decision to change their practice, retire early, or leave entirely. Those of us that remain are struggling to manage the needs of unattached patients, while caring for our own patients in a system that constantly asks us to do more. Without family physicians, increasing numbers of Albertans are showing up in emergency departments with serious issues because they have no other care options. We heard repeatedly that while recruiting new physicians is important, we must also give the physicians who are here now a reason to stay in Alberta.

New Members-at-Large

We are pleased to share that three exceptional physician leaders have now accepted the invitation to sit as Members-at-Large until elections take place at the SFM AGM in September. The SFM Executive thanks Dr. Heidi Fell, Dr. Katherine Kasha and Dr. Van Thuy Nguyen for stepping into these important roles.

SFM Retreat

In late May, the SFM Executive gathered for a strategic retreat. In advance of the retreat, we held a one-day Joint Strategic Session with the Section of Rural Medicine and the Physician Leads Executive to discuss our shared goals. This chance to collaborate and discuss our future vision of primary care and community care delivery will help guide our efforts moving forward. We appreciate our SRM and PLE colleagues making time to join us and share their insights.

The two-day SFM Strategic Retreat focused on exploring key principles, priorities, and processes to ensure we continue to do the essential work the Section requires. We came away with a number of action items that will be implemented over the coming months. The retreat also offered a chance for our new Executive Members-at-Large to learn more about the work we do. I am grateful that our new Members-at-Large were able to be there, and for the questions and perspectives they brought to the retreat.

Encouraging patients to share their stories

Over the last few months, the AMA has been working to draw attention to the health care deficit and the delays in care Albertans are experiencing. Recently, the AMA launched a survey on [PatientsFirst.ca](https://patientsfirst.ca) which invites patients to share their own care deficit experiences. Anytime you or your staff have to inform a patient that they need to wait for an appointment or service, or have to let someone know you are not accepting new patients, please **direct them to [PatientsFirst.ca](https://patientsfirst.ca) to tell their story**. You can also [download and print this poster](#) for display in your office, or for handing out to your patients. If you have any questions, please email jpac@albertadoctors.org.

There is a lot of work to do over the next few months and I will report back to you on our progress. In the meantime, if there is anything you would like to discuss, please reach out to me directly at sfmpres@albertadoctors.org.

Best regards,



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President, AMA Section of Family Medicine



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