



PROTAEA

## Dec 2, 2024 | AAP Advocacy Report

### Introduction

Protaea is proud to present our advocacy report, summarizing our efforts to advance the role of physiotherapists in Alberta's healthcare system. Over the past year, we have focused on three critical pillars: insurance reform, scope of practice advocacy, and system integration. Our relationship building and advocacy efforts have been supported by monitoring of news and Hansard reports to stay informed on legislative developments affecting physiotherapy. The report outlines our achievements, ongoing efforts, and roadmap for 2025, which we welcome feedback and input on.

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### Insurance Reform and Advocacy Efforts

#### Key Focus Areas

Protaea has actively addressed the implications of Alberta's insurance reform, particularly its effects on healthcare access, affordability, and long-term outcomes for Albertans. Our advocacy has highlighted:

- The risks associated with no-fault insurance models, such as increased costs and reduced access to physiotherapy services.
- The critical role of physiotherapy in injury management and prevention, emphasizing its cost-effectiveness in reducing long-term disabilities.
- Concerns over proposed changes to injury compensation systems and their downstream impact on patient outcomes.
- Proposed updates to Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) protocols, which are outdated by 20 years, ensuring they align with evidence-based practices.

#### Major Actions and Achievements

- **Published Opinion Editorial:** Worked with Jen Panteluk to author an op-ed for the *Calgary Herald* to bring public attention to the critical role of physiotherapists in healthcare reform.
- **Direct Government Advocacy:** Drafted correspondence and conducted meetings with Minister Nate Horner and Minister Nathan Neudorf, advocating for physiotherapy's inclusion in insurance reform discussions.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Engaged with the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) and Co-operators to build momentum for protocol reviews and evidence-based policy recommendations.



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- Collaborated with the Chiropractors Association of Alberta and the Psychologists Association of Alberta on shared concerns regarding insurance reform.
- **Strategic Communication:** Developed briefing notes and advocacy letters, positioning physiotherapists as integral stakeholders in Alberta's insurance reform initiatives.
- **Regular Monitoring:** Maintained a close watch on Hansard reports and legislative updates to identify opportunities for advocacy and respond promptly to developments.

### Next Steps

- Conduct survey of membership to collect input to support auto insurance reform consultation.
- Finalize protocol review recommendations and advocate for their adoption by policymakers.
- Continue addressing affordability concerns and ensuring fair compensation for physiotherapy services under automobile accident insurance.

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## Scope of Practice Advocacy

### Key Focus Areas

Expanding the scope of practice for physiotherapists has been a cornerstone of our advocacy. Our efforts focus on:

- Advocating for advanced diagnostic capabilities, such as Point-of-Care Ultrasound (POCUS), and broader roles in injury prevention and management.
- Advocated for legislative changes to enable physiotherapists to access Netcare/Connect Care as data custodians, similar to chiropractors.
- Drawing on successful models in the UK and Australia to guide Alberta's policy changes.
- Defining and supporting advanced practice roles to elevate the profession's contributions to healthcare delivery.
- Developing new team-based care models to advance healthcare in the province through maximizing the scope and abilities of healthcare practitioners.

### Major Actions and Achievements

- **Collaborative Advocacy:** Outlined necessary legislative amendments and regulatory pathways. Approached College to discuss.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Held strategic meetings with key leaders, including Minister Lagrange, Kim Simmonds, CEO of Primary Care Alberta and former ADM of Alberta Health, and Chris Nickerson, ADM of Alberta Health Acute Care Division.
- **Research and Best Practices:** Leveraged global examples to demonstrate the benefits of expanded physiotherapy roles in diagnostic imaging and patient care.



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## Next Steps

- Advocate for legislative amendments to grant physiotherapists full access to Netcare/Connect Care
  - Work with stakeholders to define and implement advanced practice roles, with a focus on patient outcomes.
  - Continue monitoring legislative developments to align advocacy with ongoing debates and priorities.
  - Propose modifications to billing codes, including lifting restrictions on codes like 0301 O, to allow physiotherapists to initiate consultations and streamline care delivery.
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## Emergency Department and System Integration

### Key Focus Areas

Physiotherapists play a vital role in alleviating pressures on Alberta's overburdened healthcare system. Our work has emphasized:

- Integrating physiotherapists into emergency departments, following successful models in other provinces.
- Addressing funding challenges for emergency department pilots and advocating for their expansion.
- Promoting physiotherapists' inclusion in primary care integration, ensuring they can serve as first-contact providers for musculoskeletal issues.
- Recognizing physiotherapists as data custodians within Netcare to improve care continuity and access.
- Highlighted the potential for integrating physiotherapists into RACs, aligning with Alberta Health's system transformation goals.

### Major Actions and Achievements

- **Pilot Program Support:** Identified systemic barriers to emergency department pilots, and the need for advocating for sustainable funding and measurable outcomes.
- **Collaboration and Innovation:** research similar initiatives in other provinces to encourage replication in Alberta.

### Next Steps

- Engage Alberta Health and other stakeholders to align emergency department integration efforts with broader healthcare goals.
- Looking towards support for additional emergency department pilot programs.



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- Promote the inclusion of physiotherapists in primary care delivery models to expand access and improve patient outcomes.
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### 2025 Lookahead

#### **Integration of Physiotherapy in Multi-Disciplinary Teams:**

- Collaborate with Alberta Health and AHS staff to promote physiotherapy integration and the potential of exploring partnerships with nurse practitioners.
- Modify billing codes to optimize system efficiency, allowing physiotherapists to triage patients and reduce emergency department pressures.

#### **Scope of Practice Expansion:**

- Advocate for the expanded use of POCUS and Netcare/Connect Care access for physiotherapists, working cross-Ministry
- Lead discussions with provincial regulators to optimize physiotherapy's role in the healthcare system.

#### **Insurance Reform Advocacy:**

- Update outdated MVA protocols to reflect modern best practices.

#### **Pilot Projects:**

- Support strategically planned pilot projects, focusing on emergency department integration and RACs, to demonstrate the expanded role of physiotherapists in Alberta's healthcare system.
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### Conclusion

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Alberta Physiotherapy Association and welcome feedback to ensure our advocacy remains aligned with the association's goals.