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Preamble

The overarching intent of FE funding is to foster meaningful consultation and collaboration between MSAs and health authorities. To meet this goal, FE expenditures must align with at least one of the following goals of the [Memorandum of Understanding on Regional and Local Engagement](#):

- To improve communication and relationships among the medical staff so that their views are more effectively represented.
- To prioritize issues that significantly affect physicians and patient care.
- To support medical staff contributions to the development and achievement of health authority plans and initiatives that directly affect physicians.
- To have meaningful interactions between the medical staff and health authority leaders, including physicians in formal HA medical leadership roles.

FE funds are primarily intended to compensate physicians for their time spent participating in internal meetings and meetings with health authority partners in relation to the FE initiative. Secondary uses of the funds include covering infrastructure costs of the MSA/physician societies.

FE supports the role that community-based partners can play in consulting and collaborating with MSAs and health authorities in improving physicians’ work environment and patient care in facilities.

Decision making

Local FE funding decisions are made by the MSA executives/society directors in conjunction with MSA working groups, where applicable. Before decisions are made, health authorities must be consulted on proposed activities that have operational impact or require health authority involvement, funding or in-kind support. Proposed activities can be brought forward by MSA members and health authorities for consideration.

Accountability

MSA executives/society directors have a fiduciary duty to the taxpayers of BC and the Specialist Services Committee to ensure that funding decisions align with the Memorandum of Understanding's goals. At the same time, they must be cost-conscious and accountable in their approach. All funding decisions must be able stand up to the scrutiny of Specialist Services Committee, MSA members, and ultimately the public.

Funding Guidelines

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide greater clarity to MSAs and health authorities on the prohibited uses of Facility Engagement (FE) funds, and other frequently asked areas of use that are not explained in the MOU. Recognizing that MSAs will continue to encounter grey zones in funding through the course of the initiative, criteria are also provided to assist in their decision-making.

Supplementary guidelines for select MOU funding criteria

- 1. Clinical equipment:** FE funds may not be used for the purchase of equipment or tools used by clinicians or health authority employees that involves direct or indirect patient care, or patient information/data.
- 2. Clinical service:**
 - a. FE funds may not be used for the compensation of clinicians, health authority employees or contractors in the delivery of direct and indirect patient care.
 - b. Due to the Hunter Arbitration award (2005), that considers the scheduling of physicians within a facility to be a form of clinical service, compensation for scheduling or tools that facilitate the scheduling of physicians within a facility is not a permitted use of FE funding.
- 3. Compensation for meeting attendance:**
 - a. With approval from the MSA working group, FE funds can pay for MSA members' participation at meetings, or a portion thereof, with MSA members and/or health authority partners that are not associated with:
 - i. quality assurance investigations, activities associated with members' practice reviews, or standard department/division or facility quality assurance activities (e.g., morbidity and mortality rounds, case reviews);
 - ii. attendance at department/division meetings¹ or MSA meetings as required by the medical staff rules; and,
 - iii. quality assurance committees associated or reporting to the Medical Advisory Committee at any level.
 - b. FE funds can pay for MSA members' attendance at Medical Advisory Committee meetings at the health authority-wide, regional and local levels.

¹ Matters discussed at department/division meetings include: call schedules, recruitment, resource allocation, equipment and space requests if applicable, issues or complaints about or raised by other departments, and assigning or dividing up attendance for other meetings and committees. For facilities that do not have department meetings, FE funds cannot be used to cover physicians' time discussing matters typically discussed at department meetings.

- c. Physicians who attend meetings as part of their contract deliverables with the health authority, and health authority operational leaders are not eligible for FE funding.
- d. FE funds cannot be used to purchase non-cash gifts for meeting attendees who are receiving sessional payment.

4. Donations: FE funds cannot be used for charitable donations or to purchase non-cash gifts for members of the public or auxiliary organizations.

SSC FE Working Group Enhancements to the MOU provisions

5. Capital projects:

- a. FE funds may be used for capital projects or renovations (e.g., physician lounges) to a one-time total limit (i.e., does not renew each year) of 15% of their annual site funding or \$40,000, whichever limit is higher. It is recommended for MSAs to work with health authority partners to identify opportunities for cost-sharing.
- b. FE funding is not intended for capital projects or renovations where the funding responsibility rests elsewhere, regardless of whether the funding for these projects is considered inadequate.

6. Project infrastructure:

- a. MSAs must consider if and how projects are sustained beyond pilot phases by engaging with key stakeholders early in development.
- b. FE funding can be used to hire contracted staff to assist with the operationalization of projects approved by the MSA executives and/or MSA working group (e.g., evaluation, data collection and analysis, project coordination and tracking).

7. Other Joint Clinical Committee projects seeking sustainability funding: When assessing the appropriateness of using FE funding for Joint Clinical Committee funded projects (e.g., GPSC, Divisions of Family Practice, Shared Care), the following should be considered:

- a. the relevance of the project to address facility-based issues;
- b. the extent of MSA and health authority involvement;
- c. whether funding responsibility rests elsewhere, regardless of whether funding for those activities is considered adequate; and,
- d. if there are cost-sharing opportunities, where applicable.

