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PROTOCOL & PROCESS
FOR MAKING CHANGES
TO THE DOCTORS OF BC
FEE GUIDE/MSC
PAYMENT SCHEDULE

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Fee Guide Modification Process – Fee Guide & MSC Schedule

Modifications to the Doctors of BC Fee Guide and MSC Payment Schedule

1. INTRODUCTION

The Medical Services Commission (MSC) Payment Schedule for physicians, established under the Medicare Protection Act, is a subject of the Physician Master Agreement between the Government of British Columbia, the MSC, and the Doctors of BC. The Payment Schedule specifies the amounts payable by the Medical Services Plan (MSP) for listed benefits. Doctors of BC maintains and publishes the Doctors of BC Fee Guide on behalf of its members. The Fee Guide lists the services insured by the MSP in addition to providing recommended private fees for uninsured services. The following booklet provides an overview of the process to modify the MSC Payment Schedule/Fee Guide, including an introduction to the various parties involved, the roles and responsibilities of said parties, and timelines.

2. OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

Under the Physician Master Agreement between the Government, the Medical Services Commission (MSC) and Doctors of BC, additions, deletions, fee changes or other modifications to the MSC Payment Schedule are made by the MSC, upon recommendation by the Tariff Committee and Board of Directors. If Doctors of BC and MSP agree with the proposed modification, the MSC will be notified in writing of the proposed change. If the MSC accepts the change, it will be implemented. If either party disagrees, the MSC will determine the matter if requested by one of the parties.

Section Proposals/Applications

Proposals or applications to create a new fee item, or to amend an existing fee item must be initiated by the Section owning the fee and approved by the Section Executive. Individuals wishing to submit a proposal on behalf of the Section must contact the Section President or Section Economic Representative prior to proceeding. Approval of the proposal by the Section's Executive group must accompany the submission of the signed application form. Accepted forms of approval include agreement recorded in the minutes of a Section's Executive meeting, a signed letter from the Section's Executives, or email consensus.

Prior to submitting a formal proposal to amend the Fee Guide/Payment Schedule, a Section may meet with the Fee Guide Advisor and/or other staff of the Doctors of BC Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Department to discuss the application. Doctors of BC can provide guidelines and assistance in the successful completion of the form (see *Application Form Guidelines*). Proposals from the Section should be directed to the Fee Guide Advisor, Doctors of BC Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Department, with all required documentation attached.

Once a Section has submitted an application to modify the Fee Guide/Payment Schedule, the Fee Guide Advisor and/or other staff will review to ensure it has been properly completed (e.g., no omissions, errors, ensure the fee item(s) is owned by the Section). All incomplete applications will be returned to the Section with a note outlining the deficiencies. In addition, all surgical applications will be sent to the Section of Anesthesiology for input on the anesthetic intensity/complexity level.

Once the application has been completed in a sufficient manner, the proposal will be forwarded to the MSP to be placed in the pre-review queue. In the interim, a Section may request from MSP the ability to bill under a Miscellaneous fee code if no fee item currently exists that adequately describes the procedure. MSP will generally determine a miscellaneous rate payable, based on information contained in the application.

Pre-Review Process

MSP pre-reviews all completed applications/proposals prior to being submitted to the Tariff Committee. MSP will endeavor to complete the initial review within 6 months. However, given the complexity of an application, this process may take longer.

During the pre-review process MSP may have concerns or questions relating to a component of the application. These are usually resolved through written correspondence between MSP and the Section. However, in the event that a particular issue is not resolved through written correspondence, a meeting may be scheduled between the Section, MSP, and the Doctors of BC to try to resolve the outstanding issue. In some cases a formal Working Group may be established between the same parties.

At the completion of the pre-review process the MSP will write to the Tariff Committee to advise

of their recommendation. The MSP will specify whether or not a consensus has been reached or if there are still unresolved issues.

Tariff Committee Review/Recommendation

Full Agreement

If MSP and the Section reach agreement regarding all components of an application (e.g., fee description, fee amount, guidelines, payment rules, notes etc.) then the pre-review process will be considered complete. In a letter to the Chair of the Tariff Committee, MSP will advise that agreement has been reached and the proposal is ready for the Tariff Committee's review and recommendation. The letter will document the terms agreed upon through the exchange of correspondence and/or meetings between the Section and MSP.

