



# Lamont Health Care Centre

Telephone (780) 895-2211 Fax (780) 895-7305  
P.O. Box 479, 5216-53 Street, Lamont, Alberta T0B



## 2017 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER – WINTER EDITION

### **‘MEDICAL CORNER’**

#### ***Need for a Family Doctor***

The face of the medical landscape is changing. Many of you may not be aware of it but the changes have occurred already.

Right now most small communities are facing a loss of elderly physicians. This has happened in Lamont and once again we will experience the same thing. Part of our problem is to attract new physicians to our facility and this is not an easy task. We have to juggle both the needs of the facility, and the needs of the community as well as the needs of the prospective physician when we make this decision; however, this article is about the need for a family physician because not only is the face of Family Medicine changing with regards to patients, but Family Medicine is changing with regards to the system. Right now when you see a cardiologist and you see a kidney specialist, the two do not actually talk to each other. They both prescribe some of the medications but they never have a conversation as to how efficient each one is. As well, the cardiologist may prescribe something that the nephrologist is not happy with. This can create a conflict. The only person that can actually resolve the conflict and integrate these two systems of care is the family physician.

One of the issues that we have is that young people feel that there is no need for a family physician and use both emergency and the walk-in clinic as their family doctor. I am going to tell you right now, that is not your family doctor. That doctor has absolutely no interest in you as a patient but rather only as a condition or a disease. He/she may never see you again as he/she has no vested interest in your long-term health. This creates a quandary because if he/she notices something out of the ordinary he/she is not obliged to say anything to you because he is not your family doctor. The physician is only obliged to treat you for the condition that you came in with. For example: a suspicious mole, a harsh cough or a red eye may be present when you came in, but treatment will be provided for a sprained shoulder. Your family doctor, who is the person responsible for your health care, is obliged to mention these things to you, as well as, look at the medications you take and make sure that they are safe for you as well as give you any advice for preventative health care.

I feel at this time that patients are in jeopardy because they are choosing not to have a family doctor. I also feel that patients are in jeopardy because they are using emergency services and walk-in clinics as their family doctor and they have no idea that the service they have been provided is very limited.

I think in order to protect yourself personally as well as to protect your family, a couple things need to change in the way we think about Family Medicine:

1. You need to identify a single physician as your family doctor. That is somebody that you need to have a relationship with. The only way to establish a relationship is to have regular routine visits, irrespective if nothing is wrong. In order to continue to update your family doctor on your health condition, please remember that if there is nothing wrong with you, that is still an update, because when you walk in the room something in the way you walk, something in the way you speak, something in the way you look might be something that raises suspicion in the mind of your family doctor that could forestall illness in the future.

#### **Mission Statement**

We believe that wholeness of body, mind and spirit is God's will for every person.

We are committed to the healing process, the promotion of health

and the provision of compassionate care to all persons.



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#### ***Need for a Family Doctor- (continued)***

2. A routine physical, even though it might not provide any useful information with regards to health prevention, is still an essential part of the interaction between you and your family doctor and it makes a big difference when you are being referred to a specialist. In my practice I do routine physicals all the time even though my patients may be healthy, because if they have a need to see a specialist it allows the specialist to know exactly how my patient was when they had their physical which hopefully would have been within the last year.

3. Complex medical care. Nobody can say that tomorrow they are not going to have a heart attack or they are not going to have a motor vehicle accident or they are not going to have a work injury. This results in a complex series of maneuvers requiring multiple physicians and multiple care systems. Only your family doctor can negotiate all of them. Yes, there is a charge for this visit because it is not covered by Alberta Health, but I can tell you right now that if you go to the walk-in clinic to get one form filled out, you go to emergency to get the other form filled out and then you go to see a doctor that you had seen ten years ago to get the third form filled out, you are never going to get the same level of remuneration that you would have gotten if you had had one family doctor who knew you before the accident and who treated you through the accident and followed you up after the accident.

I hope that this message hits home. I wish you all success in finding a family doctor that suits both you as a patient and as a user of the health care system.

***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!***

***- Dr. Zainool Mohamed, Chief of Medical Staff–LHCC***

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