



ALBERTA
HEALTH

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary - Acadia*



DEC 18 2019

AR 165281

Barry Morishita
President
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
300-8616 51 Avenue NW
Edmonton AB T6E 6E6

Dear Barry Morishita:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the resolutions the AUMA is contemplating regarding the health of Albertans. I am pleased to provide the following feedback:

Advertisement and Promotion of Vaping Products to Youth

We recognize vaping provisions are not explicitly identified in the scope of Alberta's current tobacco control legislation, and we share your concerns. Our government is currently conducting a review of the *Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act*, and amendments may be put forward as early as next spring. Part of the review will be about addressing the alarming rise in teen vaping. Municipalities have been invited to provide their input through a public survey or written submission. The AUMA is a key stakeholder in conducting this review and I look forward to our continued collaboration in addressing these issues.

Provincial Drug Strategy

Our government is fully committed to responding to the opioid crisis and improving mental health access for Albertans. Mr. Jason Luan has been appointed as Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to enable targeted and coordinated approaches for mental health. A commitment of \$100 million has been made for a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, along with \$40 million for an Opioid Response Strategy. A Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council has also recently been appointed to help guide and inform decisions. This council will collaborate with stakeholders to identify key actions to improve access to recovery-oriented mental health and addiction services.

Needle Debris

I understand the resolution calls for a province-wide strategy for the clean-up and disposal of used needle debris and for additional resources to be provided to municipalities to address the associated costs. The Government of Alberta provides grant funding to organizations in communities where supervised consumption services are operating or proposed, specifically for needle debris. Albertans deserve safe communities free from needle debris and we will continue to work with municipalities and law enforcement to find new ways to address this issue.

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Diagnostic Medical Imaging Guidelines

I understand the resolution calls for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) to revise its Remotely Supervised Standards so that diagnostic imaging and/or interventional radiology will be permitted to be installed within a 100 kilometre radius of Alberta's major cities.

The current standard that is of concern includes the following: "Provision of remotely supervised ultrasound (is permitted if) the diagnostic imaging facility is not within a 100 kilometre radius from the city centre of metropolitan areas of greater than 50,000 residents unless the ratio of metropolitan residents to ultrasound imaging specialists exceeds 20,000:1." The CPSA standard does not prevent communities from setting up CPSA accredited diagnostic imaging facilities or equipment at any location within the province, as long as the specific current accreditation criteria is met.

You may be aware that the CPSA is currently reviewing its remote diagnostic imaging standards to improve accessibility and to reflect technological advances in diagnostic imaging. A revision to the current Remotely Supervised Standards has been sent to stakeholders for review.

Making Children's Health Care a Priority in Alberta

Our government is committed to improving the lives of children in Alberta. We recognize that children have diverse health needs, and that specialized services are needed to support their mental and physical well-being. That is why we committed \$100 million over four years to improve mental health and addiction services throughout Alberta.

Alberta Health Services currently supports children's health and well-being outside of Edmonton and Calgary through promotion, prevention and early intervention, community clinics, school-based programming, crisis supports, day programs, as well as through various residential and hospital-based treatment. My department will continue working with AHS to understand and find new ways of delivering care to the children of Alberta's unique and underserved communities.

Thank you again and I hope this feedback is helpful.

Sincerely,



Tyler Shandro
Minister of Health