

Dr. Ryan Meili, Leader of the Opposition
417 24 St E, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 2P3
ryan@saskndp.ca

Dear Dr. Meili,

The Saskatchewan College of Family Physicians represents the 1,400 family physicians and family medicine trainees in Saskatchewan. Family physicians provide a robust foundation for our health care system by building long-term relationships with patients and providing comprehensive, patient-centred care. Our members play a crucial role in health promotion and disease prevention, to keep Saskatchewan healthy.

Since the start of the pandemic, family doctors have been a key part of health system efforts to manage COVID-19 through the province's hospitals and assessment centers. At the same time we have continued to meet the needs of our patients in our clinics, rapidly shifting to virtual care and offering safe in-person appointments when necessary.

The pandemic has brought into focus a number of long-standing opportunities to better serve Saskatchewan residents. Our organization feels strongly that the province must address the following priorities to improve patient care and strengthen our health system:

Increase funding for mental health

Family physicians are seeing firsthand the added toll that the pandemic is having on people already struggling with mental illness. It is time Saskatchewan provide the same full coverage for counselling and other mental health services that other medical services receive. We need to integrate these services into the range of options currently available through primary care.

Adopt the Patient's Medical Home Vision

The SCFP wants to see primary care in Saskatchewan delivered using an approach called the Patient's Medical Home, which offers patients comprehensive and patient-centred care, delivered by an interprofessional team of nurse educators, mental health professionals, and pharmacists led by family physicians. The approach, which is endorsed by the Canadian Medical Association, College of Family Physicians of Canada, and Canadian Nurses Association, is being used by policy-makers and clinics across the country to ensure patients get the care they need when they need it, increase provider satisfaction, and reduce demand on hospitals and emergency departments.

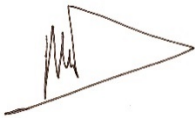
Test other models of physician payment

Our current fee-for-service model rewards volume -- rather than quality -- of care. However, there is good evidence backing other options that not only improve patient outcomes but also boost physicians' satisfaction in their work. SCFP calls on government to work with the medical community to explore other payment models that can help keep Saskatchewan patients healthy and out of hospital.

Moving forward on these three changes will help ensure that primary care in Saskatchewan is easier to access, patient-centred, and more comprehensive.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these ideas further with you, either before or after the upcoming provincial election. Please feel free to contact me by telephone (306-665-7714) or email (president@sk-cfp.ca) to arrange a socially distanced in-person meeting, Zoom conversation, or phone call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Myles Deutscher', written over a faint, light-colored signature line.

Dr. Myles Deutscher MD, CCFP
President
Saskatchewan College of Family Physicians