

Fees for medical liability protection decrease in populous regions

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The average fee for members of the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA) is decreasing in the country's four most populous provinces. Physicians in Quebec will see the largest drop, from \$3596 in 2017 to \$2778 in 2018, a decrease of 23%.

The CMPA is the primary provider of medical liability protection for Canadian doctors. It also compensates patients who are found in legal cases to have been harmed by negligent medical care. The association, which has more than 95 000 members, held its annual meeting on Aug. 23 in Quebec City.

The average fee in Ontario, at \$8779, is the highest by far, but is still a decrease of 12.1% from last year. Doctors in British Columbia and Alberta will see a small decrease, 4.9%, reducing their average fee to \$6449.

CMPA members in the association's remaining fee region — comprising Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Atlantic Canada and the territories — will pay 7.7% more, bringing the average fee to \$4295.

The frequency of legal claims brought against the CMPA has decreased in recent years. However, overall compensation to patients successful in legal cases has been high. According to the CMPA, it has paid nearly

\$1 billion to Canadian patients on behalf of its members over the past five years. Member fees also go toward covering the association's other expenses, which include legal representation of members and operational costs.

Improving the safety of medical care, and thereby reducing harm to patients, is the most effective "means of cost containment," Dr. Harley Stern, CEO of CMPA, said in a statement. The CMPA is working with governments across Canada to reduce "unnecessary costs" and improve medical safety by offering medical education programs, added Stern.

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