

COVID-19 Status

APRIL 23, 2020

We have confirmed 306 new cases of COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, bringing the provincial total to 3,401. Of the total cases, we suspect 308 cases may be the result of community transmission, 159 have been hospitalized and 44 have been in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Currently, there are 70 cases in hospital, with 18 in an ICU. 1,310 cases have now recovered.

This data helps us better understand the severity of COVID-19 in Alberta. It's important to note that the community transmission cases are those that are *suspected* of being acquired in the community. Once public health teams have investigated these cases, they are confirmed as either being through community transmission or connected to a known case. As investigations are completed, these numbers can change significantly day-to-day. Also, we include both the total numbers of hospitalizations and ICU admissions since the onset of the pandemic, and the numbers of those in hospital or ICU on each day. Both are important parts of the pandemic picture in Alberta.

Today, Sucker Creek First Nation requested information be disclosed about a single case, to make sure people have accurate information. The individual was a contact of a case in High Prairie and is currently self-isolating. There is no outbreak on the First Nation. The First Nation is well prepared, like other First Nations, and they are responding effectively, with support from AHS and Indigenous Services Canada.

4,484 tests were completed over the last 24 hours, bringing our total COVID-19 tests to 108,521, since the start of the pandemic.

Sadly, we are reporting today that five Albertans have passed away in the last 24 hours. To date, there have been a total of 66 deaths in Alberta related to COVID-19. There were also two additional deaths in Brooks, in individuals who had COVID-19 tests pending. These deaths are being investigated to determine whether they were COVID-19 related.

Losses of loved ones are difficult at any time, but at this time, as our ability to gather is restricted, we recognize that many of our traditional ways of mourning and offering our respects are not possible. We want to express our deepest sympathies to Albertans who are experiencing losses at this especially difficult time, whether or not they are related to COVID-19.

Things You Need to Know

Change to Implementation Date for Single Site Staffing

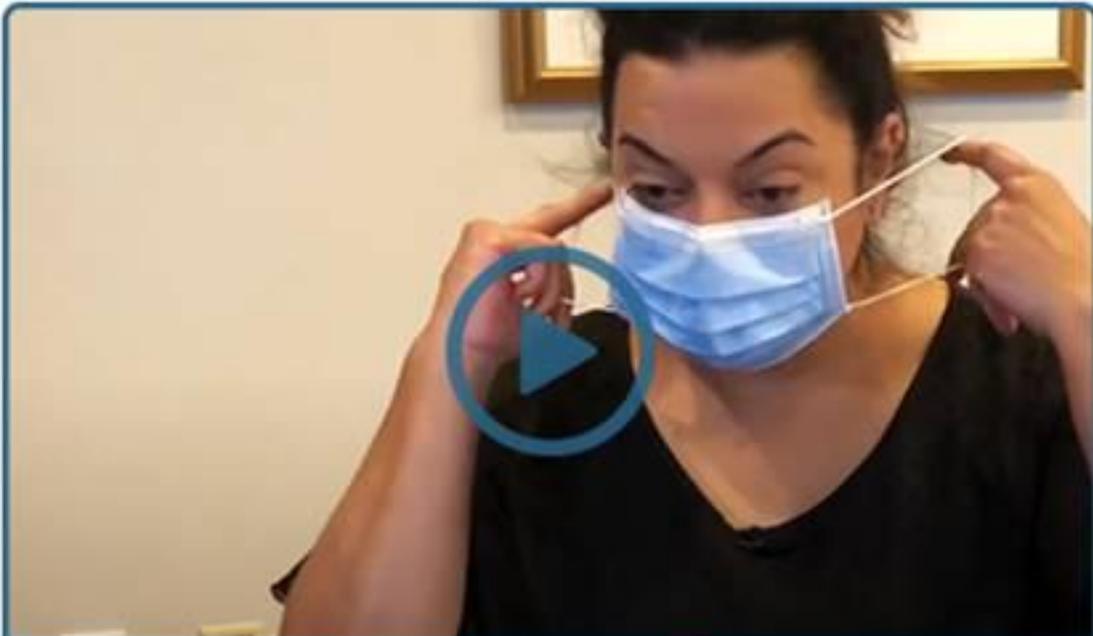
Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, put in place [an order on single site employment](#) for Long-Term Care and Designated Supportive Living (LTC/DSL) earlier this month. The order, which was scheduled to be implemented tomorrow, April 23, will now be [paused to allow for further planning](#). More information will be provided in the coming days.

PPE Tip of the Day

The daily series - *PPE Tip of the Day* – features quick and simple reminders you can take forward into your practice, from shift to shift.

The W Trick: Vanch Mask – Donning and Doffing

AHS has worked with the suppliers of the new Vanch masks to have the nose pieces adjusted and length of the mask increased, and these changes will be in place for next shipment to AHS. Until then, our frontline teams have shown us a helpful tip to addressing fit issues – [the W trick!](#)



Danielle Assad shares tips on fitting a Vanch mask

Note: if you are providing direct patient care and are experiencing mask fit issues, we would suggest that you add a face shield to offer extra protection. For patients suspected or known to have COVID-19, face shield/goggles, mask, gown and gloves should **always** be used.

Guidance on Testing Asymptomatic Patients for COVID-19

Our understanding of COVID-19 and best practices with regard to patient care continues to evolve. We would like to clarify that it is not necessary to perform COVID-19 testing on an asymptomatic patient before providing routine, urgent, or emergent health services, or before accepting a patient who is being transferred from another site.

The following outlines the rationale behind this guidance:

1. Prevalence of COVID-19 in the general asymptomatic patient is relatively low.

2. If testing were provided, the burden of virus may be below the detectable threshold at the time of collection, but could increase above the detectable threshold when the health service is provided, which could lead to a false negative. This false negative could lead to less adherence to precautions and proper use of PPE in the event that symptoms develop.
3. Delaying health services while awaiting a swab result may result in unnecessary morbidity or mortality, without adding value to the decision-making process.

This approach ensures patients receive the care they need when they need it. For more information, please visit ahs.ca/covid.

Primary Care Provides ongoing Healthcare to Albertans

Your ongoing health needs don't stop during the COVID-19 pandemic and neither do our primary healthcare networks. We want to make sure Albertans are taking care of their overall health and getting the care and support they need day to day.

In this new [AHS podcast in our COVID-19 series](#), Dr. Linda Slocombe, AHS Senior Medical Director, Primary Health Care, talks about the important role Alberta's family physicians continue to play in supporting Albertans experiencing any non-urgent medical concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Psychosocial Disaster Learning

Psychosocial Disaster Learning Series is offering an online refresher for anyone who has previously trained in Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) or anyone who would like to learn more about PFA.

This series provides a review of PFA knowledge in critical times, such as prior to being deployed in a disaster response role. The five chapters of this series compliment the in-class PFA training, and are available to AHS staff through [MyLearningLink](#) and to external partners, [here](#).

The complete series of five chapters will be released over the next three months and can be accessed anytime you may want to review the fundamentals of your PFA training.

Virtual Health Website

AHS Virtual Health now has an [external website](#) offering information and tools to support virtual healthcare, including supporting interactions for those patients in [self-isolation](#), unable to attend an AHS clinic, or located in rural and remote areas. Visit ahs.ca/virtualhealth to learn more.

In the Zones

Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC) Update – Central

With the recent expansion to the testing criteria, Central Zone will begin offering swabbing in three additional locations the week of April 27. Drayton Valley, Drumheller, and Rocky Mountain House were chosen as those locations based on a review of geographic referral data.

Zone executive leadership and medical officers of health are working with Community Engagement and Communications planning additional online meetings with community stakeholders across the zone, to keep them updated on the COVID-19 pandemic and our associated response. Update meetings for staff and physicians are also being planned.

Recreation therapists in the zone are hard at work to provide much-needed interaction for patients and residents, including coordinating ‘through the window’ pet therapy visits, organizing hallway bingo and other properly physical-distanced activities, to helping coordinate outdoor drop-in musical performances. A great example of this was the recent Battle River Pipes and Drums stop at the Wainwright Health Centre (below) The Recreation Therapy team continues to be an invaluable resource during this pandemic.



Be Well - Be Kind

Mental Wellness Moment – Family Resiliency

Families can get through this time of pandemic and come out of it stronger. In this Mental Wellness Moment, Dr. Nick Mitchell [offers advice on how family members under the same roof can work together to strengthen their bonds](#), improve communication and manage stress while staying safe at home.



This clip is one in a series of short [Mental Wellness Moment videos](#) where Dr. Mitchell talks about protecting your mental health in a time of pandemic. AHS has more resources to look after your mental health at ahs.ca/covid.

National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Alberta Health Services continues to provide organ and tissue donation and transplant services on a case-by-case basis. Urgent cases are being prioritized based on our ongoing risk/benefit assessment of the evolving COVID-19 situation, considering factors that include the availability of critical care beds, and the health of the patient.

Our goal is to provide as many patients as possible with life-saving organ transplants, while ensuring the safety and well-being of recipients. Medical experts and administrative leadership from across Canada are meeting multiple times weekly to assess the changing COVID-19 situation and impacts it may have on organ donation and transplant surgeries.

As we celebrate National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week, we want to remind you that the gift of organ and tissue donations saves lives and enhances quality of life for many others. While staying home and staying safe, consider taking this time to discuss your wishes with your family. It takes just minutes to register your decision to become an organ and tissue donor. More information about registering as a donor is available on the [Alberta Organ and Tissue Donation Registry website](#).

Canadian Health Foundations Launch the Frontline Fund to Support COVID-19 Response

A huge thank you to our health foundation partners who are taking part in [The Frontline Fund](#), launched this week. Health foundation leaders across Canada have come together to launch the fund as a way for the Canadian public and Canadian corporations to support healthcare during the COVID-19 response.

National gifts will be shared proportionately across the country, based on population. The Frontline Fund's founding partner donors include TD Bank Group with a donation of \$1 million, Maple Leaf Foods with a donation of \$2.5 million and the Canadian Medical Association Foundation with a donation of \$5 million, for a combined total of \$8.5 million in contributions to date.

