

2.1 Introduction to the Academic Medicine and Health Services Program (AMHSP)

(taken from Alberta Academic Medicine and Health Services Program: Background Information & Alberta Health Policies)

The AMHSP, formerly known as Academic Alternative Relationship Plans (AARPs), was implemented in 2017-18. The purpose of the AMHSP is to ensure that Physicians affiliated with Alberta's faculties of medicine are compensated in a way that supports them in providing high quality patient care in a complex care environment and supports activities related to research, innovation, education and administration/leadership, while ensuring consistency across the Province. Over the past two decades, AARPs in Alberta have been successful in:

- Attracting and retaining needed specialists to the province;
- Supporting innovative clinical practice;
- Enhancing the quality of Alberta's medical education and research; and
- Increasing stability and predictability of funding while focusing on accountability and quality.

Since 2014, the Province has worked with Alberta Health Services (AHS), the University of Alberta (UofA), the University of Calgary (UofC), and other stakeholders on an improved platform for AARPs. The improvements, introduced in 2017 as part of the two new Master Agreements:

- Align academic medicine across the Province;
- Feature clear objectives;
- Have strong accountability measures;
- Create consistency among Arrangements and between the UofA and the UofC; and
- Require stakeholders to demonstrate value for money.

This nation-wide leading program has enabled innovation across the pillars of academic medicine and attracted some of the best and brightest people, nationally and globally, in academic medicine to our province.

The catalyst for foundational improvements to AARPs was an independent review commissioned by the Province in 2013-14. Working groups were developed to address the key findings of the independent review which were around governance, accountability, alignment, and funding.

The working groups concluded:

- Governance across the AARPs was ambiguous and varied between the individual AARPs.
- There was little in terms of standardized AARP policies and processes to guide existing, or to inform new AARP members.
- Also missing was a unifying vision, common mission and goals to guide the AARP members in their work.
- Accountability needed to be strengthened through performance measurement to ensure the following:
 - AMHSP supports the health care needs of Albertans and achieving its outcomes;
 - The systematic maintenance of existing excellence and improvement of the delivery of academic medicine;
 - Funding is being spent as intended;
 - Knowledge transfer of lessons learned and successes; and
 - Socialization and translation of ideas to practice.

The working groups were tasked with producing recommendations to address the key findings, including developing a clear mandate, vision, mission, and goals to guide the AARP program. The working groups also developed an implementation plan. Recommendations were made to move away from individually funded and operated AARPs, to a provincially aligned and cohesive program. Key recommendations were the creation of a new multi-stakeholder program governance structure. As a result of the recommendation, an accountability matrix was developed and includes seven domains: clinical activities; education; research; leadership and administration; innovation; workforce; funding and socialization/communication. Performance indicators should be developed at each level of the matrix, from individual Participating Physicians up to the Province. Through the efforts of the Governance Framework, key categories of performance measurement related to both Clinical Services and Non-Clinical Services were identified. Arrangements reviewed the categories and developed their own set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which reflect what they are trying to achieve.

As of July 1, 2017, former AARPs are covered under a single funding agreement for the AMHSP in each of Edmonton and Calgary. Both Master Agreements will expire on March 31, 2020.