

# President's Letter

April 9, 2020



Charlene Fitzgerald  
CCFP, FCFP, FRRMS  
President

## Update for Salaried Physicians

Dear Colleagues:

Our members are proud to provide leadership and carry out their professional responsibilities during the pandemic to provide care and compassion to those in need. The CMA policy [Caring in a crisis](#)<sup>1</sup> articulates the ethical obligations of physicians under the CMA Code of Ethics and the reciprocal obligations of society during a pandemic. The government and RHAs must ensure that patient care is provided in a way that does not compromise physician safety. This must include the availability of necessary PPE consistent with the best evidence and, if shortages exist, appropriate setting of priorities.

Salaried physicians are continuing to receive normal compensation during the pandemic. We expect that RHA Chiefs and Department Heads, as a starting point, will assign roles and duties, consistent with job descriptions, for people whose workloads have been reduced due to the pandemic. Salaried physicians in many cases will also be called upon to provide other services outside their normal duties, in support of the pandemic response, side-by-side with colleagues of other disciplines. These duties may occur during regular hours or re-scheduled hours in consultation with medical leadership.

The NLMA encourages salaried physicians to be responsive to requests from RHAs to provide these alternative services within your competency. Doctors from all disciplines and locations will be taking on new roles as the pandemic worsens, and our health care system depends on it. Together we can protect our communities, ourselves, and gradually defeat this virus.

Salaried physicians who provide services in a COVID-19 Assessment Clinic, or in a Category A or Category B emergency department, over and above their normal work hours and on-call responsibilities, may be eligible for FFS compensation. In order to become eligible, the salaried physician's employer must provide a list of physician names and provider numbers to the provider MCP registration clerk. If there are any gaps in the payment arrangements the NLMA would appreciate your feedback ([nlma@nlma.nl.ca](mailto:nlma@nlma.nl.ca)).

Discussions about any special circumstances related to your own health, personal arrangements, or scope of practice, should first be held with your medical leadership within the RHA.

For your information, the NLMA has negotiated a payment arrangement for your fee-for-service colleagues which they will receive if they are available to provide "additional services" within RHAs necessitated by the pandemic. This work may occur in assessment centres, coverage in emergency departments, support to another clinical area, extended clinic hours beyond normal practice hours, regional community call services, assessment clinics, and support for quarantine units.

The NLMA appreciates receiving feedback on the work experience of physicians and we encourage you to make your views known as we proceed through the pandemic.

Sincerely,

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President

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<sup>1</sup> CMA Policy 'Caring in a Crisis: The Ethical Obligations of Physicians and Society During a Pandemic, available at: <https://policybase.cma.ca/en/viewer?file=%2fdocuments%2fPolicypdf%2fPD08-04.pdf>