

COVID-19 Status

June 8, 2020

We have confirmed seven new cases of COVID-19 in Albertans over the past 24 hours. To date, the provincial total confirmed cases of COVID-19 is 7,098. Of the total people who've been confirmed with COVID-19, we suspect 682 cases may have been acquired in the community from an unknown source (these cases are not included in outbreak data). Currently, there are 44 people in hospital, with six in an ICU. 6,624 people with COVID-19 have now recovered.

We are so happy to report there were no additional COVID-19 related deaths in Alberta in the past 24 hours. Since the start of the pandemic, 146 Albertans have passed away from COVID-19.

6,455 tests were completed over the last 24 hours, bringing our total COVID-19 tests to 281,979 since the start of the pandemic.

Things You Need to Know

Update on COVID-19 Testing for Healthcare Workers

We continue to update the testing data for healthcare workers in the [AHS Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Testing dashboard](#). These statistics provide the total number of AHS, Covenant Health and Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) employees and physicians tested, including a breakdown of the number of positive tests and those who have been confirmed to have been exposed in the workplace.

As of June 4:

- 24,812 employees (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19, and of those tested, 219 (or 0.88 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 219 employees who have tested positive, 32 (or 14.6 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with 19 of the 216 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).
- 1,501 physicians (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and of those tested, 28 (or 1.87 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 28 physicians who have tested positive, none has been confirmed to have acquired infection through a workplace exposure (with one of the 28 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).

For more information, see the AHS Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Testing [infographic](#) and [dashboard](#).

Changes to Visitation Guidelines

AHS will implement enhanced visitation for all patients in acute outpatient and inpatient settings, effective tomorrow (June 06, 2020). Additional considerations will also be implemented for pediatric, maternity and end-of-life situations. Existing visitation guidelines for continuing care environments will be maintained.

A detailed enhanced visitation guideline document is available now at www.ahs.ca/visitation.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has evolved, AHS has continuously considered visitation guidelines in the context of risk to patients and residents of healthcare facilities, as well as to the staff providing care to these individuals. The enhanced visitation guidelines expand the allowance of some visitation, while maintaining specific criteria intended to protect patients, residents, volunteers and staff. These changes reflect the balance that we must continue to strike to address the ongoing risk of COVID-19, as well as the holistic well-being of patients and residents.

Families and loved ones are central to the health of all patients and residents of care facilities. We recognize that the presence of designated family/support persons directly contributes to patients' safety, the healing process and general well-being.

Guidelines to-date have been necessary, but hard for both staff and families to manage. We respect the diligence and care that staff and physicians have shown in seeking to manage family concerns, while continuing to ensure all patients have been protected. Going forward, staff and Albertans will continue to work together to support all family members and loved ones in our care. Collaboration is vital to the health of all patients and residents.

For more information on the enhanced visitation guidelines, visit www.ahs.ca/visitation.

Verna's Weekly Video Message

For my (Verna's) weekly vlog, I gather a [panel to discuss racism, intolerance and unconscious bias](#) — not just elsewhere, but here in Alberta and within the healthcare system. My guests — Marty Landrie, Executive Director of the Indigenous Health Strategic Clinical Network; Marni Panas, Program Director for AHS Diversity and Inclusion; and Karen Chinaleong-Brooks, Senior Patient Engagement Officer — talk about their personal experiences with discrimination, their thoughts on how to be an ally, and resources available to AHS staff and physicians to help them identify behaviours that are hurtful to others. One of my guests turns the table and asks me a question, too.



Donation of Exergy Ventilators

Alberta Health Services is welcoming the donation of 200 ventilators designed and built by Calgary advanced technology firm, Exergy Solutions.

[Health Minister Tyler Shandro made the announcement today](#) in Calgary at a news conference, following a tour of Exergy Solutions' facilities.

The ventilators, named Alberta E-Vent and nicknamed "Bertie", were created in part through 3D printing technology. They are intended to provide short-term respiratory support, monitoring and treatment of adult patients, for use if, and when, a conventional ventilator is unavailable. Suncor Energy provided financial support to the Exergy Team to make the donation possible.



Many different teams and individuals offered their support and resources to bring this initiative to life. This project is another incredible example of Albertans stepping up to support us in the fight against COVID-19 and AHS is very grateful for this contribution.

AHS facilitated work on the project through its Ventilator Collaborative, a group co-led by Dr. Braden Manns, AHS Associate Chief Medical Officer, Strategic Clinical Networks, and Patty Wickson, Executive Director of the AHS Innovation, Evidence and Impact team.

The 200 ventilators, which have been approved by Health Canada, are expected to be donated in the coming weeks.

Biorepository of Human COVID-19 Samples

Today we announced a partnership between six of Alberta's health foundations for the [establishment of a biorepository](#) for human COVID-19 samples in the province.

