

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REPORT CARD ON THE STATUS OF THE TRILATERAL MASTER AGREEMENT

Alberta Health and Wellness, the Alberta Medical Association and Alberta's Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) are reporting on the status of the landmark 2003-2011 trilateral master agreement between the three parties. The first full year of implementation has been driven by developing working relationships and numerous important accomplishments and activities. Much has been achieved and much remains to be done.

At the direction of the Master Committee (Deputy Minister, Alberta Health and Wellness; Executive Director, Alberta Medical Association; CEO representing the RHAs), a 19-page Report Card on the Status of the Trilateral Master Agreement has been released. The report is available online at: <http://www.health.gov.ab.ca/professionals/index.html#Fees>.

The master agreement creates an environment for positive change in Alberta's health care system through collaboration and cooperation. For example, one of the most important components of the master agreement is the Primary Care Initiative Agreement – an Alberta-grown, innovative approach to delivering primary care services in partnerships between regional health authorities and local physicians. Such ingenuity, founded on cooperation, is the cornerstone of the master agreement, appearing in all components such as the Physician Services Agreement, Physician On-Call Programs Agreement and the Physician Office System Program Agreement.

PRIMARY CARE INITIATIVE AGREEMENT

Promoting a team approach to providing comprehensive, integrated primary care services to patients 24/7/365, RHAs and groups of local physicians create partnerships to deliver a basket of primary care services in the way that best suits the patients who live in their regions. Alberta's first ever Primary Care Network launched in May. Others are being finalized and more will be developed in the year ahead, renewing and improving the way thousands of Albertans receive their primary care.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Launched first Primary Care Network (Edmonton Southside)
- Three other networks being finalized, six nearing completion
- Established policies, processes and communication mechanisms
- Identified 10 other groups to develop Primary Care Networks in Round Two

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Second call for letters of intent
- Approving business plans
- Monitoring and evaluating original Primary Care Networks
- Developing policies on how primary care will link with specialist services, how patients will enroll with the networks, etc.

PHYSICIAN SERVICES AGREEMENT

Managing the budget for physician services, keeping current the schedule of fees and conditions of payment, updating the fee schedule to improve patient access and include new medical procedures are only some of the major tasks addressed under the Physician Services Agreement.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Implemented fee increases for April 2004, October 2004
- Made innovative fee schedule changes to improve access and encourage multi-disciplinary care
- Worked to modernize the (fee) Schedule of Medical Benefits

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Developing more alternate relationship plans, i.e., payment plans not based on fee-for-service
- Using the fee schedule to support primary care renewal



Alberta's
Regional Health
Authorities

PHYSICIAN ON-CALL PROGRAMS AGREEMENT

As well as regular care of patients provided every day by physicians in RHA facilities, RHAs need to have physicians available (on-call) to cover patient care that may be required in specific RHA programs.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Reviewed all on-call programs and revised eligibility requirements
- Reviewed requests for new programs and program appeals
- Improved equity in on-call rates
- Increased efficiency in funding transfers to RHAs and physicians

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Continuing to improve equity among programs
- Ongoing review of design, eligibility criteria, payment rates and new programs
- Evaluation of all programs
- Aligning current on-call program criteria with new requirements

PHYSICIAN OFFICE SYSTEM PROGRAM AGREEMENT

POSP provides support for Alberta's physicians as they expand the use of computerization to improve patient care. These physician office computer systems are also a critical component of Alberta's electronic health record initiative.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Enrolled 810 physicians (in addition to 1,384 existing from 2001-03)
- Worked to integrate provincial and RHA electronic health records with physician offices
- Worked to deliver lab, diagnostic imaging and other information to physician office systems
- Delivered change management services

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Making electronic health records available to all physicians
- Evaluating viability of funding beyond the original 48-month term
- Coordinating change management with Primary Care Initiative and Toward Optimized Practice

MASTER AGREEMENT

The Master Committee and Secretariat are responsible for overall implementation of the master agreement, including the work of the four strategic physician agreements above.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Established six trilateral committees with a consensus decision-making process and conflict-of-interest guidelines
- All RHAs reported on existing physician agreements and a template was developed for reporting new agreements
- 2003-04 Master Physician Budget was balanced

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Reviewing and monitoring physician agreements
- Assessing opportunities to expand the scope of the agreement
- Developing alternate relationship plans
- Continuing progress in agreement implementation



Alberta's
Regional Health
Authorities

together for patient care