

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Physicians speak out

The Alberta Medical Association recently conducts a member opinion tracker survey, typically twice a year. Our most recent issue in June 2025 offered a compelling snapshot of physician perspectives across the province. With more than 1,000 members participating, the survey achieved an 8% response rate, providing statistically valid insights with a $\pm 2.96\%$ margin of error.

Who participated?

The survey drew responses from 1,003 physicians, which represents a diverse cross-section of Alberta's medical community. Geographically, the highest participation came from these zones:

- Zone 2: Calgary (44%)
- Zone 4: Edmonton (36%)
- Other zones including South, Central, and North, contributed the remaining 20%.

This is the breakdown in terms of practice type:

- 36% work in community-based practices.
- 37% are based in AHS facilities.
- 25% operate in mixed settings.
- 2% identified as "other."

Experience levels varied:

- 31% have 6 to 15 years in practice.
- 26% have 26 to 40 years.
- 25% have 16 to 25 years.
- 12% are early-career (0 to 5 years).
- 7% have over 40 years of experience.

Understanding the member mindset

Rather than a singular sentiment, the June 2025 AMA Member Tracking Survey reveals a complex and varied landscape of physician perspectives. With 24 distinct questions spanning topics from compensation to system influence, the results underscore the diversity of experiences and priorities across specialties, regions and career stages.

While some areas, such as the AMA's role in shaping a patient-centered health system, garnered relatively strong agreement (55% overall), other topics like financial security and compensation alignment showed more modest support, which indicates ongoing concerns.

These are some notable findings.

- Family medicine non-certified physicians expressed the highest levels of agreement across topics, which suggests a relatively more positive outlook.
- Surgical specialists, on the other hand, reported the lowest agreement levels, which points to potential areas of dissatisfaction or unmet needs.
- Regionally, physicians in the South and North zones showed stronger agreement on key issues, while Central zone respondents were more reserved in their assessments.

These findings suggest that member sentiment is not monolithic. Instead, it reflects a spectrum of views shaped by practice type, location and specialty. The AMA's challenge – and opportunity – lies in continuing to engage with members across this spectrum to address their distinct concerns and priorities.

One specialist emphasized their top priority – improving access to essential health services, including emergency care, specialists, diagnostic testing, surgery, and oncology. Their comment reflects the broader reality that the challenges facing physicians and the Alberta health care system cannot be solved by addressing a single priority. Instead, complex and interconnected issues are affecting physicians' well-being and limiting their ability to provide high-quality care.

Top shifts in physician sentiment

Three statements saw the most significant positive shifts from the previous survey:

The AMA is effectively supporting physicians to positively influence a health system built around patients.

- Overall agreement: 55% (+7%)
- Family medicine: 56% (+9%)
- Specialists: 54% (+6%)

My compensation model is aligned with what my patients need.

- Overall agreement: 32% (+7%)
- Family medicine: 31% (+14%)
- Specialists: 32% (-2%)

My compensation provides for my financial security now and in retirement.

- Overall agreement: 32% (+7%)
- Family medicine: 28% (+13%)
- Specialists: 36% (-1%)

These results suggest growing optimism among family physicians regarding AMA's advocacy and compensation alignment, though specialists appear less convinced. Continued uncertainty regarding matters around stipends and alternative relationship plans are likely major factors.

Looking ahead

The AMA's ongoing tracking surveys continue to be a vital tool in understanding member needs and guiding strategic priorities. As the health care landscape evolves, these insights will help shape policies that better support Alberta's physicians and the patients they serve.

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