



January 19, 2022

Message from the President and Registrar

It has never been more challenging to be a health care provider. Thank you, physicians, clinical assistants, physician assistants, residents, and medical students, for your unwavering commitment. This pandemic continues to be difficult for everyone! The medical profession has endured a lot in 22 months; what was once considered “unprecedented” has become the norm.

You continued to provide patient care when little was known about COVID-19. You pivoted your practice to care for patients safely. You rolled out vaccinations in your clinics and rolled up your sleeves to get vaccinated when it was your turn.

Physicians have become the face of trusted sources of information on COVID-19, keeping Manitobans informed and deconstructing misinformation, all while maintaining your practice. Unfortunately, many of you have also been targeted with abuse and mistreatment.

We see you continuing to advocate to get vaccinated. We see you speaking out for our vulnerable population – people with disabilities, people who are immunocompromised, seniors, children, personal care home residents, and those living in poverty. We’ve also seen you speak out on the disproportionate risk the pandemic has on Indigenous People.

We see your frustration with a strained healthcare system and the restraints this imposes on your delivery of care, especially for those working on the frontlines in the hospitals. We see you supporting patients and families who are suffering. We also see you holding yourself and other health care workers up to deliver the best quality care despite any moral distress you may be experiencing.

Twenty-two months of working multiple shifts, no days off, wearing full PPE for lengthy periods of time, cancelling in-person appointments and surgeries, clinic exposures, isolating, and for many, catching the virus yourself, is undoubtedly taking its toll. We know you are running on empty.

Please know that you are not alone. As care providers ourselves, we see you. We understand firsthand how far you are being stretched and how mentally and physically exhausted you are. Know that there are supports for you.

We’d like to remind you of the following:

1. CPSM’s [Physician Health Program](#) is safe, confidential, and non-punitive.
2. CPSM [has also temporarily relaxed the Standard of Practice for Virtual Medicine](#) to align with the current Public Health Orders.

3. The **standard of care** now expected is that of a standard of care during a pandemic. This recognizes the challenges within the healthcare system, the challenges of COVID-19-patients, and the additional challenges members face practising medicine in the pandemic. The standard of care has fluctuated at different times during the pandemic, in different circumstances, and different practices for each patient encounter, yet it will always reflect the challenges faced by CPSM members providing care during the COVID-19 pandemic. You should not be reluctant to provide care, even when it may be extremely difficult to follow some components of CPSM's Standards of Practice. CPSM will always consider the individual circumstances and context if a complaint arises during the COVID-19 pandemic. In an emergency, failure to meet standards is not considered unprofessional conduct if a member can demonstrate they took all reasonable actions in their service to patients.

Above all else, thank you for your dedication. It is a privilege to be a physician; although these are challenging times, let us not forget that.

Sincerely,

Anna Ziomek, MD
CPSM Registrar

Jacobi Elliott, MBChB, CCFP (EM)
CPSM President