

5 Things to Know

Negotiations and the Physician Master Agreement

1. What is the Physician Master Agreement (PMA)?

The PMA is the document that governs compensation and benefits for Fee-for-Service and Alternatively Paid Physicians in BC. It is negotiated by Doctors of BC (the bargaining agent for physicians in BC) and the Ministry of Health which represents government.

It covers:

- **Fee for Service (FFS).** The PMA outlines the process for making changes to fees and new funding for increases for physicians using FFS and not on a contract. Note that PMA negotiations do not focus on individual fee values – typically the PMA includes funding and processes for allocating that funding to specific fees by sections.
- **Some physician contracts.** If you work under Service Contracts, Sessional Contracts, or Salary Agreement, then the PMA negotiations impact you. We negotiate standardized templates for these contracts and increases to the payment ranges. Other standard contracts are developed through a separate consultation process outside of PMA negotiations.
- **Benefits.** The PMA funds a range of benefits available to physicians, including the Continuing Medical Education Fund, the CMPA rebate program, the Contributory Professional Retirement Savings Plan, Parental Leave Program, Physician Disability Insurance Program and funding for the Physician Health Program.
- **Collaborative Structures.** The PMA establishes and funds [collaborative committees](#) that represent a partnership between Doctors of BC and the Government of BC, and which create new fees and develop programs that address issues of importance for physicians in family practice and specialists. The committees provide funding to [Divisions of Family Practice](#) and [Medical Staff Associations](#) to support collaboration between physicians and health system partners.

2. What does the PMA not cover?

- **PMA negotiations do not include new contract models.** Those are developed separately, outside of the PMA. Within the PMA? the government has agreed to a *process* to engage physicians in the design of new payment models, such the new Group Family Practice and the New-to-Practice Contracts.

3. What has changed for 2022?

- In response to the challenges in primary care, we are doing two sets of negotiations: while PMA negotiations continue, Doctors of BC is additionally negotiating with government on a parallel track outside the PMA for new and/or improved compensation models to address the rising cost of business and to provide family doctors with the option to practice in a different way than fee-for-service, if you choose to do so.
- The new payment model will provide physicians with another choice to be compensated for providing community longitudinal primary care, as well as other specialized services provided by family physicians to their patients.

4. How does Doctors of BC negotiate and represent members' priorities?

- PMA negotiations take place between the Doctors of BC's Statutory Negotiating Committee representing physicians and the Ministry of Health team representing government.
- In advance of PMA negotiations, Doctors of BC conducted a major outreach to members to seek their priorities on key issues, including compensation and appropriate compensation models, benefits, how collaborative dollars are used, physician administrative burdens and physician health and safety.

This outreach included: a comprehensive negotiations survey; virtual webinars and Q&A sessions with members; and meetings with all sections and both societies, physician members of the GPSC, SSC, SCC, JSC, and the Joint Benefits Committee, and the Representative Assembly.

5. When do PMA negotiations take place?

- Meetings started earlier in 2022 and are expected to continue into the fall.
- This year, the cycle is starting later than usual because government has not yet settled on its bargaining mandate. We anticipate the earliest date for ratification is fall 2022, but it could take longer.
- Our cycle is on the same timeline as all other public sector bargaining. While government is negotiating with us, it is also negotiating over 180 other public sector contracts representing almost 400,000 employees
- The current PMA continues to operate during discussions and negotiations. Typically, when a fee increase is negotiated, payments are retroactive to the first day of the new PMA (April 1, 2022)

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