

DID YOU KNOW

For 114 years AMA (Alberta Medical Association) has been an advocate for almost 14,000 members (AB physicians) providing leadership and support for their role in provision of healthcare in AB. Until February 20, 2020, AMA has worked with provincial governments.

WHAT HAPPENED?

October 28, 2019, UCP (United Conservative Party) passed Bill 21. With regards to AB Physicians, Bill 21 allows Cabinet the ability to terminate ANY agreement for physician compensation. This is not only for an existing AMA agreement, the bill clearly identifies the government is not required to live up to the terms of future contracts. AMA voiced concerns immediately not only to bill 21 but also 11 funding changes, the Minister of Health, Tyler Shandro proposed. Alberta physicians voiced concerns that the 11 funding changes would have significant impact on provision of patient care, primarily in rural areas.

WHAT HAPPENED TO NEGOTIATIONS

BETWEEN SHANDRO & AMA? AMA planned to return to negotiations with a proposed plan to reduce costs which would have the least impact on patients (AB requires a reduction in costs due to the economic downturn). February 20, 2020 Shandro opted to utilize the power provided by Bill 21, ripped up the current agreement with AMA, and walked away from the bargaining table, refusing to negotiate or arbitrate. On March 31, 2020 in the midst of a 100 year pandemic Shandro unilaterally imposed funding changes to AB physicians' compensation. 1.5 cuts were rolled back the week prior due to public outcry in support of AB physicians. The other cuts went through. As was predicted, these funding changes have created chaos in our leading public healthcare system in the midst of a pandemic. On April 9, 2020 AMA filed a lawsuit against the provincial government's Ministry of Health. AMA cites the termination of its agreement and the government's conduct during negotiations, along with Bill 21, as some of the reasons for filing this claim. AMA said a constitutional challenge is NOT what they wanted, especially during a pandemic, yet it was a necessary step.

”

We think we have reached an impasse with this government. Our relationship has never been at a lower point. It is very important that there is a method to resolve disputes between government and Alberta Physicians.

—Dr. Christine Mohler, AMA President.

What do Alberta Physicians Want?

More money right? Wrong! AMA had come to the table with a 5% wage reduction across the board. Shandro refused it. Alberta Physicians' top 3 concerns are:

- 1. Rebuilding trust between the Alberta Physicians and the UCP** “There has never been an issue about trust and accountability.” Alberta physicians want to continue through AMA to be part of the decision making process with the UCP regarding appropriate ways to decrease healthcare spending while preserving the health care of Albertans.
- 2. The need to repeal Bill 21.** Few Alberta physicians feel comfortable signing ANY contract now knowing at any moment the UCP have the power to change it. That does nothing to build trust between government and physicians.
- 3. Return to negotiations.** Alberta Physicians want Shandro to opt to return to negotiations or to 3rd party binding arbitration.

What can I do?

- *Compose a short letter voicing your concerns for AB docs.
- *Photograph your letter & share on Social Media
- *Mail your letter, no postage required to your MLA

Share Your Story.

- #patientsforABdocs
- #ThisIsMyWhy
- #AMAisABdocs
- #IBelieveABdocs