

COVID-19 Status

MAY 20, 2020

We have confirmed 33 new cases of COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, bringing the provincial total to 6,716. Of the total cases, we suspect 641 cases may have been acquired in the community from an unknown source (these cases are not included in outbreak data). Currently, there are 61 cases in hospital, with eight in an ICU. 5,584 cases have now recovered.

In positive news, today there are no deaths to report from the past 24 hours related to COVID-19. The provincial total remains at 128 lives lost in Alberta related to COVID-19. This total includes additional lives lost over the weekend. Our condolences continue to be extended to the family and friends who have experienced losses of loved ones during the course of this pandemic.

2,428 tests were completed over the last 24 hours, bringing our total COVID-19 tests to 218,964 since the start of the pandemic.

Things You Need to Know

Instructional Resource: Securing Throat Swabs in Transport Tubes

Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) has developed a new instructional resource for staff who collect COVID-19 or other respiratory virus samples using throat swabs. The [instruction sheet](#) and short [demonstration video](#) show how to ensure samples collected on throat swabs are fully contained within saline transport tubes and properly sealed for safe transport to the lab. The throat swabs used for sample collection do not have a designed 'break-point'. This can make detachment of the sample for transport a bit tricky. The video will show how you can cut or break off the swabs to ensure the swab is fully contained within the transport tube. This resource may prove helpful for staff at assessment centres, continuing care facilities, hospitals, and other sites responsible for collecting samples using throat swabs.

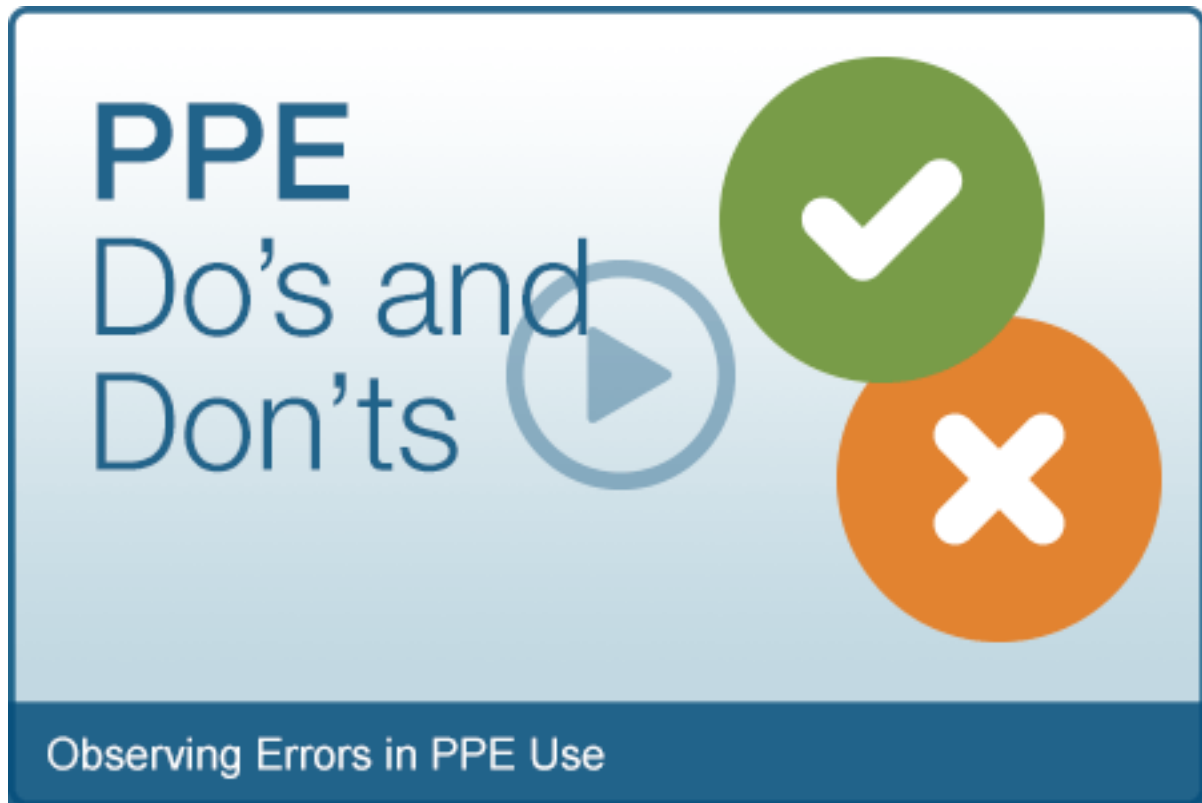
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Tip of the Day

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

Observing Errors in PPE use:

The incorrect use of PPE can put staff and patients at risk of catching an infection or illness, or passing it along to others. If you see a lapse in the [proper use](#) or [removal](#) of PPE, politely and privately provide guidance on how the staff member can correct his or her usage. Ensuring all staff use PPE correctly supports a [just culture](#) within AHS.

