

Hello everyone,

It's been a few months, but during that time the AMA Section of Addiction Medicine has been working on finalizing our core team. Thank you to everyone who has sent in nominations.

I'm very pleased to announce our new President-Elect as Dr. Rahul Mehta. He's a current internist and addiction specialist at the Royal Alexandra Hospital as part of the ARCH team. In addition to this, Dr. Tally Mogus will continue to serve the AMA as our Secretary-Treasurer, and Dr. Maddy Dearden from the Boyle McCauley will serve as our Northern Alberta Rep. Dr. Balachandra and Dr. Ayas will continue with their roles as Past President and Southern Alberta Rep respectively.

Over the last few years, it has been noted that specific physician voices were not demonstrably heard at the AMA. This included the voices of physicians who work with community agencies such as those who experience homelessness, marginalization, precarious housing, a history of corrections and our urban Indigenous groups. To provide a platform for us to advocate for these groups, we have created three new nonvoting positions, with hopes that come our next AGM, we can make them voting members. These include a vulnerable populations representative with Dr. Sarah Elliot, who works at both CUPS and the Alex in Calgary, a corrections representative with Dr. Courtney, the Medical Director of Provincial Corrections, and lastly, an Indigenous Health representative with Dr. Arianna Watts, who works closely with Indigenous populations and groups.

With the key goal of expanding our membership, we will be relying on the guidance of our three new representatives to help us reach physicians who work in these settings and to add their voice to our group.

Here is our Executive:

- President-Elect: Dr. Rahul Mehta, ARCH program Royal Alex
- Past President: Dr. Krishna Balachandra, AHS
- Secretary-Treasurer: Dr. Tally Mogus, Boyle McCauley, RAH ARCH
- Northern Alberta Rep: Dr. Maddy Dearden, Boyle McCauley
- Southern Alberta Rep: Dr. Tim Ayas, Alberta Health Services

Nonvoting positions: (to change to voting after November's annual meeting)

- Vulnerable Populations Rep: Dr. Sarah Elliot, CUPS Calgary
- Corrections Rep: Dr. Keith Courtney, Corrections Health AHS
- Indigenous Health Rep: Dr. Arianna Watts, ODP and RAH ARCH

Our team has compiled the following news and updates:

### **BILL C-22 AND DECRIMINALIZATION OF SUBSTANCES WITH DOCTORS FOR DECRIM:**

A few interesting things have happened in the last few months. The Federal Government has proposed amendments to Bill C—22. While the bill does not go far enough, it finally does demonstrate that our Federal Government does recognize that there is oppression and systemic racism in our criminal justice system. Similarly, many municipalities have been pushing forward to obtain exemptions under Section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. A group of physicians across Canada, called Doctors for Decriminalization, has recently launched. Please consider joining to advocate for decriminalization of substances at [docs4decrim@gmail.com](mailto:docs4decrim@gmail.com)

### **CHANGES TO EDMONTON'S SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION SERVICES:**

Recently the Boyle Street Community's supervised consumption has closed its doors. The George Spady fortunately, has increased its operational time to 24/7. The Boyle McCauley Health Centre will operate from 0800-1630.

### **INTRAVENOUS OPIOID AGONIST TREATMENT CLINIC:**

The iOAT program in both Edmonton and Calgary will continue as an integrated service with the existing opioid dependency programs. For the time being, no new clients will be accepted to the program however, clients currently enrolled and have not been transitioned to other forms of OAT, can continue with injectable OAT.

### **ACAMPROSATE:**

After a long absence, Acamprosate is again available for our clients. It can only be accessed as special authorization under Blue Cross and NIHB. There is still a mandate for clients to be abstinent from alcohol for at least 1 week. Naltrexone continues to be covered by both plans.

### **METHAMPHETAMINE PATHWAY OF CARE:**

Edmonton Zone PCN's ConnectMD website has recently released methamphetamine pathways for transitioning back to primary care from hospital/detox/treatment centres. There are discharge templates for these clinical settings that some organizations or clinics may find helpful in sharing with their team, in addition to resources that mental health providers and primary care providers can use in follow up visits with patients. <https://www.pcnconnectmd.com/clinical-referral-pathways/>

### **COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE:**

As we progress with phase 2 of immunizations, individuals who are experiencing homelessness and sheltered populations are now eligible for vaccinations. Other groups now eligible include those who are in corrections, as well as those who have ever received a hospital admission for mental health or substance use concerns. If you come across clients who fall into these categories, be sure to discuss vaccination options for them, and discuss the importance of vaccines especially if there is hesitancy.

