

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Signs of progress and lingering strains

In the latest Alberta Medical Association Tracker Survey conducted among Alberta physicians in June, subtle yet meaningful shifts in perception suggest the system may have stabilized slightly in some areas, while spotlighting persistent structural concerns.

Here are some highlights of the results. (Note that scores reported are on a four-point scale: 1 = negative; 2 = neutral; 3 = positive/good; 4 = excellent.)

Alberta's health care system: A tentative turn toward improvement

Physicians reported a slight uptick in how they view the health system's trajectory. The average rating rose from 1.86 in November to 1.99 in June, with a modest increase in those who said it's "somewhat better" (+1.5%) and "stayed the same" (+4%). Notably, the "much worse" category dropped by 5%, suggesting a waning sense of urgency or perhaps cautious optimism. However, nearly 43% still view the system as "somewhat worse," underlining that a large portion of the medical community remains unconvinced of true systemic healing.

Support for quality care: Mixed signals beneath the surface

When asked about institutional support for providing quality care, physicians expressed a nuanced shift in sentiment. The mean score climbed from 1.79 to 2.05 – a relatively significant improvement. Encouragingly, "somewhat better" jumped nearly 4%, while "much worse" fell by over 13%. Yet an increase in "somewhat worse" (+4.8%) suggests that while high-level support may be improving, operational frustrations continue to fester in the day-to-day realities of practice.

Physician value and recognition: A quiet struggle

Perhaps one of the most poignant indicators of physician morale was their perceived value within the health care system. While the average rating nudged slightly upward from 2.24 to 2.34, the distribution revealed growing neutrality. Those responding "neutral" rose by 4.7%, while "disagree" and "strongly disagree" both saw small declines. The data hints at a shift away from outright dissatisfaction but stops short of signaling genuine affirmation. In short, physicians may feel less ignored – but not yet embraced.

AMA's position: Strongly supporting physicians and slowly increasing influence

The AMA continues to enjoy strong trust among physicians, earning a score of 3.64 for its understanding of physicians' concerns. Physicians feel well informed about association activities. Regarding our influence in creating a patient-centred health care system, the AMA appears to be earning physicians' trust at a gradual pace. The average score increased from 3.29 to 3.42, with notable gains in "agree" (+7.2%) and a drop in

“neutral” and “strongly disagree” responses. These changes imply that advocacy efforts are resonating, though stronger alignment between policy and frontline needs could accelerate trust-building.

Final takeaway

The pulse of Alberta’s medical community is starting to steady – but the vitals are far from perfect. Improvement is visible in the numbers, but emotional and professional resilience remains a delicate balance. More than metrics, the message is clear: physicians want to be seen, heard and empowered – not just reassured.

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