To see previous PPE Tips of the Day, please visit the PPE Tips archive, [here](#).



AHS COVID-19 Podcast with Dr. Francois Belanger

Alberta physicians continue to go above and beyond supporting Albertans during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Francois Belanger, AHS Chief Medical Officer and Vice President, Quality, [talks about the unique contributions made by physicians during these uncertain times.](#)



Clinical Trials Day

On May 20, marks international Clinical Trials Day and gives us a chance to recognize the important ways clinical trials advance care for Alberta's patients.

Clinical trials are a vital part of the research activity taking place in Alberta. Through clinical trials, researchers have discovered less invasive surgical techniques, drugs with fewer side effects, and treatments that improve patient outcomes. Clinical trials are also focusing on COVID-19.

"Throughout the pandemic we have been able to mobilize quickly to support the initiation of several COVID-19-related clinical trials," notes Dr. Kathryn Todd, Vice President, Provincial Clinical Excellence.

"These studies put Alberta at the forefront in the global search for treatments for COVID-19, and give our patients access to some of the latest advances medicine has to offer," she says. "They help AHS staff generate answers to critical questions that will inform how we provide care in the future."

Some of these include studies that test the effectiveness of hydroxychloroquine, compare different types of protective masks, and look at whether the blood plasma of recovered COVID-19 patients can benefit other patients. The [Alberta HOPE COVID-19 Trial](#) is a large provincial study testing the effectiveness of hydroxychloroquine to prevent a worsening of COVID-19.

"At the initiation of the Alberta HOPE study, AHS staff quickly set up a service to contact patients within 48 hours of receiving their test results, in order to help researchers with screening and enrolment in the study," Dr. Todd says. "This kind of outreach provides unique opportunities to our patients, and supports and enables the research community in its work."

Clinical trials span the healthcare spectrum, with a large number focusing on testing new treatments for cancer. Each year, the three primary Research Ethics Boards approve more than 1,500 research studies which need support from AHS staff to generate evidence to improve care.

Tomorrow, AHS joins with all its research partners, from the universities, Alberta Innovates, our Foundations, the clinical trials units at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre and the Cross Cancer Institute, and many others, in recognizing and celebrating the importance of clinical trials for Albertans.

To find out more about clinical trials being conducted in Alberta, visit bethecure.ca, albertacancerclinicaltrials.ca and ahs.ca/participateresearch.

In the Zones

Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC) Update – Edmonton

Transportation is an important part of healthcare and gets patients to the care they need, in the right place at the right time. For vulnerable people experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or Influenza-like-illness (ILI) symptoms, the Edmonton EXPO Centre has provided a space to receive the care they need, while being able to isolate comfortably. However, getting transported from the hospital can be a barrier.

A collaboration between the ZEOC transport taskforce in the Edmonton Zone identified vehicles from Addictions and Mental Health that could fill the need for transport, while keeping staff and patients safe.

“This issue required a creative solution with the collaboration of many departments in AHS,” says Selene Tash, Executive Director, Community Health Services. “We were excited to be able to do this and help not only those in the city, but also those in suburban areas as well.”

To ensure the safety of drivers and those being transported, vehicles are retrofitted with plexiglass to maintain safe distancing - a feat that became a reality thanks to connections from AHS Facilities Maintenance and Engineering. Vehicles will also have one support worker fitted with personal protective equipment to accompany each driver.

“The way we have come together in this pandemic response demonstrates the brilliant and creative minds we have across all departments,” says Tash. “We have been able to break down barriers between departments and build relationships with people we would normally not come across.”

Transporting potential COVID-19 positive dialysis patients was also top of mind at the start of this pandemic. AHS worked closely with the City of Edmonton’s DATS (Disabled Adult Transit Service) to support a door-to-door service, where Allied Health staff were eager to volunteer to accompany dialysis patients, so they could still receive the medical interventions they need. Volunteers and drivers are equipped with PPE and vans are also retrofitted with glass.

They made their first successful trip in the week of May 4, with the City of Edmonton being very pleased with the results.

