

# COVID-19 Status

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## **APRIL 28, 2019**

We have confirmed 216 new cases of COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, bringing the provincial total to 4,696. Of the total cases, we suspect 489 cases may be the result of community transmission, 195 have been hospitalized and 50 have been in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Currently, there are 87 cases in hospital, with 20 in an ICU. 1,664 cases have now recovered.

We must report the sad news of two additional deaths in the past 24 hours, bringing the provincial total to 75 lives lost in Alberta related to COVID-19. We extend our condolences to their families, loved ones and care providers as you grieve the loss of these Albertans.

3,870 tests were completed over the last 24 hours, bringing our total COVID-19 tests to 135,442 since the start of the pandemic.

## Things You Need to Know

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### **AHS Healthcare Worker Testing Statistics**

AHS is now able to provide statistics on AHS healthcare worker testing, which are also being shared with Alberta Health. These statistics provide the total number of AHS employees and physicians tested, including a breakdown on the number of positive tests and those who have been confirmed to have been exposed in the workplace.

As of April 27,

- 15,603 AHS employees have been tested for COVID-19, and of those tested, 137 (or 0.88%) have tested positive.
- Of the 137 employees who have tested positive, 12 (or 8.8%) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with 13 of the 137 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).
- 933 AHS physicians have been tested for COVID-19 and of those tested, 22 (or 2.4%) have tested positive.
- Of the 22 physicians who have tested positive, none have been confirmed to have acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with 2 of the 22 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).

AHS is supporting those employees who have been exposed through the workplace and we continue to do everything we can to prevent further exposures. Of the positive cases confirmed to be a result of workplace exposure, such exposures were not the result of faulty personal protective equipment (PPE). We are confident that when used correctly, the PPE guidance we are providing our staff will continue to protect them from exposure. Our rate of infection for healthcare workers remains low compared to Albertans overall. Of all Albertans tested to date, 3.42 per cent have tested positive, as [reported](#) by Alberta Health on April 27.

We thank our healthcare workers for their excellent attention to hand hygiene, PPE, and other controls available to them, as we continue to work together to limit workplace exposure and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

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### **Health Care Aide Wage Supplement Announcement**

Last week, the Government of Alberta [announced increased funding](#) to help with pressures in contracted continuing care facilities, including a wage supplement for health care aides at contracted sites. The additional pay is to support hiring of additional staff at these long-term care centres, which have been hit the hardest by COVID-19.

We have confirmed that this wage supplement does not apply to health care aides who work for AHS, Covenant Health, Carewest or Capital Care. We will continue to work with the government and our unions to find ways to support our staff throughout the COVID-19 response and will keep you informed of any developments.

### **North Zone Flooding Situation**

The situation in North Zone continues to rapidly evolve as teams are faced with mandatory evacuations of specific areas in two communities, related to seasonal flooding. Mandatory evacuation orders are in place for areas within Fort McMurray and Fort Vermilion. North Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC) is working closely with municipal partners and AHS leaders in the affected areas, and have been meeting with staff to plan the coordination of response and alleviate staff anxiety, all amidst responding to the demands of COVID-19 across the zone.

The Northern Lights Regional Health Centre in Fort McMurray has not been evacuated, but is putting plans in place should evacuation be necessary. More than 70 staff at this facility have already been impacted by the mandatory evacuation of homes. In addition to this, a boil water advisory is in place for the city and surrounding communities

In Fort Vermilion, approximately 420 people have been evacuated from the area. St. Therese Hospital has not been evacuated at this point, but plans are also in place at this site should evacuation be necessary. Some expectant mothers from the area have already been moved to High Level. The local Site Command Post is working with North Zone ZEOC to sustain delivery of operational supplies due to road closures.

AHS teams have been preparing for the natural disasters, including floods and fires that happen in the North Zone at this time of year.

### **National Medical Laboratory Week**

April 26 to May 2 marks National Medical Laboratory Week in Canada. We know that teams at Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) meet and exceed very high standards every day, and this week gives us a chance to acknowledge the critical role lab professionals play in our healthcare system.

APL has responded to the challenge of COVID-19 with a level of commitment and teamwork that is truly inspiring. Through the diligence and innovation shown by our labs, Alberta has become a national and international leader in COVID-19 testing. This has not happened by accident. It is due to the leadership, foresight, and innovation of our lab teams. As the global outbreak emerged, APL acted early and quickly, developing a test to detect the COVID-19 virus by mid-January of this year, and testing commenced in late January. This put us in an excellent starting position. Consider that in early March, APL's Public Health Labs were testing dozens of samples a day. Now, they are regularly testing over 4,000 samples daily, with a maximum daily capacity of 7,000 test per day, and growing.

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Perhaps we don't think of our lab workforce as being frontline healthcare workers. But the truth is that laboratory staff and physicians are quite literally face-to-face with this virus every day. Every completed test adds to our understanding of this virus, and helps our provincial public health leaders make the best decisions possible to keep Albertans safe.