The Tariff Committee will review the letter submitted by MSP and any supporting documentation at its next meeting. If the Committee is in agreement with the proposed change, a motion recommending approval will be drafted for the Board of Director's consideration. The motion will include the description, fee amount, and applicable notes or guidelines. The minutes, if applicable, will also document payment policies that were agreed-to during the pre-review process. Should the Tariff Committee have any questions or concerns regarding the final proposal, additional information from the Section and/or MSP may be requested and approval of the change will be deferred pending further review.

Unresolved Issues

If agreement has not been reached on all points, MSP will outline the areas of concern in a letter to the Chair of the Tariff Committee. The Tariff Committee will endeavor to resolve these issues with the Section prior to making a recommendation to the Board of Directors. In typical situations the Section will be invited to meet with the Tariff Committee and MSP representatives to discuss the outstanding issues and find an agreeable resolution. In cases where agreement cannot be reached, the Tariff Committee will make a decision based on the research and background material provided. A recommendation will then be forwarded to the Board of Directors for consideration.

Board of Directors Approval and the Amendment & Clarification (A&C)

Following Board approval, an Amendment & Clarification (A&C) letter will be drafted for

submission to the Medical Services Commission (MSC). An A&C is the official document for submitting Fee Guide/Payment Schedule changes to the MSC following Board approval.

MSC Review and Approval and the Minute of the Commission (MOC)

Board approved Payment Schedule/Fee Guide changes are submitted to the MSC for review and final approval. The MSC is the only body that has legislative authority to change the Payment Schedule. If the Doctors of BC and MSP disagree on a proposed change, the MSC will make the final determination. MSC approved proposals will be released as a Minute of the Commission (MOC). This is the final step in the review and approval process.

