

Meeting with your MLA

This year, the opportunity for public fertility treatment funding is at a critical juncture in our province. Our provincial government is nearing the end of reviewing a publicly funded study commissioned by the Alberta Government and conducted by the University of Alberta's School of Public Policy that supports public funding of assisted reproductive technologies. This is an imperative time to make your voice heard regarding the need for funding infertility treatment in Alberta.

Generations of Hope encourages everyone with an infertility story (your own, a friend, a daughter, a sister, a brother, a grandchild) to make your experience heard and count toward more equitable infertility treatment in our province so all Albertans can have an opportunity to build their families safely.

One of the most effective ways to articulate how infertility has affected you and your loved ones, and to influence legislation and policy debates, is to speak with your local MLA in person. Personal meetings are a direct, immediate and clear way to communicate a powerful message to your elected representative.

Meeting with your MLA: A Step by Step Guide

Step One: Finding your MLA

You can find your local Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) by visiting: <http://streetkey.elections.ab.ca>. Here, you will also find their email address, local constituency office location and phone number.

Step Two: Where and When to Meet?

It is customary to meet at the MLA's local constituency office. When the Legislature is in session, MLAs are typically available to meet with constituents at their local constituency offices on Fridays. When the Legislature is on a break (also called constituency weeks), MLAs are available to meet throughout the week at their local offices. The Legislative Calendar is [available online](#) to check on which dates your MLA will most likely be available.

Step Three: Send a Request

Generations of Hope has prepared a sample meeting request template (attached) that can be customized for your use and emailed (or mailed) to your MLA's office. It provides the standard request requirements to be filled in (your name and address, who will attend the meeting with you if applicable,

the topic you'd like to discuss, and the suggested meeting dates and location – typically at the local constituency office).

Step Four: Follow Up with Staff

A few days after you submit your meeting request, feel free to contact your MLA's local constituency office and confirm your request was received. The constituency assistant should explain what the MLA's schedule looks like and if he or she is likely to be available on the days and times you requested. Flexibility and patience may be required as an MLA's time can be scarce. But by working with the local constituency assistant, you will significantly increase your chances of securing a meeting at a mutually agreeable date and time.

Step Five: Meet your MLA

When you meet with your MLA, be prepared to discuss your experience with infertility, whether you (or a loved one) proceeded with treatment or not, and the impact it has had on you and your loved ones. As appropriate, incorporate these key messages which help to raise awareness of the medical condition and to paint the bigger picture of infertility in Alberta and the opportunity that exists:

- A recent report commissioned by the Alberta Government and conducted by the University of Alberta's School of Public Policy shows cost savings to our healthcare system of up to \$97 million dollar over the first 18 years of life if fertility treatments, tied to a single embryo transfer policy, were publicly funded. This report is available online on the Alberta Health Technologies Decision Process Website under '[Provincial Reviews](#)'.
 - If the wider societal costs are taken into account, the actual savings realized to the Province could be up to \$179 million over the first 18 years of life.
- Every year, thousands of Albertans face the dilemma of being financially unable to pursue a family because of the high cost of fertility treatment. Funding fertility treatments gives equal access to all Albertans to build families safely, regardless of their income where they live.
- Other provinces have already taken steps to support residents suffering from infertility. Quebec has been publicly funding in vitro fertilization treatments since 2010, and the Government of Manitoba provides a tax credit to cover the costs of infertility treatment up to 40 per cent. Recently, Ontario committed \$50M annually to funding one treatment cycle of in-vitro fertilization (including both a fresh cycle and multiple frozen cycles) in order to improve access to IVF for thousands more Ontarians living with infertility and New Brunswick implemented a one-time \$5000 rebate (starting April 1st 2014) for residents going through fertility treatment.
- 76 per cent of Albertans support public funding of infertility treatments, and for good reason: on top of savings to our healthcare system, it will ensure better health outcomes for moms and babies.
- Infertility is a medical condition that affects one in six Alberta families.



FERTILITY ASSISTANCE FUND

- Encourage your MLA speak to or write a letter to the Minister of Health, to raise awareness about this important medical disease that affects so many Albertans, and bring to his attention the barriers thousands of families face every day in building their families safely.

When your meeting concludes, we'd recommend leaving the provided infographic [hyperlinked] about infertility in Alberta as a leave behind piece of key information for your MLA.

Step Six: Follow-Up

Generations of Hope recommends that you send a personal letter (sample template attached) thanking your MLA for his or her time, and reiterating your key messages. Please also inform Generations of Hope about your meeting (sample template attached), especially if the MLA expressed an opinion or personal experience about infertility.

Thank you for contributing to raising awareness of infertility in Alberta, and helping make our province stronger by giving all Albertans the opportunity to create their families safely.

Meeting Request Template

Subject: Access to Infertility Treatment in Alberta

Dear MLA [insert MLA's last name]:

I am writing to you both as your constituent, and as someone who has been deeply affected by infertility, a medical condition that affects one in six Alberta families. Every year, thousands of Albertans like me face the dilemma of being financially unable to pursue a family because of the high cost of fertility treatment.

As your constituent, I strongly support public funding of infertility treatment in our province. Just last year, a report commissioned by the Alberta Government and conducted by the University of Alberta's School of Public Policy recommended that infertility treatments be funded, and that doing so would not only result in better access to quality care, but also save the province \$97 million per year.

I would like to meet with you for 15-30 minutes on [include potential meeting dates and times] at your constituency office to discuss my experience with infertility, and how you, as an elected official can help address this important issue that touches so many Albertans. I will be attending with [include other attendees, if applicable].

I will follow up in a few days on this request. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

[Name]

[Address]

[Phone number]

Thank You Letter Template

Subject: Thank you

Dear MLA [insert MLA's last name],

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me [include other attendees, if applicable] on [date of meeting].

Infertility is a medical condition that affects one in six Alberta families, including my own. Every year, thousands of Albertans face the dilemma of being financially unable to pursue a family because of the high cost of fertility treatment.

Our province is faced with an opportunity to fund fertility treatments, which would give equal access to all Albertans to build families safely, regardless of their income or where they live. Just last year, a report commissioned by the Alberta Government and conducted by the University of Alberta's School of Public Policy recommended that fertility treatments be publicly funded, and in so doing, would save our health system at least \$97 million per year – up to \$179 million if wider societal costs are taken into account - while giving better health outcomes for moms and babies. I hope I can call upon your support when the time comes to move this important initiative forward.

Thank you,

[Name]

[Address]

[Phone number]

Generations of Hope Follow-Up

Please email your feedback to info@generationsofhope.ca

Subject: MLA Meeting Follow Up

1. Name of MLA:
2. Date met:
3. MLA's level of support for funding fertility treatments: supportive / unsupportive / neutral
4. Follow up required:
5. Other comments: