



ALBERTA
HEALTH

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

AR 226928

December 13, 2024

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 letter regarding Resolution B14, Attraction and Retention Strategy for Rural Health Care Professionals.

Our government understands the important role physicians and other health care professionals play in helping Albertans manage their health. That is why we are working closely with the Alberta Medical Association, physicians, Alberta Health Services (AHS), and other stakeholders to develop solutions that build a stronger, more resilient health care system. This includes expanding Alberta's medical schools to train over 100 additional physicians per year. A key aspect of this initiative is a partnership with the University of Lethbridge and Northwestern Polytechnic to develop regional training centres in Lethbridge and Grande Prairie that will act as hubs for surrounding communities. The training centres will include interprofessional teaching clinics and give medical students the ability to complete most of their education outside of metropolitan regions. This will benefit all rural communities, as evidence shows that students who learn in rural areas tend to practise in rural areas.

Additionally, we are improving registration policies to help more international medical graduates (IMGs) enter the workforce sooner. The College of Physicians and Surgeons has streamlined the licensure process for IMGs whose education and training are comparable to the Canadian standard. It also recently [expanded the list](#) of organizations that can sponsor IMGs for practice readiness assessments. This means that private medical clinics, businesses, municipalities, and other legally recognized entities can apply to sponsor IMGs.

While Alberta does not have specific student loan repayment programs for health care professionals, it does offer financial incentives that support the attraction of health care professionals to rural communities. As part of the collective agreements between AHS, Covenant Health, and unions, the [Rural Capacity Investment Fund](#) supports recruitment, retention, and relocation initiatives that will grow capacity and increase the number of clinical staff at rural sites across Alberta. The funds also support education and professional development of rural health care employees.

.../2

Tyler Gandam
Page 2

Further, the [Rural Remote Northern Program](#) compensates physicians who practise in underserved areas in Alberta while AHS offers recruitment incentives of up to \$100,000 for physicians who sign a return-of-service agreement of at least four years to fill for critical, in-demand positions.

Thank you again for writing. I appreciate the partnership of Alberta Municipalities as we continue working to achieve Albertans' priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adriana LaGrange', with a stylized, cursive script.

Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Health