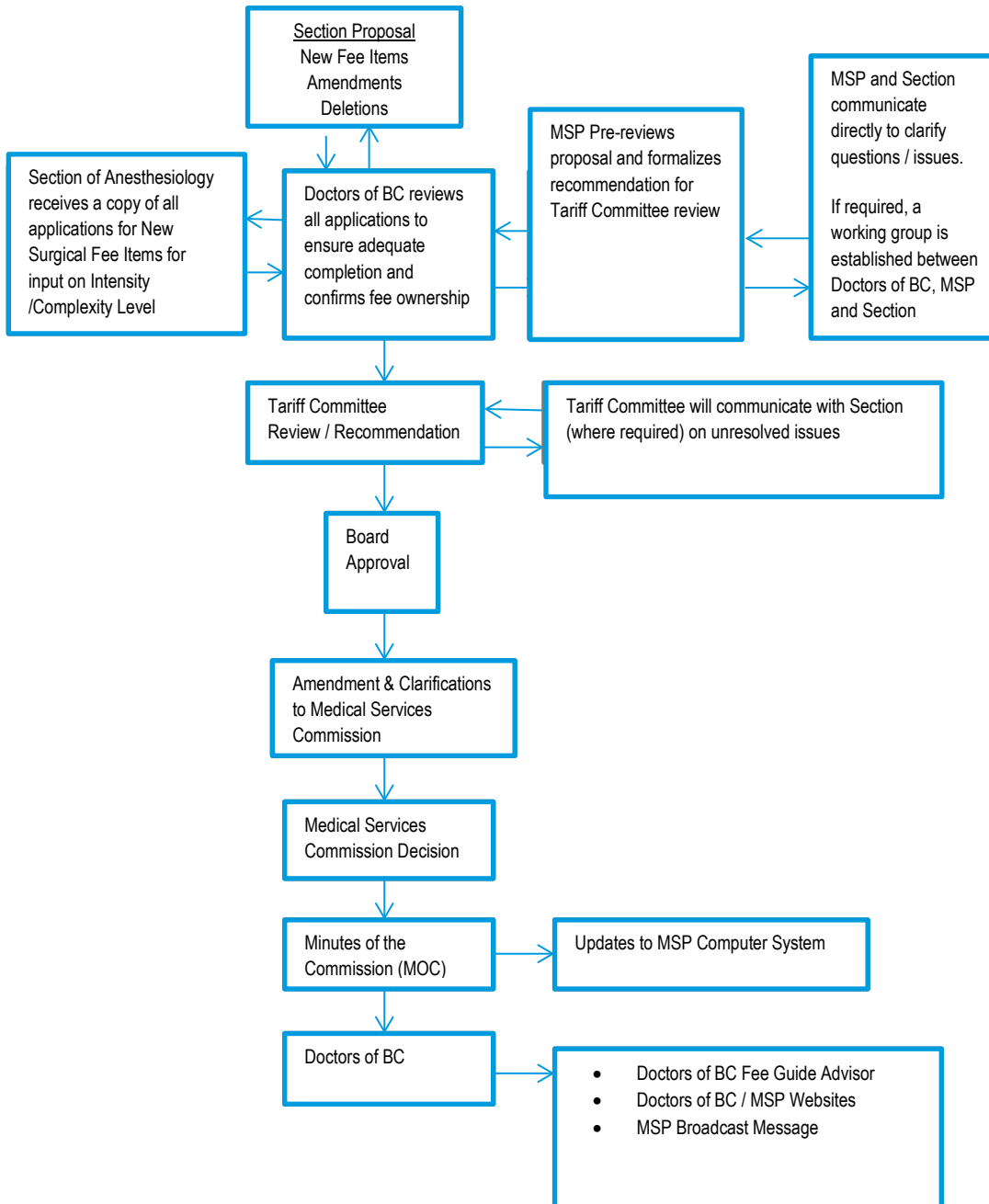
Fee Guide/Payment Schedule Updates

The MOC and Broadcast Message are the final documents that officially denote a MSC-approved modification has been made to the Payment Schedule. MSP will forward all signed MOC's and their corresponding Broadcast Messages to the Doctors of BC. Once received, the Fee Guide Advisor will update all internal documents and databases including the website which lists all updates to the Fee Guide.

It should be noted that although a MOC has been signed, it may take up to 3-6 months for the AI Network to be updated to accept billing claims. The Fee Guide Advisor will notify the Section via email when this process is complete. Members will be notified of Fee Guide/Payment Schedule changes via one or more of the following publications:

- 1) Doctors of BC and MSP websites.
- 2) MSP Broadcast Message.
- 3) Letter or email to the Section from the Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Department.

Figure: Schematic Diagram of the Administration of New Fee Items, Amendments, and Deletions



3. TIMELINES & UPDATES

Generally, a time-line of 12 months from the date the application is received by MSP to final approval is targeted, taking into account the various parties involved and many steps in the administrative process. However, this can vary significantly, depending on the complexity of the application and volume of applications in the pre-review queue.

Doctors of BC support staff in the Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Department request pre-review updates from the MSP prior to each Tariff Committee meeting, where any concerns/issues regarding a particular application or the process itself will be raised and discussed. If MSP and a Section disagree concerning an aspect of the application, the Section is typically invited to attend an upcoming Tariff Committee meeting to discuss the outstanding issue(s). Alternatively, it may be suggested that a Working Group be established to further examine the issue and facilitate a resolution.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Tariff Committee

The Tariff Committee is a Statutory Committee of Doctors of BC that reports directly to the Board of Directors. The Tariff Committee is authorized to study all matters concerning medical economics and report on those matters to the Board. The Board considers all major decisions of the Tariff Committee before final action and/or publicity is undertaken.

The Tariff Committee is composed of eight physician members with support staff provided by the Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Department. Three representatives from the Government attend the Tariff Committee meetings as guests, in a non-voting capacity. These representatives were included in the Tariff Committee in the early 1990's for efficiency and to streamline the process.

Medical Services Commission (MSC)

The MSC manages the Medical Services Plan (MSP) on behalf of the Government of British Columbia in accordance with the *Medicare Protection Act* and Regulations. The MSC is a nine-member statutory body made up of three representatives from Government, three

representatives from Doctors of BC and three members from the public, jointly nominated by Doctors of BC and Government.

The responsibilities of the MSC are two-fold: to ensure that all BC residents have reasonable access to medical care and to manage the provision and payment of medical services in an effective and cost-efficient manner.

The MSC is a signatory to the Physician Master Agreement. Articles 13 and 14 of the agreement outline the consultation process between Doctors of BC, Government and the MSC regarding changes to the Payment Schedule. If the Doctors of BC and Government agree to make a change to the Payment Schedule, an Amendment and Clarification letter will be submitted to the MSC outlining the details of the change. If the proposed change is accepted by the MSC, it will be implemented in the Payment Schedule/Fee Guide. In the event the Doctors of BC and Government disagree on a proposed amendment, both parties may make separate recommendations to the MSC who will determine what changes are made, if any.