During National Medical Laboratory Week, we encourage you to reach out to your colleagues in APL and share your thanks and recognition for their contribution to our COVID-19 response, and to the overall success of our integrated healthcare system in Alberta.

### **PPE Tip of the Day**

Our daily tips feature quick and simple reminders you can make part of your practice, from shift to shift.

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#### **Even more about Gloves!**

**REMEMBER:** [Gloves](#) are never a substitute for good hand hygiene, they are an additional protective measure to [prevent contamination](#). **ALWAYS** [clean your hands](#) for 30 seconds after removing gloves.

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### **Scientific Advisory Group Information Briefs – NSAIDs and Positive Test Predictors**

The Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) plays a key role in AHS' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, undertaking a timely review of current evidence and making recommendations to the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) to aid in their decision-making. Questions related to any aspect of COVID-19 are within their scope, including risk for transmission, personal protective equipment, strategies for isolation, treatment strategies, and management of patients in hospitals. Below are three information briefs from SAG on safe discharges, NSAIDs and predictors of positive COVID-19 tests.

#### *[Safely Discharging COVID-19 Patients from Hospital](#)*

There is limited evidence for specific discharge criteria and follow-up care for individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. In creating the recommendations, SAG used policy statements and guideline documents, and primary data where available.

Common criteria for discharge for COVID-19 patients within guidelines from health organizations and health regions include; afebrile status without the use of fever-reducing medications (for 24-72 hours); improved respiratory symptoms; two negative SARS-CoV-2 NP tests 24 hours apart; and improvement of inflammation on imaging, but these criteria are not based on high-quality evidence, and additional RT-PCR testing was not felt by SAG to be a critical determinant of discharge decisions.

For more information, please review the [Rapid Review](#).

#### *[Non-steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs \(NSAIDs\) Safe in COVID-19](#)*

There has been ongoing controversy in the media regarding the use of NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen, aspirin, naproxen, diclofenac) in COVID-19 patients, after comments from the French health minister and corresponding statements from the World Health Organization (WHO), which have since been retracted.

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Guidance from Canadian sources and the European Medicines Agency state that patients who take prescribed NSAIDs prior to developing COVID-19 should continue to take their medication. Canadian, British, and American guidance suggests that acetaminophen should be used as the first-line treatment for fever. This is recommended out of an abundance of caution due to the absence of evidence regarding ibuprofen in COVID-19, but also because NSAIDs carry a risk of acute kidney injury in people who are sick.

The evidence for this topic is gathered entirely from existing guidance and literature reviews. No primary studies were identified that support or refute the safety of NSAIDs in COVID-19 treatment.

For more information, see the [Rapid Review](#).

#### *Predicting Positive Tests for COVID-19*

There is a lack of scientifically rigorous evidence to support the use of patient demographic, environmental, and clinical factors (including symptoms) as a means to estimate the probability for a positive COVID-19 PCR test result. Although research studies have identified various predictive factors with a suitable level of statistical significance, the quality of these studies is low.

Those predictive factors that are statistically significant in more than one study, and are biologically plausible and clinically rational, might be considered (with suitable caution) by clinicians to very roughly estimate a potentially increased risk of COVID-19 infection in patients presenting with respiratory symptoms.

For more information, see the [Rapid Review](#).

## In the Zones

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### **Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC) Update – Central**

Central Zone Addiction and Mental Health (AMH) staff are finding creative ways to ensure services continue to run and teams stay connected with clients, while maintaining the required physical distancing. And some staff are even learning a few new tricks along the way.

One of those staff is Behavior Specialist Keir Kutney, a longtime member of the Children's Addiction and Mental Health team in Red Deer. For two decades Keir has been offering a course for parents on understanding and managing behaviours in youth. Traditionally offered in person, Keir was among the first to look to technology to continue offering support during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite technology not being a strong suit.

"Keir's presentations and program are always in high demand, and we have continued to see that demand during COVID-19," explains manager Amy Cote. "This was one of the first programs we moved to an online format, in order to keep providing such supports for parents, caregivers and educators as well."

A six-week series designed to help parents manage their child's severe behaviour, the program helps equip parents, foster parents, educators and others gain an understanding of why kids behave how they do, and provides skill and knowledge to help them establish a strategy for developing and

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maintaining relationships and communication, and creating and implementing effective behaviour programs.

The response to offering the program virtually was incredible Cote says, with 98 participants signing up for the session series.

“I’m hoping to build on that as I become more familiar with our virtual world,” says Keir. “Once we saw that success, we’ve been working to provide more programming online,” adds Amy. “We’re running a trial of a new program specifically for teens to help them process how the pandemic is impacting life for them.”

With events like graduations not proceeding as planned, the Quaranteen 2020 group will provide high school seniors support and strategy to process losing the end of their high school experience and what moving forward might look like.