### **REMOTE SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION SERVICES:**

In other news, we have two new national overdose response services. One is the National Overdose Response Service, which is a telephone-based overdose prevention line, much like a virtual supervised consumption service where if someone is using a substance alone, they can be supervised remotely by someone of lived experience. If they overdose, emergency services will be contacted and dispatched to their location. More information can be found at [www.NORS.ca](http://www.NORS.ca). One key partner to NORS, is a Vancouver Tech company called Brave and they have created a similar app-based service called BeSafe. Feel free to look it up here: <https://www.brave.coop/besafe>. Both services are available in Alberta.

### **RED DEER SHELTER SITUATION:**

Recently the Red Deer City Council voted to move their shelter from the downtown core to an industrial site far away from where most of this population congregates. This will cause significant disruption to this population. More information can be found here: <https://www.reddeeradvocate.com/news/two-month-deadline-for-relocating-red-deer-homeless-shelter-is-too-tight-says-safe-harbour/>

While the City Council has paused this move, there is a petition being circulated to ensure the shelter stays in the downtown core. Feel free to sign it here: <https://www.change.org/p/red-deer-city-council-keep-safe-harbour-s-shelter-program-temporarily-in-current-location>

### **PART TIME ADDICTION MEDICINE POSITION:**

A part time position for an addictions medicine doctor is available immediately at EHN Sandstone, a private detox, and addictions treatment facility in Calgary. One clinic (2-2.5 hr) per week with extra remuneration for on-call commitment of 1 day/week + 1 weekend/month on average. CCFP (AM) and/or CSAM/ISAM qualifications an asset. Competitive remuneration. Contact Dr. Christin Hilbert at [chilbert@ehncanada.com](mailto:chilbert@ehncanada.com)

## **ALBERTA COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS AND THE COLLABORATIVE MENTORSHIP NETWORK:**

The ACFP invites you to join their community of health providers working to improve patient outcomes around chronic pain and substance use.

The Collaborative Mentorship Network for Chronic Pain & Addiction (CMN) is a community of like-minded health care providers who want to contribute to the improvement of care for people with chronic pain and/or substance use disorders.

The CMN provides helpful resources and opportunities for peer-to-peer support. In alignment with the Alberta Pain Strategy, the CMN is a community of practice that provides resources for primary care clinicians to help them manage their patients with these complex health conditions.

### **EVENTS:**

CMN events have covered a huge range of topics such as Pregnancy and Polysubstance Use, Buprenorphine Naloxone RECAP, and sessions with PEER on low back pain and neuropathic pain. Up next, we have Dr. Vincent Lam, presenting on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. For those who cannot attend the live events, we ensure that all CMN members have access to event recordings, resources, and slides. See the [CMN Calendar](#) for a full list of events that you can attend.

### **HOW TO JOIN:**

The CMN is a free, flexible membership, available to primary health care providers. As a CMN member, you have access to a community discussion board and a resource library, accredited educational events, and the opportunity for peer-to-peer support in the form of mentorship.

Approximately 65 per cent of CMN members participate in mentorship. Members who have decided to be a mentee and/or a mentor are provided with an infrastructure to establish a trusted mentoring relationship within the community of practice. If you have experience with chronic pain and/or substance use, please consider joining the CMN as a mentor.

Check out our website to learn more and fill out a brief application: [www.cmnalberta.com](http://www.cmnalberta.com)

Our Medical Lead is Dr. Cathy Scrimshaw, a family physician in Pincher Creek. Here's her take on why you should join the CMN: [CMN Welcome video](#).

### **CONTACT THE CMN**

Have additional questions? Email: [mentorship@acfp.ca](mailto:mentorship@acfp.ca)

Feel free to reach out to myself if you would like to add anything to our next newsletter.

Hope you're all staying well and safe,

Dr. Monty Ghosh on behalf of the AMA Section of Addiction Medicine Executive.