Medical Services Branch (MSB)

The Medical Services Branch in the Ministry of Health is responsible for the administration and operation of the Medical Services Plan (MSP). The MSP is managed by the Medical Services Commission according to the legislative provisions of the *Medicare Protection Act* and Regulations.

The staff of the MSP (including a medical consultant) are responsible for reviewing the applications submitted by Sections to amend the Fee Guide/Payment Schedule. All aspects of the applications are reviewed and researched, including the proposed fee description, fee value, payment rules/restrictions, and fee notes. For new fee items, there is a specific focus on whether the proposed fee is for a medically required service and should be insured by the MSP.

Section

Physicians who wish to propose modifications to the MSC Payment Schedule/Fee Guide should submit their proposals to the Tariff Committee through the appropriate Section. If a Section chooses to advance a proposal to the Tariff Committee, it must submit its proposal in writing and complete an application form. In addition, the Section must submit a copy of minutes from a meeting of the Section's Executive group agreeing to the change. A signed letter of agreement

or consensus by email from the Executive group is also acceptable.

The Section is responsible for addressing all questions regarding the proposal during the pre-review period. Typically these questions will be addressed by MSP or Doctors of BC through written correspondence; however, the Section may be requested to meet in-person or by teleconference to discuss a certain aspect of the proposal.

5. RESOLUTION OF DISAGREEMENT

Tariff Committee/ Board of Directors

If there is disagreement between the Section and MSP during the pre-review process, the Tariff Committee will try to resolve the issue with the Section prior to making a recommendation to the Board. If the Section does not agree with the Tariff Committee's recommendation, the Section may request that the decision be re-reviewed. If there is still disagreement after the re-review, the Section may make their case to the Board.

Review Committee

If a Section disagrees with the decision of the Board, the Section may request that the matter be brought before the Review Committee for resolution. Paragraph (iv) under Doctors of BC (BCMA) Bylaw 9.2(f) stipulates:

(iv) Any Section may refer any decision of the Board regarding any recommendation of the Tariff Committee to the Review Committee for review within one hundred twenty (120) days after the date of distribution of the decision.

Once a decision has been rendered by the Review Committee it is final and binding on every member, the Society of Specialists, the Society of General Practitioners, every Section and the Board.

The Review Committee is a Statutory Committee within the Doctors of BC. The Committee is comprised of 4 physician members, a non-physician Chair, a member from the Section whose case has been referred to the Committee, and if required, a member from the Section that the Board has designated from among the Sections that are adverse in interest to the Section

whose case has been referred to the Committee. Only the 4 physician members and the Chair are entitled to vote.

Medical Services Commission (MSC)

In situations whereby Doctors of BC and the MSP are still in disagreement over a modification to the Fee Guide/Payment Schedule after a decision of the Tariff Committee and Board, either party may submit the matter to the Medical Services Commission (MSC) for decision. Doctors of BC and the MSP each prepare and provide Briefing Notes to the Commission for its review. A Briefing Note provides the background to the issue, areas for discussion, documentation to support its claim, as well as recommendations for the Commission to consider. At a Commission meeting, a member of the Tariff Committee and/or a member of the Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Department, and often a member of the Section, present on behalf of the Doctors of BC. The MSP also has a delegate to represent its interest. Once the Commission has rendered its decision, it is final and binding.

6. FUNDING FOR NEW FEE ITEMS

Under the 2004 and 2006 Agreements, funding is available to pay for new fee items. Fee item proposals that qualify to be funded out of this money must meet the following criteria:

The new fee item fund established in the 2004 and 2006 Agreements are to be used to fund new fee items that are created for new procedures and techniques. It may also be used to fund medically required work currently not able to be accurately billed under any other specific fee-for-service items. The money is not to be used for fee increases or for new fee items that have a higher fee for a service currently adequately described and paid under an existing fee item.

If proposed changes have a financial impact and do not qualify for new fee item money they must be funded by the Section. This can be accomplished in two ways: 1) decrease an existing fee item(s); or, 2) funded out of a fee allocation.