Financial support from the Calgary Health Trust, University Hospital Foundation, Alberta Cancer Foundation, Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation, Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation and the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation will cover the full \$300,000 capital cost of the biorepository to be located in Edmonton and Calgary. The biorepository will allow for the long-term preservation of positive COVID-19 samples, giving Alberta's world-class medical-scientific researchers local access to the biological material they need to further study the virus.

There are currently more than 30 research projects in Alberta in need of positive samples, to support their coronavirus-related research. These projects are undertaken between AHS, the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary, involving dozens of Alberta-based researchers. This partnership brings AHS and Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) together with post-secondary, research, and philanthropic communities in our shared goal to combat COVID-19, expand scientific discovery, and keep Albertans healthy now and in the future. Check out a [short video](#) on the biorepository project.



Change in Emergency Operations Centre Structure

Effective this evening, Friday, June 5, 2020, the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC), established to respond to the COVID-19 incident, is transitioning to a new structure and is adopting new processes. Going forward, the ECC will be open Monday to Friday, 0800 - 1615 hrs. Outside of these times, urgent inquiries should be addressed to the administrator on-call.

Change in Schedule for COVID-19 Update

We wanted to let you know, that in keeping with other re-launch activities, the schedule for the COVID-19 Update will be revised. Beginning next week, we will move to having an update once during the week. We commit to keeping you informed on COVID-19 in our province. Any urgent COVID-19 information will be communicated immediately and directly to relevant audiences and through an all-staff message, as needed. The next COVID-19 Update will be sent out next Friday, June 12.

COVID-19 Pulse Survey Results Direct our Action

Nearly 13,500 of you completed the recent COVID-19 Pulse Survey (May 19-22) to help us understand what you need and how we can support you. The results showed that you know what's expected of you, and how to address risk, but we also learned that there's room to improve on the direction from leaders.

Over the next few weeks we'll be looking at ways for leaders to be more visible, so we can better understand and provide the resources needed to continually enhance your workplaces and support your wellbeing.

To build on what we've learned from you, we'll be following up with a second pulse survey in July. Please watch for that opportunity, as your responses will further help us understand how we can best support you.

PPE Question of the Week – Masks Unmasked

Kerry Coroy — clinical liaison with Contracting, Procurement and Supply Chain Management with AHS — [answers a series of questions we've received from staff and physicians about masks and masking during COVID-19](#). Coroy explains the difference between various kinds of masks, how they should be worn, and what masks are appropriate for specific procedures.



The image is a video thumbnail with a teal border. At the top left, it says "PPE Question of the Week" with "Question of the Week" underlined. In the center, the title "Masks Unmasked" is displayed in large teal font, followed by a play button icon. On the right side, there are three stacked icons: a pair of gloves, a surgical mask, and a white lab coat. At the bottom, a teal banner contains the text "Kerry Coroy answers PPE question of the week." in white.

Taking time for 'What Matters to You?' Day on June 9

'What Matters to You?' Day is more than just asking a question, it is the beginning of impactful conversations. As healthcare providers, we are able to start the conversation by asking patients and families what really matters to them. These conversations build trust and help us better understand the needs of our patients.

Although this year looks a little different, many teams are adapting to new ways of participating, either virtually and physically-distanced, where appropriate. We wanted to share this [video](#) from the Foothills Medical Centre on how they are recognizing this important day.

In the Zones

Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC) Update – North

Growing community in the North Zone

Staff at the North Zone's Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Grande Prairie are tackling the pandemic by planting some cheer in the flowerbeds around the facility. Called GROWing commUNITY, different

teams of staff have adopted planters, filling them with flowers donated by various greenhouses in the area through the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital Foundation.

It's the second year for the initiative. The kickoff went a bit differently this year, with smaller groups tidying the beds and planting at different times over the course of a few weeks, rather than the large planting party hosted in 2019. Regardless of physical distancing, participants felt it important to get involved, eager to dig in and get their hands dirty.

GROWing commUNITY is organized by the QEII Wellness Committee. The group encourages healthy lifestyles and workplaces amongst local AHS staff through a variety of fun activities.

"It's not your typical wellness event and it benefits a wide variety of people," says QEII Wellness Committee member and AHS Executive Associate, Candice Edey. "The teams who are involved get the benefit of the outdoors and working with the plants and flowers, while everyone who walks past through the summer - the patients, visitors, Mackenzie Place residents - we all get to enjoy the view of beautiful flowers."



Puckering up in Lac La Biche

The North Zone's Lac La Biche Program Admin team decided to have some fun and recently added lip stickers to their masks to bring a smile to the people they serve.

