

**From:** Philip Schienbein - Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul <[Philip.Schienbein.BCS@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:Philip.Schienbein.BCS@assembly.ab.ca)>

**Sent:** Thursday, April 18, 2024 11:41 AM

**To:**

**Cc:**

**Subject:** Expanded Physician Sponsorship Opportunities

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning,

The attached letter and documents outline a new initiative from the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) that expands the sponsorship model to include family medicine physicians. This initiative is designed to address the ongoing challenges of physician shortages that have been a concern for many within our constituency.

MLA Cyr believes this program can greatly enhance healthcare access across our region. Please find the attached letter for your reference.

Thank you,

Philip Schienbein  
Constituency Assistant for

**Scott Cyr, MLA**  
Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul  
#2, 4428-50 Avenue  
Box 5160  
Bonnyville, AB T9N 2G4

Phone: 780-826-5658

Fax: 780-826-2165

Email: [bonnyville.coldlake.stpaul@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:bonnyville.coldlake.stpaul@assembly.ab.ca)



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ALBERTA

April 17, 2024

Scott Cyr, MLA  
Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul  
Box 5160,  
4428-50 Avenue,  
Bonnyville, AB  
T9N 2G4

To the Esteemed First Nations Chiefs, Métis Settlement Chairs, and Municipal Leaders of the Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul Constituency,

**Re: Enhancing Community Healthcare through Expanded Physician Sponsorship Opportunities**

It is with enthusiasm that I write to share a remarkable development that directly addresses a critical need within our communities – the expansion of the sponsorship model by the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA). This initiative marks a significant step forward in improving healthcare access across our constituency, and indeed, the entire province.

Thanks to the diligent efforts of Dr. Scott McLeod and his team at CPSA, our municipalities now have an exciting opportunity to sponsor family medicine physicians. This program expansion comes as a beacon of hope amid the ongoing challenges of physician shortages, a concern that many of you have expressed in our discussions.

Dr. McLeod's comprehensive update, which is attached for your reference, outlines the new framework allowing not just Alberta Health Services but also local governments, corporations, and other entities to sponsor internationally trained physicians. This tailored approach will enable us to address the unique healthcare needs of our diverse communities more effectively.

Here are the steps for becoming a sponsor, as detailed in the FAQ section of the attachment:

1. **Complete an Application:** Prospective sponsors are required to fill out an application form available on the CPSA website.
2. **Application Review for Completeness:** CPSA will contact applicants to address any incomplete or missing information in their submissions.
3. **Payment of Sponsorship Fee:** Following the completion of the application, sponsors will be instructed to pay the applicable sponsorship fee.

4. **Decision by Sponsorship Committee:** A committee will review the application and make a final decision, communicated through written correspondence.

The entire process aims to be concluded within approximately one month, assuming there are minimal follow-ups required.

I urge each of you to consider how this initiative could be leveraged to enhance healthcare services in your localities. The potential to directly sponsor a physician not only empowers our communities but also builds towards a sustainable healthcare system that meets the needs of all residents.

For more detailed information, including financial responsibilities and application guidance, please refer to the enclosed document. Dr. McLeod and his team are also available for any further inquiries you may have; they are just an email away.

Thank you once again to Dr. McLeod for sharing this pivotal update with us. I am confident that with collective effort and shared commitment, we can usher in a new era of healthcare accessibility and excellence in Northeastern Alberta.

Warm regards,



Scott Cyr, MLA

Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul

**Cc.**

Dr. Scott McLeod – CPSA CEO & Registrar

Stacy Greening – AHS Chief Zone Officer for North Zone

Dr. Brian Muir – AHS Zone Medical Director for North Zone

Adele Richardson – AHS Director Clinical Operations Area 8

Shelly Franklin – Site Administrator Covenant Health

Loree Reynolds

April 4, 2024

Mr. Scott Cyr  
MLA, Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul  
6th Floor 9820 - 107 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E7  
Sent via email to: [Bonnyville.ColdLake.StPaul@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:Bonnyville.ColdLake.StPaul@assembly.ab.ca)

Dear Mr. Scott Cyr:

On behalf of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA), I am writing to share some important healthcare news. CPSA is the regulatory body responsible for licensing the province's physicians and physician assistants. We also ensure physician competence through quality assurance and improvement programs, accredit health facilities, and ensure doctors adhere to the highest ethical standards. Our mission is to serve and protect Albertans by guiding regulated members in providing safe, high-quality care.

Like all provinces and territories across Canada, Alberta is facing a family physician shortage. Family physicians play a critical role in our healthcare system, tending to Albertan's primary healthcare needs and connecting them to specialists when needed. CPSA appreciates the prioritization of family physician retention and attraction and is committed to help strengthen the province's healthcare system.