“We are so appreciative that our dialysis patients who are COVID-19 suspect or positive are able to continue to travel to and from dialysis by DATS,” says Sandi Vanderzee, Executive Director of Alberta Kidney Care-North. “Many of these patients have mobility issues and are not able to get from the van to the doors of their home or hospital. The collaboration of this team goes above and beyond what would be expected.”



Vehicles have been adapted with plexiglass barriers to allow AHS teams to safely transport patients to and from healthcare services.

Be Well - Be Kind

More Celebrity Gratitude for AHS

Messages of thanks keep pouring in from across the province and beyond, for the hard work and dedication of frontline healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Canadian actors, musicians, athletes, supermodels and poets have been sending us their videos of support to recognize all you are doing for Albertans.

Follow AHS social media to see video messages of support from celebrities, including actor Andrew Phung and actress Andrea Bang; Calgary pop band the Dino Martinis; Olympic Gold medallist Mark

Tewksbury; singer-songwriter Reuben Bullock from Reuben and the Dark and supermodel Heather Marks. We'll share a new video every couple of days.

Today, Canadian Football Hall of Famer and TSN sportscaster [Matt Dunigan shares his thank you note for AHS frontline workers.](#)



Shout Out

Thank you our teams who find ways to work together to support patients and each other. This shout out was sent to us to recognize a team effort between nurses, managers, physicians and allied health teams to provide innovative ways to care for their patients. This kind of teamwork makes a direct difference to the experience of our patients.

Management, physicians and allied health on Unit 24 of the Foothills Medical Centre joined forces to celebrate the nurses who provide outpatient care to patients needing Addiction and Mental Health (AMH) Services. Nurses on this unit have been instrumental in providing innovative care and support during the pandemic, including individual and group sessions by Zoom and phone, injections to help keep patients well and out of hospital, and urgent face-to-face appointments for patients in crisis. Unit 24 was the first AMH Day hospital in the city to provide group treatment via Zoom (these nurses are both clinicians and masters of technology!). We also want to acknowledge and thank the dedicated allied health and

administrative support staff who work side-by-side with these amazing nurses. The Unit 24 programs are truly multidisciplinary.

Addictions and Mental Health Management

Community Acts of Kindness

Albertans are still expressing their immense gratitude in heartfelt ways for the work of AHS teams across the province, including through personal email messages and signs which pop up on streets and boulevards, like the one below which appeared this weekend in southwest Calgary. We know many of you worked over the long weekend, taking time away from family and loved ones. We hope these notes of thanks will serve as a reminder that your sacrifices are so appreciated.

Thank you

I want to sing the praises of everyone involved in the COVID-19 testing process. My son is very sick with some of the COVID-19 symptoms. Obviously a scary time for all of us. He was tested within hours of calling in and got a negative result back within 24hours. A huge relief here, but way to go team!

- *Rachel*

Thank you. From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU. I'm a lucky person, as I don't know anyone who's sick or needs you right now, but my family and I have needed healthcare workers in the past, and I wasn't able to express my gratitude then, so I'm sending you all positive thoughts and strength. THANK YOU ALL!!!

- *Leslie*

To all the healthcare professionals in the Calgary area, thank you for your tireless commitment and work through these trying times. You are the heroes of this story.

- *Erin*

Thank you for risking your life to help others during this hard time! You make me smile and feel secure and safe. THANK YOU!

- *Jaxon*



Whether you were working or taking some downtime, we hope you had some time over this past long weekend to enjoy the beautiful weather most of Alberta experienced. We were thankful for the sun, which seemed to instill some much-needed optimism in the midst of the ongoing demands of the pandemic.

As we move forward with the easing of some restrictions, we are committed to continuing to manage this pandemic in our province. We cannot relax our efforts to protect each other and especially those who are most vulnerable to the serious outcomes of COVID-19. Our return to business and social activities must be measured and careful. This is why public health orders remain in place, which include limits to outdoor gatherings of up to 50 people and indoor gatherings to 15 or less, staying home and away from others with any symptoms of illness, maintaining physical distance from those who are outside of your household, and being vigilant about hand-washing. All of these measures are important whether you are at home or at work. And, we must remember, that even though we are resuming some activities, we are not going back to our pre-pandemic normal. Our actions must continue to bear COVID-19 in mind, as the virus is still present and contagious.

Thank you for your vigilance in protecting Albertans through your jobs and in your communities. As infection and hospitalization rates remain lower than anticipated and are holding steady, we are thankful that together we are truly making a difference to the spread of COVID-19 in our province. We've got this! Keep up the amazing work.

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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