



Memorandum

Ministry of Health
Primary Care Division

COVID Response & Health
Emergency Management Division

Health Sector Workforce and
Beneficiary Services Division

1178243

Date: October 19, 2020

To: Health Authority, Doctors of BC, Divisions of Family Practice and
Medical Staff Associations

Re: Personal Protective Equipment and COVID-19 Planning Support for Physicians

Since March, primary care providers and community medical specialists have played an integral role in our province's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank you for all your work to support patient care in this unprecedented time.

In September, the Province announced the [COVID-19 Health-Sector Plan for Fall/Winter 2020-21](#) which sets out a series of key actions to ensure our health system continues to be well-prepared as we head into our traditional flu season over the next several months, and further, to ensure British Columbians continue to have access to the health care services they need for the duration of the COVID response period. The Plan includes key actions related to primary and medical specialist care, and the Ministry of Health has worked with its partners to provide a number of financial and other resources to support these actions. For example, we developed and recently updated the Primary Care COVID-19 Response Framework to enable primary care providers to work collaboratively with health authorities, community medical specialists and other partners to ensure services are available in their communities.

We know that personal protective equipment (PPE) is a key requirement for ensuring British Columbians continue to have access to safe, in-person primary and community medical specialist care during the pandemic, and we are committed to supporting you in this area as well. We have heard your feedback over the past few months about the need for secure access to PPE so that you can better support the health system's overall COVID-19 emergency response and to meet the needs of your patients in your practices. To that end, we are pleased to confirm that primary care providers and community medical specialists will be able obtain PPE through our provincial supply chain and distribution system at no charge for the duration of the emergency response. Detailed information on the process for ordering and delivery of PPE through the provincial supply will be finalized this week.

In the interim, please continue to order your PPE supplies from your usual vendors, or if supplies are not available through your usual vendors, please continue to work with your regional health authorities for your urgent PPE needs (also at no charge).

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Further to the above, we are pleased to advise that the Ministry is providing additional one-time compensation, to a maximum of 20 hours per physician in total, to continue to support physicians to actively participate in planning activities related to the Fall/Winter Plan between now and March 31, 2021. Allocation of, and criteria for, the new funding will be similar to the pandemic planning support of up to 35 hours per physician which was made available to you earlier this year. You will receive more information on how to access this new funding shortly.

The Ministry has also been working with the Doctors of BC through the General Practices Services Committee to secure additional funding for Divisions of Family Practice to enable their efforts in support of the Fall/Winter Plan between now and March 31, 2021. Details, including criteria and allocations to Divisions, will be communicated to you by the Doctors of BC.

We appreciate your cooperation as we work together to overcome the challenges of COVID-19 and ensure British Columbians have access to the services they need. We commit to keeping you informed of key updates as soon as they are available.

If you have any questions, please contact your Ministry Regional Primary Care Liaison.

Sincerely,



Ted Patterson
Assistant Deputy Minister
Primary Care Division



Ian Rongve
Assistant Deputy Minister
COVID Response and Health Emergency Management Division



Mark Armitage
Assistant Deputy Minister
Health Sector Workforce and Beneficiary Services Division