With that goal in mind, CPSA is expanding our sponsorship model to support continuous efforts in improving physician resources in our province. Since 2015, Alberta Health Services (AHS) has been the only entity that could sponsor internationally trained physicians going through CPSA's assessment process. That has now changed. While AHS-sponsored positions will continue to serve communities with the greatest need, CPSA now welcomes individuals, organizations, corporations, and others to apply to be a sponsor for a family medicine physician position in their desired community.

Sponsorship starts with identifying a family medicine position in a primary care setting in the sponsor's community of choice. Sponsors are responsible for recruiting physicians and supporting the successful candidate through CPSA's assessment process. Sponsors also play an integral role in financially supporting the physician, from CPSA registration and assessments through to independent practice in the community.

CPSA appreciates all efforts to improve Alberta's healthcare system. Driven by our commitment to the health and well-being of Albertans, we continue to look for ways to lend our experience and expertise to this work, and recently highlighted several new Registration initiatives in our monthly newsletter, [The Messenger](#). If you have any questions or would like more information about the expanded sponsorship model, or any other CPSA initiative, I can be reached at [Scott.McLeod@cpsa.ca](mailto:Scott.McLeod@cpsa.ca). Please also find attached some frequently asked questions.

Sincerely,



Scott McLeod, MD, MPH, MPA, CCFP, FCFP  
CPSA Registrar & CEO

SM/km

Encl. (1)

# Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is sponsorship?**

Sponsorship is a step towards bringing internationally trained physicians into Alberta. It starts with identifying a family medicine position in a primary care setting in the sponsor's community of choice. Sponsors are responsible for recruiting physicians, which includes selecting the successful candidate to undergo CPSA's assessment process.

Sponsors also play a key role in financially supporting the physician from CPSA registration and assessments through to independent practice in the community.

### **What has changed?**

Since 2015, Alberta Health Services (AHS) was the sole sponsor for internationally trained physicians going through CPSA's assessment process. While AHS-sponsored positions will continue to serve communities with the greatest need, CPSA now welcomes individuals, organizations, corporations, and others with interest to apply to be a sponsor for a family medicine physician position in their desired community.

### **Why did CPSA expand their sponsorship model?**

CPSA has expanded our sponsorship model to support continuous efforts to improve access to family medicine physician resources in our province.

### **How will this change benefit Albertans?**

Like all provinces and territories across Canada, Alberta is facing a family physician shortage. CPSA is expanding our sponsorship model to support improved access to community-based health care for Albertans.

### **Who can become a sponsor?**

Individuals, organizations, corporations, and others with interest may apply to be a sponsor for a family medicine physician position in their desired community. CPSA reviews all applications to make sure sponsors can meet their responsibilities to their community and to the physician who will fill the sponsored position.

### **After applying to CPSA, how long does it take to become a sponsor?**

Applying to become a sponsor involves the following process:

1. Prospective sponsors complete an application form on [cpsa.ca](https://cpsa.ca).
2. CPSA reaches out to prospective sponsors to advise where applications are incomplete/missing information.
3. Once an application is deemed complete, CPSA reaches out to prospective sponsors to pay the sponsorship fee.

4. A sponsorship committee reviews the sponsor application submission and makes a decision.

Applicants will receive an email within two business days confirming receipt of the application. CPSA will strive to complete the initial screening of the application for completeness within two weeks and the final adjudication of the complete package with a written decision within another two weeks; the total time should be about one month for applications that require little to no follow-up. If an application is incomplete and requires further follow-up during the initial screening, this will impact the timelines above. We anticipate that our process will be faster as time passes and we work to improve efficiency, as well as get through the large and enthusiastic initial volume of requests.

### **How much does it cost to apply? What are overall the costs of being a sponsor?**

Prospective sponsors pay a non-refundable application fee of \$3,500 + GST. This cost goes toward the assessment of the sponsor application.

If approved, the sponsor is responsible for financially supporting the physician from CPSA registration and assessments through to independent practice in the community.

Assessment fees range from \$9,000 - \$35,000 depending on the assessments the successful physician candidate must undergo. Other costs to support the successful physician candidate can range up to \$100,000, which includes costs like incentives, relocation support, stipend during the assessments, support with work permits, site visit costs, etc.

### **Why does expanded sponsorship only include family medicine physicians?**

CPSA identified family medicine positions as the most immediate priority for the first year. CPSA will be working toward expanding the sponsorship model to include specialty positions and eventually positions for any physician who meets CPSA eligibility requirements over the subsequent one-to-two years (mid 2025 onwards).