

As part of the Alberta Health Services Boards' ongoing commitment to community engagement, openness and transparency, members of the public, in attendance at the Public Board meetings, are invited to submit questions to the Board. A direct response will be provided and the question and response will also be posted on the AHS website prior to the next Public Board meeting. Questions of the Board can also be submitted through the Board Office at AHSB.admin@albertahealthservices.ca

Q: I have been waiting for over a year for a copy of Physician Privileges for the Endoscopists in Fort McMurray. I understand there should be a book containing this information which is approved by the Medical Director and is general knowledge for all healthcare providers. How are we to know what procedures are approved, safe, qualified, etc, if we don't have this information?

A: With respect to specifics details about the Medical Staff Appointment and Clinical Privileges granted to individual AHS physicians and other Practitioners, such information can be made available to AHS staff and indeed the public (upon request). However, there is no "book" or unified master record for all physicians at this time. Rather, the details for each individual Practitioner are carefully defined in individual records on each physician's file. Currently, access to such information is available through each North Zone's Medical Affairs Office and the Zone Medical Director.

While we do have overall summaries and numbers for each facility and Zone, we are only now considering a composite electronic repository of all individual grants of privileges that would include all relevant details.

With respect to what procedures are approved and safe, AHS does determine, through consultation with operational and clinical leaders, what treatments and procedures are safe, effective, affordable and should be offered to our patients.

In terms of whether an individual physician is granted privileges to perform a particular procedure, there is a carefully delineated approach process that considers the Practitioner's training, past experience with the procedure, and recent performance of the procedure.

A final word of "caution". The amount of detail, i.e. whether a specific procedure is listed or separately identified in a physician's record of Clinical Privileges depends on his/her qualifications.

Questions from the Public

For example, a gastroenterologist who is certified as having successfully completed gastroenterology training (in an approved program) by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada would not have endoscopy listed specifically in his/her record of privileges as the certification of training assures that he/she is qualified to perform endoscopy which is considered an essential requisite of gastroenterology certification.

On the other hand, a family physician or general internist who wishes to perform endoscopy would need additional training as endoscopy is not part of the requisite and standard training to be a family physician or general internist. In this setting, the record of privileges should specifically indicate endoscopy as being approved.