



ALBERTA
HEALTH

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Red Deer-North*

AR 215551

December 5, 2023

Tyler Gandam
President, Alberta Municipalities
300, 8616 51 Avenue NW
Edmonton AB T6E 6E6

Sent via email: president@abmunis.ca

Dear Tyler Gandam:

Thank you for your letters regarding the three health priorities of Alberta's municipal leaders and Alberta Municipalities' resolutions on these issues. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

A primary focus of Alberta's government over the next four years is to ensure Albertans have improved access to world-class health care when and where they need it. As highlighted in Premier Smith's [mandate letter](#) to me, Alberta Health will continue to support primary care as the foundation of our health system by assessing alternative models of care and leveraging all health care professionals.

Please be assured that Alberta's government recognizes the integral role nurse practitioners (NPs) play in delivering high-quality health care in Alberta. We are committed to increasing the number and variety of health care professionals in the province, including NPs, to help meet Albertans' health care needs. To this end, Alberta's government is developing a new compensation model for NPs to encourage NPs to operate independently, adding much-needed capacity to Alberta's primary care system. The new compensation model will be phased-in and is expected to launch in early 2024.

Regarding your recommendation to fund operational costs incurred by hospice societies, we have invested nearly \$1 billion over three years to begin transformation of the continuing care system. This includes implementing recommendations from the Facility-Based Continuing Care Review and the Advancing Palliative and End-of-Life Care in Alberta Report (2021). These strategic investments will support initiatives that will enable a shift to more care in the community, enhance workforce capacity, increase choice and innovation, and improve the quality of care within the continuing care sector. As part of the continuing care transformation, and to address the existing hospice capacity needs, Alberta Health has budgeted support for the operational funding of an additional 25 new community-based hospice spaces by 2026.

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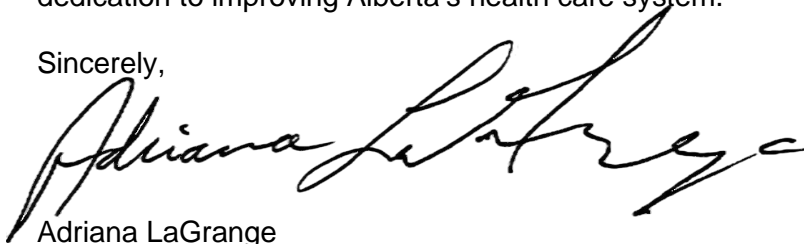
I also understand that the ongoing strain on emergency medical services (EMS) has had a major impact on the Alberta Medical First Response (MFR) Program. Please know that Alberta's government values the partnerships we have with municipalities that provide this important service. As you may know, we introduced the Health Care Action Plan (HCAP), which prioritizes improving EMS response times; this includes fast-tracking ambulance transfers at the emergency department so that paramedics are available for more calls.

While we are seeing [positive results](#) from the HCAP, we recognize that there is more work to do. That is why I have established a new Alberta EMS Standing Committee (AESC) made up of front-line paramedics, municipalities and Indigenous representatives, and other key community partners. The committee will provide direct input to Alberta Health on performance, opportunities, and challenges within the EMS system and will continue the work to strengthen EMS in our province. This work includes reviewing progress on the implementation of the recommendations from the AESC and the Alberta EMS Dispatch Review.

Under the MFR Program, administered by Alberta Health Services (AHS), municipal fire-rescue services acting as MFR agencies may join AHS' MFR Program and respond to requests from AHS EMS dispatch to provide MFR services prior to the arrival of EMS. This voluntary agreement allows MFR agencies to choose which types of EMS events they wish to respond to. As MFR services are an optional responsibility for Alberta municipalities that are part of a public safety role, Alberta Health does not provide direct funding to MFR agencies to cover operational costs. However, the Department does cover the cost of some training, equipment, and supports, including the development and administration of provincial medical control protocols for MFRs.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your resolutions with me. I appreciate your dedication to improving Alberta's health care system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adriana LaGrange', written in a cursive style.

Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Health