

Dear Our Valued Bowmont Patients

Unfortunately, the Government has made changes that affect our ability to provide the same level of care as we have in the past. We treasure the relationships we have built with you and we don't make changes easily, but we have to make changes in order to sustain our practice. Be rest assured that patient care remains our highest priority. Please help us cope with these challenging times by reviewing the following changes to our policies:

- **Routine visits will be booked for 10 minutes. Unless you and your doctor agree on booking a longer visit in advance, or you're experiencing an emergency, a basic visit can last no longer than 10 minutes.**
- **Bring your list of concerns to your doctor and together we can prioritize them. We will address the most important concerns first so that we have adequate time to address issues adequately. You may have to book multiple visits on different days to address each of your concerns.**
- **Appointments will be needed in order to review all results; this may include normal results. This is best practice.**
- **Prescription refills require a visit to the office.**
- **All patients will be required to pay \$150 for Driver's Medicals (including patient's over 75).**
- **We will no longer be able to provide annual written care plans to complex patients to coordinate their multiple health issues.**
- **There will be a charge for completing all insurance forms, notes and letters.**
- **We may be unable to accommodate late arrivals – please call if unforeseen circumstances arise and we can see if we can accommodate you that day. We may have to rebook you at another time.**
- **Expect longer wait times in ER and for CTs, MRIs and specialist visits. Please check with your doctor for up to date wait time estimates.**

We ask for your support during these challenging times. Please know that we are, and will continue, advocating for you.

If you are not pleased with the above changes to your health services, we urge you to contact your government representatives and express your concerns: Health Minister Tyler Shandro (calgary.acadia@assembly.ab.ca), Premier Jason Kenney (premier@gov.ab.ca). Let them know that their attack on family doctors and your medical home is not acceptable.

We feel compelled to speak out against the recent cuts announced by Health Minister Shandro as they will seriously jeopardize the healthcare system and threaten the safety of our patients.

We see firsthand every day that the downturn in Alberta's economy has resulted in hardship for so many families. We understand that cuts are necessary.

In our last round of negotiations with the government, physicians voluntarily found millions of dollars of savings. When negotiations began again in November 2019, Alberta doctors proposed changes that would have saved further millions each year while working on plans for additional savings while minimizing the impact on our patients. We then found out through the media that Minister Shandro had terminated negotiations, torn up our existing contract and unilaterally imposed drastic changes which mainly target family doctors.

As family doctors, we treasure the long-term relationships that we have built with our patients over the years. Those relationships take time to build. Practicing safe, comprehensive and thorough medicine takes time. Until now, the government has compensated us for spending more time with our patients. Minister Shandro's cuts effectively disincentivize physicians from spending more than 10 minutes with their patients. This will have a deleterious effect on all patients, however, complex patients, those with multiple medical issues, and the elderly will disproportionately suffer.

The changes proposed by Minister Shandro will mainly affect family doctors who also have to pay the costs of running an office such as a lease, staff, equipment and utilities. If we were to continue the same level of care, we would not be able to pay for our overhead and sustain our ability to practice. Many of us would likely need to seek other job opportunities. This all places family physicians in the very difficult position of having to choose between running a financially viable office or giving their patients the time that they need and deserve.

We worry that the compassionate medical home and doctor-patient relationship we've fostered with you will suffer with Health Minister Shandro's unprecedented cuts to family medicine. We treasure the relationships that we have built with our patients over the years, and we do not make these changes willingly or easily. Please rest assured that patient care remains our highest priority.

Thank you for continuing to trust us and for letting us serve you.

Your Bowmont Team