

POSITION STATEMENT

Political Interference in Clinical Practice

June 2026

At the heart of our healthcare system is a relationship: between a patient and a physician who knows their history, their circumstances, and the evidence that applies to their care. Health policy shaped by clinical evidence, informed by the experience of the clinicians delivering care, and responsive to the needs of the communities, supports this relationship. When policy is developed without these foundations, it undermines the care it seeks to improve — and sets a precedent whose consequences extend beyond any single area of medical care.

The Government's [Access to Prescribed Alternatives in BC](#) policy direction (December 2025) requires that patients receiving prescribed alternatives take their medication under supervision. BC Family Doctors recognizes government has a critical role to play in protecting public health and safety. However, the Policy removes a physician's clinical discretion and places physicians in a difficult position - requiring them to limit care that is clinically indicated while adding new barriers to patients' care.

For patients in rural and remote communities, where pharmacy access is limited and overdose death rates among the highest in the province, mandatory supervised dosing is logistically impossible for many. For Indigenous peoples, who face some of the highest overdose death rates in BC and systemic barriers to substance use care, the Policy disrupts the delivery of culturally safe care and compounds existing inequities. In some communities, pharmacists have indicated they lack the capacity to supervise dosing and may withdraw from the program — not just restricting care but eliminating access entirely.

These concerns are not unique to British Columbia as we see increasing government oversight in clinical practice. Alberta has restricted safer supply prescribing, evidence-based gender-affirming care, and now medical assistance in dying. The province has enacted these policies over the objections of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and the Alberta Medical Association's Section of Pediatrics. In Quebec, legislated performance targets prompted hundreds of physicians to seek licensure in other provinces within weeks.

Doctors work at the point where patient care and government policy meet, and when those rules change, they're the first to feel the effects. A November 2025 CMA and Abacus Data survey of 447 Canadian physicians found that 80 per cent believe increasing government oversight will make it harder to recruit and retain physicians, and 66 per cent anticipate a decline in patient care quality. In provinces where governments have imposed restrictions on clinical practice, up to 80 per cent of physicians report they do not feel trusted or respected by their governments.¹

BC Family Doctors asserts that physicians must be free to use their training, clinical expertise, therapeutic relationship, and experience in caring for patients where they are able to choose the best course of treatment, grounded in the evidence, informed consent, and the trusted relationship between doctor and patient.

We affirm that policies that directly affect clinical care are most effective when developed collaboratively with clinicians and the communities they affect. When they are developed unilaterally, patients lose access to services, physicians are unable to provide evidence-based care and the health system is further strained.

BC Family Doctors calls on the provincial government to:

- Consult prescribers and clinical advisory bodies before implementing policy that restricts clinical practice;
- Preserve clinician discretion for individual patient care decisions within appropriate, collaboratively developed monitoring frameworks;
- Assess the impact of prescribing policy on patients before implementation, with particular attention to rural and remote communities where access to pharmacy-supervised care may be limited or unavailable; and
- Include Indigenous peoples and communities in the development of health policy, respecting the expertise of the First Nations Health Authority and the voices of those with lived and living experience, from the outset.

BC Family Doctors stands ready to work with government, health system partners, and the communities we serve to develop health policy that is safe, appropriate and clinically sound.

References

1. CMA & Abacus Data. Physician Pulse: Government Interference in Health Care. November 2025.
<https://abacusdata.ca/canadian-physicians-say-bill-26-and-bill-2-are-undermining-healthcare-in-canada>