Sometimes masks can be a little intimidating to the children they see at their office, so they decided to pucker up and lighten things up. They printed the lips on labels and shared them with other offices to bring a little smile to everyone they see.



Be Well - Be Kind

Mental Wellness Moment - Potential long-lasting Impact of COVID-19 on children

How will a major event like the COVID-19 global pandemic affect us and our kids, not just now, but in the future? In this Mental Wellness Moment, Dr. Nicholas Mitchell addresses this question and

provides [suggestions what parents and caregivers can do to help children and youth manage any stress and anxiety they might feel during this pandemic.](#)



Celebrities Celebrating AHS

Messages of gratitude for our frontline healthcare staff keep pouring in from Canadian actors, athletes, artists and musicians. Today's thank you message comes from Alberta-born country music star, Paul Brandt.

"As kids, we were raised to think all superheroes wear capes," says country music star Paul Brandt, a former registered nurse at Alberta Children's Hospital. "Well, the world is realizing this isn't always the case. True superheroes? Well, they wear scrubs, masks, visors and gloves."



Follow AHS social media for more celebrity shout outs.

Shout Outs

The sound of voices raised in song is echoing through our shout outs tonight, as two different choirs have found ways to bring people together to enjoy music, in innovative ways.

This week in Canmore, the Alpine Voices Threshold Choir came to sing outside the fence of the Canmore Hospital and Long-term Care Centre, while our residents sat on the other side. The group is a local chapter of singers, which includes a large number of AHS volunteers, who, prior to the pandemic came every Monday evening to sing gentle songs at the bedside of patients and residents. The group mentioned how much they miss coming to the hospital, and so, with the help of the Recreation Department, they came this week to sing outside for those in the hospital and the long-term care centre. It worked so well, that they will be coming regularly on Wednesdays, weather permitting. In addition, we tried out a Zoom meeting for cancer patients in our Arts in Medicine program. Thank you to volunteers who came to sing and those who delivered kits to the homes of those in our Arts in Medicine program, prior to our event. All those involved seemed to love the opportunity to reconnect.

*Pamela Kathol, Volunteer Coordinator (Banff/Canmore)
Volunteer Resources*

*Adele Follitt, Recreation Therapist II
Canmore General Hospital*



Once a week, for an hour, Dr. Michelle Cunningham gets together with a group of fellow doctors and sings – online, via Zoom. “For that one hour of the week, I don’t think about the other worries in my life,” Cunningham says. “All I can do is focus on the choir director and what she is telling us to do.”

Dr. Wendy Hall, an anesthesiologist at the Rockyview General Hospital, started the Calgary Physicians Choir a few months ago. After hearing about a similar project in Toronto, she sent a note to a group, asking if anyone would be interested in singing with her. “Within 24 hours, I think I had about 60 responses,” she says. “And we have over 50 in the group now.”

The choir includes both experienced singers and musicians, as well as many with little or no professional musical training. Their love of singing is what brings them together. “It’s a unique way we can connect right now,” Hall says.

The COVID-19 outbreak put an end to potential in-person practices, and there are no plans to get on stage any time soon. “Most of us are in it for fun,” Hall says. “We’re not thinking about long-term performances, that kind of thing.”

For now, they’re simply happy that they can get together safely and express themselves through music. “Most of all, we’re just looking forward to being together in person when it’s safe to do so.”



Community Acts of Kindness

Friends of the University Hospital launches new initiative – Growing Hope

The McMullen Gallery has announced a new installation, "Growing Hope." The Friends of the University Hospital team will be tying paper leaves to the Gift Shop gate at the University of Alberta Hospital, with messages of hope and happiness to those in the community, created by you. More information is available [here](#).



Embracing Change

2020 has been an interesting year so far, and we're not quite half way into it. It has tested and challenged our capacity to adapt and change around the world. We are into our fourth month of pandemic response in Alberta and we have seen how remarkably nimble and resilient our Albertans are, and how very capable and professional you have been in the face of intense pressure and stress.

It's easy and understandable to feel discomfort as we move through these unprecedented times. We can find strength in the time we take to recharge and relax. We emphasize this every weekend, but recognize downtime isn't always on the weekend. Please find time to honour yourselves and your work, and to do the things you love, whenever you can find the opportunity.

Together, we've already been through so much change in a few short or long months (depending on how you're feeling). Perhaps, change is the theme for this year and we hope we can embrace the positive changes that have come from the past months and weeks, as we realize change is inevitable and in some ways, desperately needed.

We are so thankful that we have worked together to create change in big and small ways, and that through our collaboration and unity, we are having a positive impact in Alberta – on this pandemic and in the ways we see and support each other.

Thank you for being such a great team. Thank you for all you do every day to make Alberta a better place.

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

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