



ALBERTA  
HEALTH

*Office of the Minister  
MLA, Calgary - Acadia*



JUN 14 2021

AR 182101

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

Dear Barry Morishita:

Thank you for your letter regarding access to health care services in smaller municipalities and the integration of nurse practitioners (NPs) into Alberta's health system. I apologize for the delay in responding.

Alberta Health recognizes that NPs are highly skilled and educated professionals who play an important role in meeting the health needs of Albertans. As you know, the Primary Care Network (PCN) NP Support Program (SP) was launched in 2019 with the goal of increasing access to, or presence of, NP services in primary care and community health settings through annual grant funding to PCNs. Alberta Health continues to focus on providing Albertans with a greater choice of health care practitioners by increasing the number and scope of NPs in Alberta. It also ensures NP services are supported in PCNs by allowing NPs to have their own patient panels.

To provide more sustainable funding for the PCN NP SP, changes to the PCN 2020-2023 PCN Grant Agreement were made that decoupled per capita funding from the PCN NP SP funding. This action makes funding generated from NP patient panels accessible for NP overhead. Alberta Health continues to monitor the progress of the PCN NP SP and will undertake a program review to better understand recruitment and retention challenges for NPs in primary care settings. Recommendations from this review will be provided for my consideration.

In 2020, I extended the term of the Provincial Primary Care Network Committee (PPCNC) and five Zone PCN committees to work towards aligning and integrating health services across zones, and to scale and spread successful innovations across PCNs. In addition, I have tasked the PPCNC with providing recommendations relating to improving rural primary care, including the use of NPs and physician assistants in rural care.

The PPCNC has established a Rural Sustainability Primary Care Task Force, which includes representation from your organization, to research and develop advice on these matters. The Task Force is expected to provide its recommendations to PPCNC by March 31, 2022. The PPCNC will consider the Task Force's recommendation and provide their advice on the sustainability of primary care delivery in rural Alberta.

.../2

Barry Morishita  
Page 2

Thank you again for your letter.

Sincerely,

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

Tyler Shandro, Q.C.  
Minister of Health