The Frontline Fund has also partnered with [CanadaHelps.org](#) to make it easy and efficient for Canadians to get involved. For more information on The Frontline Fund, please visit [frontlinefund.ca](#).

New Government Tools to Connect and Recognize Volunteers

Earlier this week we thanked our volunteers for the work they do across AHS in recognition of National Volunteer Week, April 19-25. In 2019, 14,328 AHS volunteers gave 1,257,360 hours to support our organization. Whether your contributions were on the frontlines or behind the scenes, you have impacted the lives of countless patients, families, staff, physicians and communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has ignited the spirit of volunteerism in Albertans across the province. Today, the Government of Alberta is [launching a new tool](#) to connect Albertans with volunteer opportunities during this unprecedented global crisis, and launching the Northern Lights program to recognize Albertans who volunteer to support their community.

While physical distancing and gathering restrictions are in place, there is still a need for healthy volunteers to help those in need with countless opportunities to do so.

Find out more [here](#) on the new Alberta Cares Connector tool and the Northern Lights Recognition program.

Shout Out

After sending out our thanks to our volunteers across AHS this week, we received a note in reply. It demonstrates the philanthropic and compassionate nature of our volunteers, and we are grateful for such positive feedback. Thank you, Barbara, for your kind words.

I think AHS is doing an outstanding job of keeping AHS staff and volunteers informed. Even friends, to whom we have forwarded these emails, really appreciate the extensive, and often heart-warming, information included every day. I wish there was a way I could thank Dr. Verna Yiu, face-to-face, for making sure Alberta is the very best place to live, when it comes to providing safe and effective health care. She deserves a medal, along with all of you, for helping us all get through this with a helpful and supportive attitude. WE ARE SO FORTUNATE to live, really live, in this province!

Blessings are in the wind for you today!

Barbara Price

We are so appreciative of AHS teams at every level of our organization, including our leaders. This note from a frontline provider recognizes that AHS leaders are playing such an important role in this

pandemic. As Annie says so beautifully, the commitment of our leaders to supporting staff, physicians and volunteers is so reassuring at this time of uncertainty and fear.

I know that there is a lot more work happening in the background that most are not privy to. Endless meetings, planning, contingency plans, what ifs, ordering supplies, managing schedules based on what-ifs, etc. I just wanted to say that I am so proud of all the work everyone is doing, and as a front line first responder to these very sick patients, I feel very supported and appreciate all the information that comes out daily. Sometimes it feels a bit overwhelming at how quickly everything changes and trying to stay current with these changes, but our medical directors have been amazing at answering questions our group have sent in when seeking clarification.

Walking in, wearing my full PPE and looking into the eyes of the very scared patients and their families, it makes me stop and take a breath every now and then, especially when I see how scared they are. It is easier doing it though knowing that I have the support of my platoon colleagues, my supervisors, and the managers who are clearly working super hard to make sure we are stocked, protected and able to do our jobs successfully. It makes a difference and I thought I would give you some kudos also. Leadership at the top has a trickle-down effect and I wasn't sure if anyone had given you the pats on the back that are deserved in this very exhausting time.

Make sure you are taking care of your own needs with self-care and don't get run down in your desire to lead from the front. Have a great day, and know that what you are doing on a daily basis make a difference all the way down the line. Warm regards,

Annie

Today is Administrative Professionals Day, and we definitely want to thank all our administrative professionals across the province, who keep our health system running smoothly, especially during times like these. Your everyday contributions to the organization help us provide exceptional patient care and protect the health of Albertans.

Community Acts of Kindness

We talk almost daily about the amazing work of our AHS teams, but sometimes their skills go way beyond the scope of their jobs! We want to close with a charming note from an Albertan about an AHS nurse working at a COVID-19 assessment centre, who clearly went above and beyond the call of duty this past weekend. Thank you for the smile you brought to our faces.

Sunday April 19 morning, I had a COVID-19 screening done at the Richmond Road Medical centre in the Fast track "A" bay. My car battery died and I was unable to start my car. The wonderful nurse who did my swab quickly sprang into action and boosted my car with the ease of a mechanic. I was so thankful to her. Thanks for the great and fast service, both in healthcare and automotive.

To each one of you: thank you for the big and small things you do for patients and families every day. Whether you are directly providing care, or you are supporting care from a role that isn't hands on with patients, you are so valued. We know every one of you has unique, important skills that you use at AHS, which have come from years of training in your roles and also through life experience. Thank you for using your skills innovatively and with such compassion during this pandemic. We are all being tested and challenged as we meet COVID-19's demands. Each day you show what you're made of.

Thank you and stay safe.

Please Note: This message has been modified from the AHS Daily Updates.

*****Please share this information as appropriate*****

*****For Alberta Health Services – Indigenous specific questions/concerns please
email ahs.ecc.operations.ih@ahs.ca *****

*****For Indigenous Services Canada please
email sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca *****

Josipa Pavicic on behalf of Nadine McRee