Whether through developing virtual challenges to get families to boost their well-being through physical activity, to adapting existing materials into new formats to support family resiliency, the AMH team continues to stay connected with clients and communities across the zone, providing a continuum of prevention and treatment throughout the pandemic

### **Community Acts of Kindness**

In recognition of our lab workforce during National Medical Laboratory Week, we are sharing this social media post from Calgary’s Child Magazine, which commissioned a second ‘KnitWits Tribute’. This knitted heart has been placed on a light standard outside of the APL Public Health Lab ProvLab site in Calgary (at Foothills Medical Centre). It’s a simple and lovely act of gratitude for the commitment of lab staff, many of whom are working 20 hours each day to process thousands of tests.

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**Calgary's Child Magazine**



Yesterday at 12:00 p.m. · 🌐

We're very proud to have commissioned a second special KnitWits tribute. The first was at the [Alberta Children's Hospital](#) and this one is for the [Alberta Health Services](#) lab techs at the Public Health Laboratories (ProvLab). We thank you for your dedication & hard work, tirelessly processing tens of thousands of COVID-19 tests. [#COVID19AB](#)



It is amazing to consider that we are in week eight of full-on pandemic management across AHS. At times, it feels remarkable how quickly nearly two months of this new normal have gone by. At other

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times, the magnitude of the powerful response we have mounted and the energy it has required, remind us of every passing moment in this massive effort. What has been abundantly evident since the start of this pandemic in Alberta, is that you have tirelessly and fiercely provided or supported high-quality care that is innovative and compassionate. Every. Single. Day.

We know for every one of you, there are unsung heroes in your lives who support you as you work long hours to keep Albertans safe. While they may not work for AHS, they are in the trenches with you, behind you, meeting your practical needs, proudly praising the work you are doing, and perhaps offering prayers as you head off to work each day. We want to salute these unsung heroes who are bolstering AHS staff and physicians, so we can keep providing and supporting care for Albertans. To the spouses, partners, children, girlfriends, boyfriends, parents, extended families, friends, neighbours, and all the others in our lives who are helping us help all Albertans and our patients, we recognize that you provide our foundation and strength. Thank you beyond words.

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Managing Stress, Anxiety and Substance Use During COVID-19:

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## Coping with stress, Anxiety, and Substance Use During COVID-19

A resource for people in Canada



In times of high anxiety and stress, it's more important than ever to safeguard your mental wellness.

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That's why the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), in partnership with the [Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction](#) (CCSA), has created a fact sheet to support the mental health of people in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[VIEW THE FACT SHEET](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a higher sense of stress and anxiety for all people in Canada. While it's normal to worry in uncertain times, heightened levels of stress or worry may impact our mental health and increase our use of substances.

Recognizing that some people may use substances to cope with their anxiety and stress, the MHCC, in partnership with CCSA, has created a fact sheet. It offers tips to manage stress and reduce the harms associated with using cannabis, alcohol, and other substances.

**Looking for mental health and wellness resources during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

- Visit the MHCC's [COVID-19 Resources Hub](#).
- Visit CCSA for more information on the [Impacts of COVID-19 on Substance Use](#).



The views represented herein solely represent the views of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Production of this material is made possible through a financial contribution from Health Canada.



## Composer avec le stress, l'anxiété et l'usage de substances durant la COVID- 19

Une ressource pour la population canadienne



Durant cette période d'anxiété et de stress élevés, il est plus important que jamais de préserver son bien-être mental.

C'est pourquoi la Commission de la santé mentale du Canada (CSMC), en partenariat avec le [Centre canadien sur les dépendances et l'usage de substances \(CCDUS\)](#), a rédigé une fiche d'information qui vise à soutenir la santé mentale des Canadiens et des Canadiennes durant la pandémie de COVID-19.

### [CONSULTER LA FICHE D'INFORMATION](#)

La COVID-19 a fait augmenter les niveaux de stress et d'anxiété pour l'ensemble de la population canadienne. Même s'il est normal de s'inquiéter en période d'incertitude, des niveaux de stress et d'inquiétude accrus peuvent avoir une incidence sur notre santé mentale, en plus de faire augmenter l'usage de substances.

La CSMC reconnaît que certaines personnes peuvent avoir recours aux substances afin de mieux composer avec le stress et l'anxiété. C'est pourquoi elle a rédigé une fiche d'information à cet égard en partenariat avec le CCDUS. Cette dernière

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propose des conseils afin de mieux gérer le stress et réduire les dommages causés par l'usage du cannabis, de l'alcool et d'autres substances.

**À la recherche de ressources concernant la santé mentale et le mieux-être durant la pandémie?**

- Visitez le [Carrefour de ressources COVID-19](#) de la CSMC.
- Consultez le site Web du CCDUS pour de plus amples [renseignements sur l'usage de substances et COVID-19](#).



Les points de vue présentés ici représentent uniquement les points de vue de la Commission de la santé mentale du Canada. Le présent matériel a été produit grâce à la contribution financière de Santé Canada.

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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](mailto:ahs.ecc.operations.ih@ahs.ca) \*\*\***

**\*\*\*For Indigenous Services Canada please email [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca) \*\*\***

*Josipa Pavicic on behalf of Nadine McRee*