



Premier of Alberta

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

July 18, 2023

The Honourable Adriana LaGrange  
Minister of Health

Dear Minister:

I want to thank you for your service to this government and congratulate you on your new role as Minister of Health.

Our Cabinet is made up of talented, diverse, and experienced leaders and I am proud to share with you our responsibility to fulfill the mandate given to us by Albertans. We all love this beautiful province and want the best for our families and our future. Over the next four years, we will take clear and decisive action to grow and diversify our economy while ensuring our health, education and other core social programs are world class.

I have full confidence that our team will build on our solid foundation of stability, informed decision-making, and good governance to improve the lives of Albertans and help our province realize its potential.

A primary focus of our government over the next four years will be to ensure Albertans have improved access to world-class health care when and where they need it. To accomplish this task, you will need to demonstrate creativity, responsiveness to public concerns, and a willingness to reform the management and structure of Alberta Health Services to better decentralize decision-making and resources to the front lines and local communities. We need to foster an environment within AHS and the entire health community that welcomes innovation and incentivizes the best patient care.

It is also critical that these objectives be accomplished within the pillars of the *Canada Health Act* and, importantly, in alignment with our government's Public Health Care Guarantee that no Albertan will ever have to pay out-of-pocket to see their doctor or receive a needed medical treatment.

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 our platform commitments to support Albertans, including:

- Investing \$6 million to add five more conditions to the Alberta Newborn Screening Program: congenital cytomegalovirus, argininosuccinic aciduria, guanidinoacetate methyltransferase deficiency, mucopolysaccharidosis type 1, and 3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl-CoA lyase.
- Adding more obstetrics doctors for communities in need, including Lethbridge and Fort McMurray.



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- Investing approximately \$10 million to develop and implement a province-wide Midwifery Strategy.
- Providing the Alberta Women's Health Foundation Legacy Grant – a one-time \$10-million investment to support women-focused research, advocacy, and care.

In addition, I expect you to support the delivery of these further initiatives to strengthen our province's health care system, including:

- Resolving the unacceptable lab services delay challenge so that lab service access is timely across all areas of the province.
- Continuing to improve emergency medical services response times, decrease surgical backlogs, and cut emergency room wait times.
- Continuing to implement the recommendations from the Alberta EMS Provincial Advisory Committee and the PricewaterhouseCoopers EMS Dispatch Review to ensure EMS dispatch is being conducted in a way that provides the highest levels of service to Albertans in every part of the province, with special consideration for addressing local resources, challenges and concerns.
- Supporting primary care as the foundation of our health care system by assessing alternative models of care and leveraging all health care professionals. This includes continuing the work of the Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health 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.
- Providing better care to seniors by implementing recommendations from the Facility-Based Continuing Care Review and the Advancing Palliative and End-of-life Care in Alberta report. This includes ongoing work to add continuing care congregate spaces and to help seniors stay in their homes longer with additional supports and appropriate home care.
- Developing a series of reforms to the health care system that enhance local decision-making authority, improve health care services for all Albertans, and create a more collaborative working environment for our health care workers by incentivizing regional innovation and increasing our ability to attract and retain the health care workers we need.
- Working to address rural health challenges such as access to health care professionals.
- Working with municipalities, post-secondary institutions, doctors, and allied health providers to identify strategies to attract and retain health care workers to rural Alberta.



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- Collaborating with the Minister of Technology and Innovation to perform an independent review of the effectiveness of the information technology systems used throughout Alberta's health system and provide recommendations on how to strengthen Alberta's health-care system through the use of technology.
- Working with the Minister of Advanced Education, who is the lead, to develop streamlined automated credentialing for front-line health care workers, doctors, nurses, and paramedics.
- Addressing health care staffing challenges, particularly in rural areas, by:
  - Improving health workforce planning.
  - Evaluating retention policies.
  - Leveraging the scope of allied health professionals.
  - Working with the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism, who is lead, to streamline immigration and certification processes.
  - Increasing the number of training seats for health care professionals in Alberta.
  - Fully implementing the recently negotiated Alberta Medical Association agreement.
- Working closely with the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction, who is the lead, to ensure that recovery from mental health and addiction and increasing the recovery capital of Albertans is a guiding policy in modernizing Alberta's primary health care system.
- Working with the Minister of Technology and Innovation, who is lead, to explore the feasibility of creating an Alberta health spending account to support improved health outcomes for Albertans.
- Working with the Minister of Justice, who is the lead, to assess the proposed federal medical assistance in dying legislation amendments that would include those with mental health conditions and recommend Alberta's regulation of the profession regarding this proposed legislation.
- Designing a health ministry-specific job-attraction strategy that raises awareness for young Albertans (aged 16 to 24) and adults changing careers about the skilled trades and professions available in each economic sector, including pathways for education, apprenticeship, and training.

I direct you to work closely with the public service, including your Deputy Minister and other senior officials in your ministry, to support the priorities outlined in this letter with the highest standard of professionalism, integrity, and creativity.



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I also expect you to regularly and proactively reach out to all ministry-related stakeholders in order to take feedback and identify potential solutions on issues of importance to them, including finding ways our government can reduce burdensome and unnecessary red tape and barriers that are hurting their members' ability to grow the economy and improve quality of life for the Albertans they serve.

Together with you and our Caucus and Cabinet colleagues, I look forward to serving all Albertans to ensure our province remains one of the best places on earth to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Smith".

Danielle Smith  
Premier of Alberta