



November 18, 2021

Dear Family Physicians,

I am sure most of you have seen the email that was sent last Friday inviting primary care physicians to join physician leaders from the Sections of Family Medicine and Rural Medicine and the Primary Care Networks for a moderated panel conversation on primary care with Health Minister Jason Copping. The Minister of Health has expressed an interest in hearing directly from primary care providers on the issues that are impacting their practices and their patients. It is a welcome suggestion at a time when I know so many family physicians are facing increasing challenges, many of which were identified during our engagement initiative conducted earlier this fall.

The webcast, which is scheduled for **Monday, November 22 from 6:30 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.** will offer an opportunity to hear directly from Minister Copping on various topics, including the long-term vision for primary care, priority areas for family physicians and PCNs, sustainability of rural care, COVID-19, and other important topics.

The event will be moderated by Dr. Rick Ward and will include opening remarks from the panelists, followed by a question-and-answer session between the physician panelists and the Minister. Panelists for the event include:

- The Honourable Jason Copping, M.L.A. Minister of Health
- Dr. Ernst Greyvenstein (PCN Physician Lead, Calgary Zone)
- Dr. Nadine Letwin (PCN Physician Lead, Edmonton Zone)
- Dr. Brad Bahler (Family Physician, PCN Member, Sylvan Lake)
- Dr. Samantha Myhr (President, Section of Rural Medicine)
- Dr. Craig Hodgson (President, Section of Family Medicine)
- Dr. Darryl LaBuick (Executive Member, Section of Family Medicine)

I encourage all of you to attend and be part of this important conversation. If you haven't already registered, please [click here](#) to do so.

Themes from our engagement initiative

Many of the topics our panelists will present, address the realities primary care providers are currently facing, which were captured during our recent member engagement initiative. In late summer and early fall, the Section of Family Medicine, along with the Section of Rural Medicine and the Primary Care Network Physician Leads Executive, undertook an engagement initiative that hosted a series of informal member conversations in zones across the province. We also created a confidential member survey to help gather experiences about the issues impacting practice survivability and offered a similar survey for patients. Although the report is currently being finalized, we can share that practice survivability emerged as the central theme of the initiative, with participants identifying several specific concerns, such as:

- Uncertainty and unpredictability within the profession

- Pandemic-related impacts
- Inadequate remuneration due to insufficient virtual codes and complex care compensation
- Changing practice mix resulting from financial pressures
- Reducing clinic hours and closing practices
- Physicians leaving the province or retiring early
- Increased workloads/stress and physician burnout
- Decreased patient access to primary care
- Need to improve patient awareness of physicians' challenges

The insights and comments shared during the engagement initiative were powerful and profound, and we are grateful to everyone who took the time to participate. The themes that emerged will help inform our advocacy efforts and ensure we focus on the most important issues for you and your patients. I know these concerns will also be reflected in the questions from panelists during the webcast on November 22 and look forward to hearing Minister Copping's thoughts on these priority areas. I hope to see you there.

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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