

Alberta urged to cut wait for digestive care

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As Alberta moves to overhaul health care, a doctors' association said Thursday it hopes to meet with Health Minister Iris Evans in a bid to improve the province's poor track record on access to digestive disease specialists.

The Canadian Association of Gastro-enterology said Thursday that Alberta's medicare reforms should boost patient access, noting the province has the longest waiting times in Canada for appointments with digestive disease specialists.

"We demand that (politicians) in Alberta take note of the serious problem with access for patients," said a statement from the association.

The comments come after two other physicians' groups -- the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta and the Alberta Medical Association -- called on the province to provide more information on its reforms.

The Klein government has proposed a controversial 10-point plan to overhaul Alberta's health system, with the dual goals of increasing patient access and reducing cost.

A CAG study, released in February, found Alberta patients referred to see gastroenterologists had to wait more than 10 months for an appointment or procedure -- four months longer than recommended and the longest delay in Canada.

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