7. DEFINITIONS

Miscellaneous Codes

According to Preamble C.4., miscellaneous fee codes are intended for unusually complex procedures, procedures that are established technology but are infrequently performed and are not yet listed in the Fee Guide/Payment Schedule, or in cases where a physician desires independent consideration.

Provisional Fee Items

Provisional Fee items are items prefixed with a “P” and are usually determined by the Medical Services Plan or recommended by the Tariff Committee when it is required to “keep track” of billings for items that require monitoring (generally to ensure certain fiscal responsibilities are met.) Provisional designations are used as an interim measure to pay physicians for services rendered and to keep stats until fiscal impact has been confirmed.

8. Choosing the Correct Form

There are five forms applicable for proposing modifications to the Fee Guide/Payment Schedule:

| Form | Use this Form When: |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1) New Medical Fee Item | <p>Requesting a new fee item for a service that is NOT considered a surgical procedure. All new consultations, visits, and counseling fee items should be submitted using this form, regardless of the Section requesting it.</p> <p>If a fee item is to be deleted in conjunction with this new fee item, the Delete Fee Item form should accompany this form.</p> <p>If more than one fee item is being requested each fee item should be submitted on a separate form.</p> <p>Example: Fee Item X is to be split into Fee Item Y and Fee Item Z.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If Fee Item X is to be deleted, a Delete Fee Item Form and two New Medical Fee Item Forms would be submitted. |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Fee Item X is to be maintained but at a different fee level, then an Amend Description or Fee Form and two New Medical Fee Item Forms would be submitted. |
| 2) New Surgical Fee Item | Requesting a new fee item for a surgical procedure. . |
| 3) New Diagnostic and Selected Therapeutic Procedures Fee Item | Requesting a new fee item for diagnostic and selected therapeutic purposes . |
| 4) Amend Description or Fee | Requesting an amendment (i.e., clarification or additional notes) to the description or fee of an existing fee item. However, the intent of the fee item must not change. If the original intent of the fee item has changed, the fee item should be deleted using the Delete Fee Item form and a new fee item requested using either the New Medical Surgical or Diagnostic Fee Item forms. |
| 5) Delete Fee Item | Requesting the deletion of an existing fee item (i.e., fee item is obsolete or is being replaced by a new procedure). |

9. Application Form Guidelines

One of the major delays in processing requests is due to insufficient information or lack of detail. Please answer the questions on the forms with as much detail as possible. Any questions that are not applicable should be specified as such rather than leaving the space blank. Any proposals submitted with blanks in any portion of the document will be considered incomplete. The following check list will assist in the completion of the form. Please contact a Fee Guide Advisor (see Contact Information) for assistance in completing an application, rather than leaving information blank.

Physicians or Sections that are not familiar with the application process are encouraged to meet with the Fee Guide Advisor prior to submitting an application form. It is also recommended that Sections take advantage of the resources of the Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Department to assist with any data or costing requirements (see Contact Information).

The checklist on the following page can be used to determine readiness of an application for submission.

| Check Box <input type="checkbox"/> | | Item |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Fee Item Description</i> | Is the title of the fee item adequately described? It is important that the title be as unambiguous as possible. In order to achieve this, it may be necessary to have long titles which detail inclusions/exclusions etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Supporting Documentation</i> | Is the service supported by medical evidence? If so, then copies of all medical journal articles or other related research should be attached along with application. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Current Billing Practice</i> | Has the Section indicated how the service is currently being paid (i.e., under what fee code MSP will require this to determine the financial impact of the proposal. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Volume Estimates</i> | Has a volume estimate been provided? The Economics team should be contacted if assistance is required. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Anesthesia Requirements</i> | The Economics team will forward sectional proposals to the Section of Anesthesiology when pre-review letter and forms are forwarded to MSP. If anesthesia is not applicable, then put N/A in this field. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Contacted Sections Impacted by Proposal</i> | Sections also billing these or any related fees, and/or whose services may be affected by the proposed changes should be contacted for input. A Fee Guide Advisor can assist with this process if requested (see Contact Information). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>No Missing Information</i> | Has any part of the form been left blank? Any questions that are not applicable, not available, or unknown should be specified as such. Any fields left blank on the form will be considered incomplete and returned to the Section complete. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Required Signatures & Minute Excerpts</i> | Has the excerpt from the Section's minutes approving the proposal been attached? Has the application form been signed by the Section President/Chair? |

