

COVID-19 Status

As of Sept. 30, a total of 18,235 cases of COVID-19 have occurred in Alberta, of which 1,596 cases are currently active. The average number of daily new cases for the week ending Sept. 30 is 159, compared to 121 cases the previous week, a 31 per cent increase. As with last week, [AHS](#) Edmonton Zone accounts for 53 per cent of all active cases.

Currently, 64 people are in hospital with the virus; 12 of whom are in an intensive care unit. From the start of the pandemic, 843 individuals have been hospitalized, which is 4.6 individuals per 100 cases. In all, 16,370 Albertans have recovered from COVID-19.

Eight Albertans passed away between Sept. 24 and Sept. 30. We extend our condolences to the families of these individuals, and to all who have lost loved ones during this time. In total, since the start of the pandemic in this province, 269 Albertans have died from COVID-19.

As of Sept. 30, a total of 1,365,496 tests have been conducted. In the past week, 110,429 tests were completed for an average of 15,776 per day. Although the number of daily tests has increased significantly since the start of the pandemic, the daily positivity rate has remained under two per cent since mid-May. As of Sept. 27, the weekly average positivity rate was 0.96 per cent.

As of Oct. 1, [AHS](#) has confirmed that 246 individuals with COVID-19 were present at schools while infectious. Currently, 162 out of 2,415 schools in the province have reported that an infectious individual has attended their school.

Things You Need to Know

COVID-19 Testing for Healthcare Workers — The Latest Numbers

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 Sept. 30:

- 52,964 employees ([AHS](#), APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and, of those tested, 575 (or 1.09 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 575 employees who have tested positive, 80 (or 13.9 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with 158 of the 575 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).
- 3,456 physicians ([AHS](#), APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and, of those tested, 41 (or 1.19 per cent) have tested positive.

- Of the 41 physicians who have tested positive, three (or 7.3 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with four of the 41 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).

Verna's Weekly Video Message — Family Support and Visitation Guidelines

Compassion is one of **AHS**' core values and it's essential in our relationships with patients and families.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced this, as we continue to look for ways to adopt public health restrictions while considering their impact on our staff, patients and families.

Back in March, we had to make the difficult decision to limit the interactions between patients, residents, families and visitors. We did not make that decision lightly, knowing how valued and important these interactions are to patients and their loved ones.

Our [visitation guidelines](#) are updated regularly to reflect the current environment and the valuable feedback we receive from designated family or support persons, visitors, staff, physicians and volunteers.

And since June, we've been gradually opening up visitation because we know how important the presence of families and support persons are to the mental and emotional well-being of our patients and residents, while ensuring everyone's health and safety.

With me (Verna) today [to talk more about family support and visitation](#) are:

- Dr. Jim Silvius, Senior Medical Director, Provincial Seniors Health and Continuing Care.
- Paul Wright, Manager, Calgary Zone Patient- and Family-Centred Care.
- Kait Cooper, Senior Consultant, Engagement and Patient Experience.

Jim, Paul and Kait share how we've evolved and implemented the guidelines, involved patients and families in their development, and what we're doing to protect the health of our vulnerable continuing care residents when it comes to visitation.



Reminder — Staying Home When Sick and Staying Vigilant

It is critical we all continue to take required precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within **AHS** workplaces. Outbreaks and ongoing increases in daily cases underscore the vigilance required to reduce risk and protect yourself, patients, staff and visitors.

As we continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and the impact on **AHS** healthcare workers, we know that employee-to-employee/provider-to-provider transmission is occurring. There is an extremely high risk for transmission of COVID-19 in small, enclosed spaces, such as break rooms, charting areas, open workspaces and other common areas if appropriate control measures are not followed.

The best protection is to avoid crowding and maintain physical distancing whenever possible. Wearing a mask at all times can help keep everyone safe. This is a **requirement**, not an expectation, and applies to all zones, and all **AHS** or subsidiary facilities (clinical and corporate), in all settings where there may be contact with patients, families, visitors or the public, and in all other areas where physical distancing of two metres cannot be maintained.

We cannot overstate the importance of **staying home when sick**. We each have a role to play in protecting each other – our patients, staff, physicians and volunteers. We must all be diligent in modelling safe work practices. Simple actions such as adhering to all [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) measures, completing your [Fit for Work screening](#), [washing your hands](#) regularly and [physically distancing](#) can slow the spread of COVID-19.

For more information, including the online Fit for Work screening tool, visit ahs.ca/fitforwork. Talk to your leader if you have questions about Fit for Work screening at your site.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication.

Be Well - Be Kind

Celebrity Shout-out – *Heartland* actor Shaun Johnston

Messages of gratitude to our healthcare staff keep pouring in from musicians, models, actors and athletes from Alberta and beyond.

This week's shout-out comes from actor [Shaun Johnston, star of CBC's *Heartland*](#).

"You're keeping us all safe, healthy ... and that goes a long way, I have to tell you. It's admired greatly," says Johnston, who is from Ponoka. "I love you for it. Keep up the good work."

Stay tuned and follow [AHS](#) on [social media](#) for more celebrity shout-outs.



Sharing the Love — Gratitude from Albertans

"I want to thank all the staff and doctors who treated me during my stay at the Foothills (Medical Centre) in April and May. The staff were very professional, helping me in every way. They even helped my family arrange a birthday celebration. I will never forget it!"

— Richard Pearcy

“Thank you for a smooth and seamless (and quick!) experience with my seven-year-old daughter. The nurse took time to prepare my daughter and answer questions, and was honest and friendly. I am so impressed with Calgary’s testing program. Thank you.”

— Anonymous

Wrapping up — Looking Ahead and Looking Back

It’s hard to believe it’s now October and, with three months left in 2020, we’re approaching the end of this difficult and challenging year. But I think it’s also helpful to look back and reflect upon how far we’ve travelled, and the lessons we’ve learned, in the almost seven months since Alberta’s first confirmed case of COVID-19. For instance, at the beginning of the pandemic, **AHS** performed about 35 COVID-19 tests per day; as you read earlier, we averaged more than 15,000 daily tests this week. Our early modelling projections prompted us to free up hundreds of acute care beds in anticipation of a peak of severe COVID-19 cases expected in May. That surge was smaller than our modelling projected and we have currently have 64 people in hospital with the virus, even as many Alberta businesses have reopened and many K-12 students are back in classes. Early on, we implemented heavily restrictive visitation guidelines at our acute and continuing care sites; today, we’re striking a different overall balance between the safety of patients, residents and our people, and the needs of patients, residents and families to spend time together and support one other.



We’re learning as we go and we’ve come a long way since March. COVID-19 remains a present and real threat. We must remember to maintain our vigilance. There are still hard times and difficult decisions ahead, especially as we head into influenza season. But where we stand right now — dealing with the issues of the day and seeing the end of 2020 on the horizon — take a moment to look back give yourself and your colleagues credit for all of your hard work, your willingness to adapt on the fly, your courage and, of course, your compassion. We wouldn’t be where we are today without you, and we are so proud of everything you have accomplished.

As always, with gratitude and appreciation,

*****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 **AHS** - Provincial Indigenous Health Hub

This message and any attached documents are only for the use of the intended recipient(s), are confidential and may contain privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, retransmission, or other disclosure is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately, and then delete the original message. Thank you.