8. Physician research and quality projects:

- a. FE funds can be used for quality improvement projects² that encompass the Institute of Health Improvement Quadruple Aim (i.e., improving patient outcomes, improving patient and provider experience, reducing costs), involve multiple physician groups and/or collaboration with health authority partners.

² **Quality improvement** aims to improve internal processes, practices, costs or productivity by assessing an existing practice; applies a flexible design on ongoing feedback through Plan Do Study Act cycle; and, is completed quickly through rapid cycles.

- b. FE funds cannot be used for physician research projects³.

9. Training:

- a. FE funds cannot be used to pay physicians' sessionals and expenses for required CME accredited clinical training.
- b. Alternative funding sources should first be considered for clinical training that is not required for maintaining a license or privileges. If a MSA decides to use FE funding for non-required clinical training, it must involve multiple physicians groups or the majority of the MSA. FE funds cannot be used to pay physicians' sessionals for attending non-required CME accredited clinical training.
- c. MSAs are encouraged to explore alternative funding sources for non-clinical training before utilizing FE funds. If FE funds are used, it can be used to support accredited and non-accredited non-clinical training (e.g., speakers' fees, physician sessionals and expenses) provided that multiple physician groups or the majority of the MSA can benefit. Areas of non-clinical training relevant to MSAs include communication, conflict resolution, and leadership.

10. PQI/FE work:

- a. FE funding can be used to pay for Physician Quality Improvement graduates' time spent training and guiding their MSA colleagues on MSA endorsed quality projects.
- b. FE funding can be used to pay MSA members' time in working with the PQI-funded physicians on their projects at various stages (e.g., design, implementation, evaluation).

11. Events:

- a. FE funds can only be used for events that align with the MOU objectives such as those promoting awareness of and participation in FE activities, and fostering relationship building amongst MSA members and with health authority and community partners.
- b. FE funds cannot be used to pay physician sessional time to attend events where the primary intent is to socialize, or to cover costs related to fitness or social activities (e.g., gym memberships, ski tickets, golfing fees, yoga sessions, movie nights).
- c. Attendees who do not have a direct role in Facility Engagement (i.e., family members) cannot have their individual expenses covered by FE and/or be remunerated for their participation time.

12. Wellness Activities:

- a. FE funds can be used to support activities that addresses work environment and organizational risks for increasing physician burnout (e.g., reducing administrative burdens on physicians; improving work flows; improving collegiality among and within work groups such as improving teamwork, communication and conflict management).

³ **Research** aims to generate new knowledge that is generalizable to the wider population; test a new practice, theory or intervention; and, its design is tightly controlled in order to limit the effect of confounding variables on the variables of interest. For further information, please click here: [Is it research or quality improvement?](#)

- b. Group activities that enhance individual approaches to manage burnout symptoms such as resiliency training can be funded, but sites should consider organizational and work group strategies for reducing risk of burnout as well (e.g., working with health authority partners on reducing paperwork or developing efficient workflows for implementing electronic health records; departmental training on respectful peer-to-peer communication).
- c. FE funds cannot be used cover costs related to fitness or social activities (e.g., gym memberships, ski tickets, golfing fees, yoga sessions).

Decision-making Criteria for Grey Zones

The following MSA decision-making criteria have been provided to address ambiguous uses that are not explained in the MOU criteria or SSC funding guidelines.

- a. Does the proposed activity fall outside one of the specific categories of prohibited uses under the MOU or other SSC guidelines? (clinical equipment, paying for clinical services, real estate, etc.)
- b. Does the proposed activity foster meaningful interactions and communication amongst MSA members and/or between the health authority and MSA members?
- c. Does the proposed activity directly influence positive change for the medical staff's work environment and patient care?
- d. Is the proposed activity supported by a broad spectrum of physicians at the site or in the region (e.g., multiple departments, multiple disciplines)?
- e. Is the proposed activity supported by the health authority (e.g., health authority sponsor or funding/in-kind commitment)?
- f. Is the MSA the most appropriate funding source?
- g. Would the MSA be able to publicly defend the proposed initiative as an appropriate use of public funding?
- h. If required, is the proposed initiative able to stand on its own without continued sustainment funding? This question does not apply if the proposed initiative does not require ongoing funding.

If all the answers are 'yes' then the proposal can proceed without further review.

The proposed initiative cannot proceed if the answer to a) is 'no'. There is no SSC appeal process for sites if the proposed initiative falls within one of the specific categories of prohibited uses in the MOU (section 5 (a) to (f)) or SSC funding guidelines.

If one of the answers to b) to h) are 'no' and the MSA is having difficulty reaching a decision, then the proposal can be brought forward to a regional MSA-HA table or ad hoc meeting for consultation and documentation. Participants should include other FE participating MSA executives in the region or sub-region, local/regional HA partners, and FE staff. HA partners are to be consulted on every potential grey zone funding decision prior to final approval by the MSA.

Escalation Process

Grey zone uses: If a local MSA is having difficulty making a decision on a proposed activity after consultation with other MSA executives and HA partners at a regional level, the matter can be brought forward to the SSC FE Working Group and its Co-Chairs for input and/or decision.