



November 27, 2023

Honourable Danielle Smith,
Premier of Alberta
420 Legislature Building 10800-97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Honorable Premier Danielle Smith:

On behalf of the Alberta College of Family Physicians (ACFP), I am writing to you in response to the announcement made on November 22, 2023 - *Strengthening primary care with nurse practitioners*. We have heard from our members, and we feel that the presentation of the new funding model for Alberta's nurse practitioners undervalues the role of family physicians in primary care.

There are significant differences in the two professions—most notably in the training and scope of practice. With respect to clinical experience in training, our family physician members average 15,000-20,000 hours after residency to a nurse practitioner's 700-900 practice hours. On behalf of more than 5,600 family physicians, family medicine residents and students, we would like to share with you the views of our membership. They are feeling undervalued and unsupported while continuing to work in untenable and poorly supported environments. We hope that you can reiterate the recommendation in the MAPS report that every Albertan should have access to a comprehensive care team embedded in a Patient's Medical Home and part of an Integrated Patient Neighbourhood. We feel that this would help build the trust and good faith that we all need as we move forward with the MAPS innovations.

The ACFP strongly believes that every Albertan should have access to a family physician and a comprehensive primary care team. To achieve this, Alberta Health should fund the expansion of family practice teams at the point of care including more appropriate funding for family physicians and other members of the team that will encourage optimal team-based care. We trust that Alberta Health and the Alberta Medical Association will find a solution to support this and we are supportive of complementary team members, such as nurse practitioners, working to their full scopes of practice, to optimize patient care in a Patient's Medical Home.

We appreciate that last week's announcement will add more resources to our destabilized primary care system and nurse practitioners can improve timely access to a primary care provider for Albertans. We would like to emphasize that nurse practitioners, like family physicians, will be more effective working in teams. We should not recreate a practice environment where nurse practitioners work in either solo practice or small group settings, as it will produce the same challenges we currently face. We recognize the need for government to balance the many improvements required to the health system including optimizing the work of the various health care professionals. To date, the ACFP has appreciated the many reviews and initiatives that have been undertaken and our members have continued to spend their time providing input. However, we are coming to a critical point where implementation of recommendations is more important than further consultation.

Thank you for the priority that the Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System has in your busy agenda. We take our role as a valued primary health care stakeholder very seriously and are pleased to be on the Supporting Comprehensive Primary Care Task Force. We would like to support the initiatives as much as we can and look forward to continuing working with you and your team.

Sincerely,

Dr. Noel DaCunha, MBBS, CCFP
President, Alberta College of Family Physicians

Cc: The Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Health
Martin Long, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health
Alberta College of Family Physicians Board of Directors and Membership