

## In this Issue

About Us  
Message from  
the CMO  
Pandemic  
Wellness  
November  
Artist's Corner  
Upcoming  
events  
Sept/Oct  
Resources

## About Us

Welcome to *MD Culture Shift*, an Alberta Health Services (AHS) publication created *by* physicians *for* physicians through the Physician Diversity, Wellness, and Leadership Development portfolio.

The portfolio is focused on providing physician leaders with the knowledge, skills, and tools to foster a local team culture that models our organizational values and just culture principles, enhances the delivery of safe, quality care, and values wellness and diversity.

This publication shares insightful and valuable information in the areas of wellness, diversity, leadership development and showcases the great work being done throughout the province supporting a shift in the culture of medicine.

To see previous editions, please visit [ahs.ca/mdwellness](https://ahs.ca/mdwellness).

**Open using your AHS profile to be able to access full content via embedded links.**

## Message from the CMO

### Fourth Wave

We recognize the incredible work, dedication, professionalism and compassion that you have shown and continue to show as we work to treat patients and support the health of Albertans.

It is worth taking time to reflect on how we are feeling and how we are managing under stress. We need to attend to our own health and well-being to ensure that we can continue to function as individuals, in our families, in our communities, and as a team at work. Supporting each other through listening and checking in is important.

We know you continue to come to work every day to do your best for the people that we serve. The work that you do is critical to the health and well-being of Albertans.

As we implemented strategies to increase ICU capacity during the fourth wave of the pandemic, unfortunately this resulted in a reduction in surgical and other important clinical activity. Making these difficult decisions during that time, and as we continue to respond to the pandemic is deeply concerning and is causing moral distress.

Throughout the pandemic, physicians have been facing difficult decisions, every day. The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has [an article](#) helping physicians identify when they may be experiencing moral distress and offers resources for support. We encourage you to read this and share it with your colleagues.



 Alberta Health Services  
Healthy Albertans.  
Healthy Communities.  
Together.



During this difficult time, connect with friends, colleagues and loved ones. If you are struggling and feel you need more support, there are resources available through the [Physician & Family Support Program \(PFSP\)](#).

I (Francois), thank you for your continued hard work, dedication, resilience and ongoing commitment to provide the highest-quality of care to each and every one of your patients. You are making a difference to Albertans every day, and you continue to do it, to show up for Albertans and for your colleagues. I value and appreciate you.

Please know that I am here for you. I welcome any feedback by email to [cmo@ahs.ca](mailto:cmo@ahs.ca) and am also willing to chat with you.

**Dr. Francois Belanger**  
Chief Medical Officer and Vice President, Quality

## Pandemic wellness

### PFSP – New Offerings

PFSP continues to offer services on an **individual basis** by calling the assistance line at 1-877-767-4637. Two additional options are now available to support physicians struggling with moral distress:

1. An **educational session** of approximately 60 min in length, offered through Well Doc Alberta. Requests for an educational session are submitted by the physician leader via email to [welldocalberta@ucalgary.ca](mailto:welldocalberta@ucalgary.ca).
2. **Small group support sessions** with a qualified therapist. A group would consist of 6 to 12 physicians (for example, from the same team or department) with a qualified therapist. Sessions could be virtual or in-person. Physician leaders interested in this option for their teams should call the PFSP assistance line at 1-877-767-4637 for further discussion.

## CMA Launches National Physician Health Survey

The CMA has launched the National Physician Health Survey, last conducted in 2018. By taking part in the survey and sharing your experiences, you will help the CMA, and other stakeholders, identify the individual- and system-level changes needed to better support physicians, create a healthier medical culture and guide the country's post-pandemic recovery. [Complete this survey now.](#)

Survey closes Nov.15, 2021.

## CMA Pandemic Wellness Toolkit

The pandemic has taken a toll on the emotional and physical well-being of physicians, medical learners and health care workers. Many have had to cope with an increase or exacerbation of anxiety, burnout or other health challenges related to increasingly difficult workplace conditions.

### PANDEMIC WELLNESS TOOLKIT



This [Pandemic Wellness Toolkit](#) includes proven wellness services and resources to support you at this stage of the pandemic.

