



Deputy Premier
Office of the Minister
MLA, Edmonton-Glenora



AR 151224

May 1, 2018

Barry Morishita
President
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
300 - 8616 41 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6E 6E6

Dear Barry Morishita:

Thank you for your letter regarding the three health related resolutions passed at your 2017 annual convention.

AUMA Resolution 2017.B10 - Compensation for Municipalities Participating in the Medical First Response (MFR) Program

The MFR Program was established to equip medical first responders with standardized training, supplies and support integral to the provision of safe and effective first aid to patients.

MFR agencies, such as fire departments, work with Alberta Health Services Emergency Medical Services (AHS EMS) to provide initial medical aid in Alberta communities. Through this program, each municipality is responsible for determining the level of MFR service they will provide, including the types of EMS calls, if any, they will respond to.

In addition to this voluntary MFR role, fire departments serve a municipal public safety role (as defined by each individual municipality). The public safety role includes the provision of services in situations where patient extrication is required (such as patient extrication from motor vehicles), low or high-angle rescue, patient entrapment, or any other situation in which patient removal is required.

The agreement for enrolment in the MFR Program states that the program will not reimburse MFR agencies since the provision of MFR is voluntary for municipalities; provincial policy does not differ from this. Additionally, providing MFR is a means by which municipalities promote public safety, consistent with section 7(a) of the *Municipal Government Act*.

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If you would like additional information about the Ministry's position on cost recovery for MFR services, please contact Bre Hutchinson, Director, Emergency Health Services at 780-643-6342 or bre.hutchinson@gov.ab.ca.

AUMA Resolution 2017.B11 – Support to Medical Equipment Lending Initiatives across Alberta (PSB)

We recognize that many Albertans need affordable access to medical equipment on a short-term basis.

Short-term medical equipment programs provide loaner equipment for Albertans recovering from injuries, surgery or those who need support in their own homes after hospitalization. Equipment available through these programs includes assistive equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, hydraulic lifts, bed rails, bath chairs, commodes, safety rails, cushions, air casts and crutches/canes.

The Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) Program provides funding for basic medical equipment and supplies to meet clinically assessed chronic needs for Albertans with a long-term disability, chronic illness or terminal illness. An assessment by a health care professional determines the equipment and supplies that an Albertan can receive through the AADL Program. AADL recyclable equipment is used by the client for as long as they need it and then returned to be recycled. When the equipment is not available in recycle, the program purchases new equipment.

Most community groups that lend equipment require a referral from a health care professional and allow clients to keep the equipment as long as they need it within a limited time period. This equipment enables them to remain in their homes and communities and improves their quality of life.

Alberta Health is working with AHS and other stakeholders to identify how to broaden the provision of medical equipment and supplies in the community and the most effective way to deliver those services.

AUMA Resolution 2017.E2 – Provincial/Municipal Working Group on Opioids (OCMOH)

In Alberta, the unprecedented rise in opioid-related overdose deaths, including fentanyl, is considered a public health crisis. Between January 1 and September 30, 2017, 482 opioid-related drug overdose deaths occurred. This is a 40% increase from the same time period in 2016, when there were 346 accidental drug overdose deaths related to opioids. Responding to this public health crisis is a top priority for government.

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The Government of Alberta's response to the opioid crisis has been guided by six strategic areas: harm reduction initiatives, treatment, prevention, enforcement and supply control, collaboration, and surveillance and analytics. In addition, Alberta has established a dedicated emergency commission to enhance Alberta's ability to respond to the opioid crisis. The mandate of the Minister's Opioid Emergency Response Commission is to develop recommendations for, and facilitate implementation of, urgent coordinated actions to effectively address the opioid crisis.

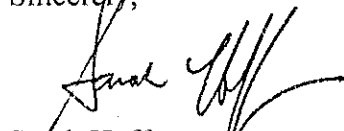
We recognize the importance of local context, and that no one organization or level of government can address this crisis single-handedly. Our government is committed to taking a multi-pronged approach to reach the diverse communities being impacted by the opioid crisis.

Municipalities have resources and knowledge that can support Alberta's response activities. Alberta Health is interested in exploring options for sharing information with municipal leaders about Alberta's opioid response strategy as well as engaging municipalities regarding how they can increase their participation in the response to the opioid crisis.

I would appreciate if our staff could work together to explore these options in greater detail. Please feel free to contact Keely McBride, Project Manager, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (keely.mcbride@gov.ab.ca), to discuss this initiative further.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to engage in this important dialogue and for your partnership in supporting the health of Albertans.

Sincerely,



Sarah Hoffman
Deputy Premier
Minister of Health

cc: Honourable Rachel Notley, Premier