Fee Guide/Payment Schedule Forms

All Fee Guide/Payment Schedule Forms can be downloaded from the Doctors of BC Website at:
<https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/member-area/fee-guide-agreements/fee-guide/modification-process>

To download a form:

1. Highlight the desired form
2. Right click with your mouse
3. Save target as (save to a drive on your computer)

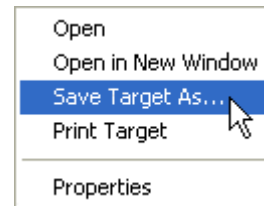
Example: Downloadable Fee Guide/Payment Schedule Forms

Choosing the Correct Form PDF

Application Form Guidelines (Form Check List) PDF

Fee/Guide/Payment Schedule Forms

- New Medical Fee Item
- New Surgical Fee Item
- New Diagnostic and Selected Therapeutic Procedure Fee Item
- Amend Description or Fee
- Delete Fee Item



Once the form has been filled out in its entirety, please print out, attach all required information, and send with an accompanying covering letter to:

Dr. Brian Gregory
Chair, Tariff Committee
c/o Economics, Advocacy and
Negotiations Department
Doctors of BC
Suite 115, 1665 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 5A4

10. CONTACT INFORMATION

Doctors of BC Economics and Policy Analysis Department

| Contact Person/Role | Mailing Address | Phone/Fax/Email |
|--|--|---|
| Tariff Proposals & Tariff Inquiries: | | |
| Ms. Catriona Innes Manager, Fee Guide | Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Dept. Doctors of BC Suite 115, 1665 West Broadway Vancouver, BC V6J 5A4 | Phone: (604) 638-2866 Fax: (604) 638-2922 Email: cinnes@doctorsofbc.ca |
| Fee Guide & Billing Questions: | | |
| Ms. Lea Harth Advisor, Fee Guide | Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Doctors of BC Suite 115, 1665 West Broadway Vancouver, BC V6J 5A4 | Phone: (604) 638-2827 Fax: (604) 638-2922 Email: lharth@doctorsofbc.ca |
| Data Requests: | | |
| Mr. Raaj Tiagi Senior Health Economist | Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Dept. Doctors of BC Suite 115, 1665 West Broadway Vancouver, BC V6J 5A4 | Phone: (604) 638-2896 Fax: (604) 638-2922 Email: rtiagi@doctorsofbc.ca |
| Ms. Victoria Watson Director, Economics | Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Dept. Doctors of BC Suite 115, 1665 West Broadway Vancouver, BC V6J 5A4 | Phone: (604) 638-7852 Fax: (604) 638-2922 Email: vwatson@doctorsofbc.ca |
| All Other Inquiries: | | |
| Mr. Jim Aikman Executive Vice President, Economics, Advocacy & Negotiations | Economics, Advocacy and Negotiations Dept. Doctors of BC Suite 115, 1665 West Broadway Vancouver, BC V6J 5A4 | Phone: (604) 638-2893 Fax: (604) 638-2922 Email: jaikman@doctorsofbc.ca |

Medical Services Plan

| Contact Person/Role | Mailing Address | Phone/Fax/Email |
|--|---|---|
| Dr. Jason Wale Senior Medical Consultant | Ministry of Health Payment Schedule Administration Compensation Policy & Programs Health Human Resources and Labour Relations Division PO Box 9649 STN PROV GOVT Victoria, BC V8W 9P4 | Email: jason.wale@gov.bc.ca |
| Ms. Betty Louie Senior Payment Schedule Advisor | Ministry of Health Payment Schedule Administration Compensation Policy & Programs Health Human Resources and Labour Relations Division PO Box 9649 STN PROV GOVT Victoria, BC V8W 9P4 | Email: betty.louie@gov.bc.ca |
| Mr David Mills Manager MSC Payment Schedule | Ministry of Health Payment Schedule Administration Compensation Policy & Programs Health Human Resources and Labour Relations Division PO Box 9649 STN PROV GOVT Victoria, BC V8W 9P4 | Email: david.mills@gov.bc.ca |
| Ms. Marie Ty Executive Director, Payment Schedule Administration | Ministry of Health Payment Schedule Administration Compensation Policy & Programs Health Human Resources and Labour Relations Division PO Box 9649 STN PROV GOVT Victoria, BC V8W 9P4 | Email: marie.ty@gov.bc.ca |