## November 20 -Transgender Day of Remembrance

### Creating Safety and Inclusion for Transgender People

In recognition of Transgender Day of Remembrance, we bring awareness to the hate, discrimination, violence transgender people experience daily and how stigma and discrimination lead to negative health outcomes experienced by transgender people. We challenge you to honor this day with action. *What is one action YOU will take to create a safer and more welcoming space for transgender and non-binary people at AHS?"*

#### Bringing awareness to the social context for transgender people in Canada (Bauer, 2015)

- 13% have been fired for being trans (+15% more fired but not sure why)
- Though 44% of trans people have post-secondary/or graduate degree, medium income is \$15,000/year (Bauer, 2012)
- 20% have been physically or sexually assaulted for being trans, 34% have been verbally threatened or harassed but not assaulted
- 60% have avoided public spaces for fear of harassment, 57% avoided public washrooms
- 50% have depressive symptoms consistent with clinical depression, 43% of trans people have attempted death by suicide (10% within past year)

#### Trans Pulse Canada Report (2020)

- 45% report having at least 1 unmet healthcare need
- 12% avoided going to the ER in the past, despite needing care
- Trans (16%) and non-binary (26%) had experienced physical and sexual assault
- 64% avoid at least 3 or more 14 identified public spaces for fear of being harassed or outed, only 16% do not avoid such places

#### What can you do?

##### Hear the stories of Transgender People

- Marni Panas, Program Manager, AHS Diversity & Inclusion, has contributed to legislation and policy protecting human rights for individuals at the provincial and federal levels in Canada. She has also been invited to share her experiences and expertise on cultural safety for diverse health care providers, patients and their families locally, nationally and internationally. Watch Marni's [TedX talk](#).
- [Transgender Lives: Your Stories](#) is an interactive campaign created by *The New York Times* to allow transgender people to tell their own stories in their own words.

##### Clinical resources to improve the LGBT2SQ healthcare experience and outcomes

- [Rainbow Health Ontario](#) creates opportunities for the healthcare system to better serve LGBT2SQ communities.
- [Trans Care BC](#) supports the delivery of equitable and accessible care, surgical planning, and peer and community support for trans people across the province.

##### AHS Sex and Gender minorities (LGBTQ2S) Resources

- [Guide to Creating Safe & Welcoming Places for Sexual & Gender Diverse \(LGBTQ\\*\) People](#)
- Webinar: [Improving the Experience for Sexual and Gender Diverse \(LGBTQ\) People](#)
- [LGBTQ2S+ Alberta Health Services education video](#)
- [LGBTQ2S+ / Sexual and Gender Diversity](#)
- [LGBTQ2S+ Together for your Health poster](#)
- [Transgender Guidelines](#)

## November 25 - International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women

### Physicians and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)



The stress of confinement, financial uncertainty, attitudes about gender roles and a desire for control during disasters increases the risk of intimate partner violence (IPV). During this pandemic, Alberta IPV crisis lines have seen a 30–50 per cent increase in calls.

Physicians are not immune to Intimate Partner Violence. In 2019, Dr. Elana Fric, a family physician in Toronto was murdered by her husband two days after filing for divorce. In 2020, Dr. Jennifer Kagan lost her daughter Keira when her father took both their lives amidst a custody dispute.

Sadly, there are many barriers for physicians experiencing IPV to seek help.

What you can do:

- Talk openly about IPV on your team. Foster a culture that allows those who come forward to maintain their dignity, privacy, and ability to reach their professional goals while going through this difficult time.
- Know the hand signal for violence at home. Review our Physician Wellness [infographic on Intimate Partner Violence](#) that includes supports available in Alberta.
- Learn more: Watch Dr. Imogen Coe's [Equity in Medicine talk](#) on gender-based violence in Science and Medicine.

“

Where does an admission of an abusive relationship fit into the narrative of the successful and intelligent woman, especially in a cohort that is self-critical and high-achieving?

~ Dr. Ester Choo, blog post *FeminEM*

”

#### Artist's Corner

### Poet – Dr. Muriel Solomon

Dr. Muriel Solomon rediscovered her love of the written word during the isolation of the pandemic. She shared this poem in our Physician Wellness Zoom room where participants shared how creativity has supported their mental health through the pandemic.

