



Premier of Alberta

Office of the Premier, 307 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6 Canada

November 14, 2022

The Honourable Jason Copping
Minister of Health
Government of Alberta

Dear Minister Copping,

I want to thank you for your service to Albertans, and for your continued service as Minister of Health.

Our Cabinet faces an extraordinary task: to deliver on a clear and bold mandate in a limited period of time. Albertans are counting on us and they rightfully expect their government to address the challenges they are facing with our full attention and action.

First, I ask you to keep the inflation and affordability crisis top of mind. Affordability is the primary challenge facing Albertans today and as a government we will ensure that Alberta families are able to manage through this storm by taking decisive action in the coming weeks and months.

Second, our cabinet must continue to remain laser-focussed on job-creation and strengthening Alberta's economy. No matter what the industry, we must continue the good work of diversifying our economy through job-creation to ensure all Albertans and their families can prosper.

Third, the challenges facing our healthcare system mean Albertans aren't getting the necessary care they need when and where they need it. We will ensure all areas of the province receive prompt and efficient ambulance service. Our government will also make haste to bring substantive improvements to emergency room services and clear surgical backlogs.

Finally, I expect our Cabinet to remain united and determined in the face of a federal government that no longer treats its partners in Confederation as equals. We must proactively protect Albertans from continued federal government overreach, including hostile economic policies that landlock our provincial resources, that chase billions in investment and thousands of jobs from our Province and that are detrimental to the short and long-term prosperity of Albertans.

While we may face challenges, I nonetheless have full confidence that our government can and will address these matters to secure a province that remains a healthy haven for those seeking economic opportunity and freedom.

Under your leadership as Minister of Health, I expect you to work closely with your Cabinet and Caucus colleagues and the public service through the Committee, Cabinet, and legislative processes to deliver on commitments to support Albertans, including:

- Develop a series of reforms to the healthcare system that restore decision making authority to the local level, incentivize regional innovation and competition to provide increased medical services and surgeries, and that attracts health care professionals domestically and internationally.
- Assess the effectiveness of our health care institutions including the HQCA and AHS and develop a plan to improve health care delivery and health care outcomes while managing costs. This includes mechanisms to support local decision making within AHS and supporting our frontline health care workers.
- Take immediate tangible steps to have AHS improve EMS response times, decrease surgical backlogs and cut emergency room wait times.
- Address health care staffing challenges, particularly in rural areas, through improving health workforce planning, evaluating retention policies, leveraging the scope of allied health professionals, streamlining immigration and certification processes, and further increasing the number of training seats for health care professionals in Alberta. This includes fully implementing the recently negotiated AMA agreement.
- Support primary care as the foundation of our health care system through assessing alternative models of care and leveraging all health care professionals. This includes continuing the work of Modernizing Alberta's Primary Care System initiative, assessing alternative compensation models for family physicians and nurse practitioners, improving the management of chronic disease and increasing the number of Albertans attached to a medical home.
- Improve provision of care to seniors through implementing recommendations coming out of the Facility-Based Continuing Care Review and the Advancing Palliative and End-of-life Care in Alberta report. This includes continuing to add continuing care congregate spaces as well as supporting seniors to stay in their homes longer with additional supports and focus on providing appropriate home care.
- Work with municipalities, doctors and allied health providers to identify strategies to attract and retain health care workers to rural Alberta.
- With the Minister of Technology and Innovation as lead, work to establish Health Spending Accounts, assess the interfunctionality of the 1300 or more IT systems currently in use in health (as identified in the 2017 Auditor General report), as well as pilot existing software apps that can be used to streamline ER waiting times and more effectively manage shift schedules.
- Establish a Task Force of medical professionals under the Alberta Health Quality Council to conduct a data review of the last several years of health information with a view to offering recommendations on how to better manage a future pandemic.
- Work with Parliamentary Secretary for EMS Reform RJ Sigurdson to address EMS challenges.

- Work with the Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health Tany Yao to address rural health challenges such as access and health care professionals.

Your Deputy Minister and other senior officials in your ministry will support our priorities with the highest standard of professionalism and integrity. Alberta's public service will provide you with non-partisan advice and loyal implementation of your mandate. As I mentioned, our ability to support Albertans in the coming months will require you to work respectfully with your officials, and often up against tight deadlines.

As such, I expect all Ministers and their staff will conduct themselves in all matters with the highest standards of integrity and ethical behaviour. I expect you to be aware of and to be fully compliant with Alberta's *Conflicts of Interest Act*, and that all Ministers protect the significant trust that Albertans have placed in our government.

We will come through this difficult and challenging period in Alberta's history, so let us work together to fulfill and exceed our mandate on behalf of the good people of this great province. I am honoured to be working with you to build a stronger and more prosperous Alberta.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Danielle Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Danielle Smith
Premier of Alberta