## The Bruise ~ Dr. Muriel Solomon

I looked at her, she looked back at me  
dressed in white and all my finery  
It seemed, I mocked her pain,  
her black eye, her apathy.

She looked at me with vacant eyes.  
I looked at her and tried to say  
words of comfort and tried to share  
her pain.

For I was here and she was there.  
Did she know that I did care?  
Who did this to you  
gave your eye such blackened hue?

Took your spirit  
and squeezed it tight  
So that nothing remained,  
no bright light.

Broke your bones and smashed your head  
Gave you a baby  
When you were almost dead  
I look at you, you look back at me  
Does this go on till eternity?

Inspiration for this poem: Dr. Muriel Solomon was in Makaha, just outside of Honolulu, just before Easter. She was going to miss the chance to sing for the Easter Service. Graciously, the Choir mistress at the local Makaha church accepted her to join. Her first evening, at choir practice, she turned around and saw a woman at the back of the church, holding a baby in her arms. She looked so listless with her left eye black and blue. Muriel kept turning around and looking at her and each time she would look back at her she felt a longing, *"I longed to talk to her, touch her, soothe her in some way. I've never forgotten her."*

## Upcoming Events

### NEW - AHS MD Culture Shift Community of Practice

The first session will be focused on an introduction to the portfolio of diversity, wellness and leadership development with an introduction to trauma informed leadership. This session will include interactive co-design to guide future topics.

- Nov. 24. 7 - 8:30 p.m.
- [Zoom Meeting](#)
- Passcode: 603079

## CMA Wellness Connection

- [Mindful Parenting - Getting Home Life Organized](#): Nov. 9, 12 p.m.
- [Compassion Rounds - Blue Zones](#): Nov. 11, 7 a.m.
- [Preventing and Overcoming Burnout - Bringing Back Social Connection](#): Nov. 18, 12 p.m.

## University of Calgary COVID Corner

Mental health in the Pandemic: Early Detection and Intervention.

- Nov. 10, 7 - 9 p.m.
- More information [here](#).

## October in review

### Healthy Workplace Month

In May 2019, the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) Board of Directors launched an initiative towards Healthy Working Environments. [Learn more about this initiative](#) including the Healthy Workplace framework. Additionally, AHS tools that support a healthy workplace can be found on the [Respectful Workplaces Insite page](#).

### Disability Awareness Month

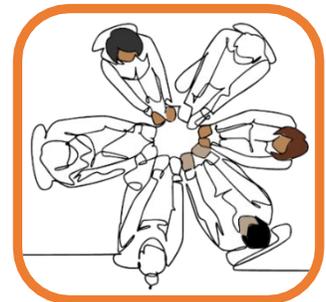
To celebrate Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM), the following sessions were held to increase awareness of inclusive hiring practices and share diverse perspectives from AHS staff:

- **Introduction to Diversity and Inclusive Hiring.** The focus of this session is to create awareness of the importance of inclusive hiring, the reasons why employers should do it and how it can be done. We discuss some of the pitfalls and challenges employers and companies may face and partnering and working with supported employment agencies. View the [transcript](#) or [recording](#) of this session.
- **Panel discussion.** Listen to stories from diverse perspectives; hear from those who have positively embraced inclusive hiring. Hear their lived experience with inclusive hiring in their practice and from those in industry. View the [transcript](#) or [recording](#) of this session.

## September in review

### National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Thank you to the knowledge keepers who shared their stories and wisdom so generously. This excerpt from Randal Bell, Senior Advisor- Indigenous Populations, AHS, challenges us to reflect on our role in Indigenous reconciliation as care providers:



#### Indigenous Reconciliation and YOU

Please understand that YOU have an important role to play in Indigenous reconciliation...

- You can help others understand the role of indigenous trauma and the importance of trauma informed care
- You can help others understand the role of social determinants of Indigenous health
- You can stand up and speak out against racism wherever and whenever you see it
- You can look for opportunities to decolonize health services for Indigenous patients
- You can help build Indigenous trust in AHS, so Indigenous people can get the help they need

For those who missed the event, we share the recordings that are now available:

#### [Honoring and acknowledging the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

MC: Marty Landrie, Executive Director, AHS Indigenous Wellness Core. Opening Prayer and teachings from Elder Emil Durocher, remarks from AHS Leadership and teachings from the Indigenous Wellness Core. Elder and Survivor Kerrie Moore shares her experiences from residential school.

## Land Acknowledgements

Jamie Harmon, Indigenous Cultural Competency Education Team.

Inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Land Acknowledgements are a stepping-stone in the reconciliation process. This [presentation](#) provides a look at Land Acknowledgements through an Indigenous lens.

## National Day of Truth & Reconciliation Teachings

Elder Casey Eaglespeaker, Chair of the Wisdom Council  
Elder Casey shares his experiences in residential school that he attended from the age of four. This is a very powerful presentation that may trigger an emotional response in many. Please reach out for support if you need to.

*The Hope for Wellness Helpline is available 24-hours a day at 1-855-242-3310.*



## Reconciliation: Decolonizing Health Services

Randal Bell, Senior Advisor, Indigenous Populations

Through research and personal experience, Randal presents a linear sequence of trauma that brought us to the current state of the Indigenous health crisis. Randal speaks to the difference between equity and equality in health services and the critical need for individual and systemic change. Randal concludes by presenting a pathway to decolonizing health service through trust, mutual understanding, partnership and respect.

## Allyship = Action

Dr. Esther Tailfeathers Medical Director, AHS Indigenous Wellness Core presents a picture of Indigenous health in the province, discuss systemic racism and how allies can help by working together to bring about change. You'll learn what an ally is and what allies can do to contribute to anti-racism in Alberta.

[Conversation with filmmaker Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers](#) to discuss her film, *Kimmapiitssini - The Meaning of Empathy*, which examines the change brought by community members with substance-use disorder, first responders and medical professionals as they strive for harm reduction in Kainai First Nation. Watch the [trailer](#).

## Resources

### Well Doc AB

#### **Being Human: Thoughts on Humanity in Medicine with Dr. Jane Lemaire (podcast)**

In the latest [Well Doc Alberta Physician Wellness Podcast episode](#), Dr. Jane Lemaire discusses humanity in medicine. The 13 min episode explores what humanity means and how it relates to the practice of medicine, and why ensuring the integration of humanity in medicine is important for patients, physicians, and the health-care system. Search for the podcast on your favourite streaming platform, or listen to the episode [here](#).

#### **Physician Peer Support Team Development and Training**

Well Doc Alberta collaborates with physician groups to develop and train formal physician-to-physician peer support teams. Teams trained through Well Doc Alberta are invited to be members of the Well Doc Alberta Peer Support Team Network, which offers ongoing training events to augment peer supporter skills and debriefing opportunities to help sustain the peer support teams.

Well Doc Alberta

Shaping the future of physician wellness, together

## Physician Peer Support Team Training

Designed for physician groups who want to develop a formalized peer support team (e.g., Divisions, Departments, community physicians, rural physicians)

### Three Step Process

1. INITIAL CONSULTATION
2. HOW TO DEVELOP A PEER SUPPORT TEAM INFORMATION SESSION WITH GROUP LEADERSHIP (1 HOUR)
3. FORMAL PEER SUPPORT TEAM TRAINING WORKSHOP (4.5 HOURS)

Contact us to get started: [welldocalberta@ucalgary.ca](mailto:welldocalberta@ucalgary.ca)



[Well Doc Alberta.](#)

## Doctor of the Week Call for Nominations

Do you know a physician who has gone above and beyond during the pandemic to shape and drive improvements for patients? Perhaps a physician colleague has gone out of their way to help support others during a difficult day? If you know someone who you feel should be recognized, please email [CMO@ahs.ca](mailto:CMO@ahs.ca) with your suggestion, and a brief description of why.



### Well Doc AB

Well Doc Alberta offers resources and education to support Physician Wellness, including Physician Peer Support Training for physician groups, and a Community Bulletin Board to promote physician wellness events and research.



### Physician & Family Support Program

1-877-SOS-4MDS (767-4637)  
International: 403-930-0529 (you may call collect)  
CONFIDENTIAL 24 Hours a Day/7 Days a Week/365 Days a Year