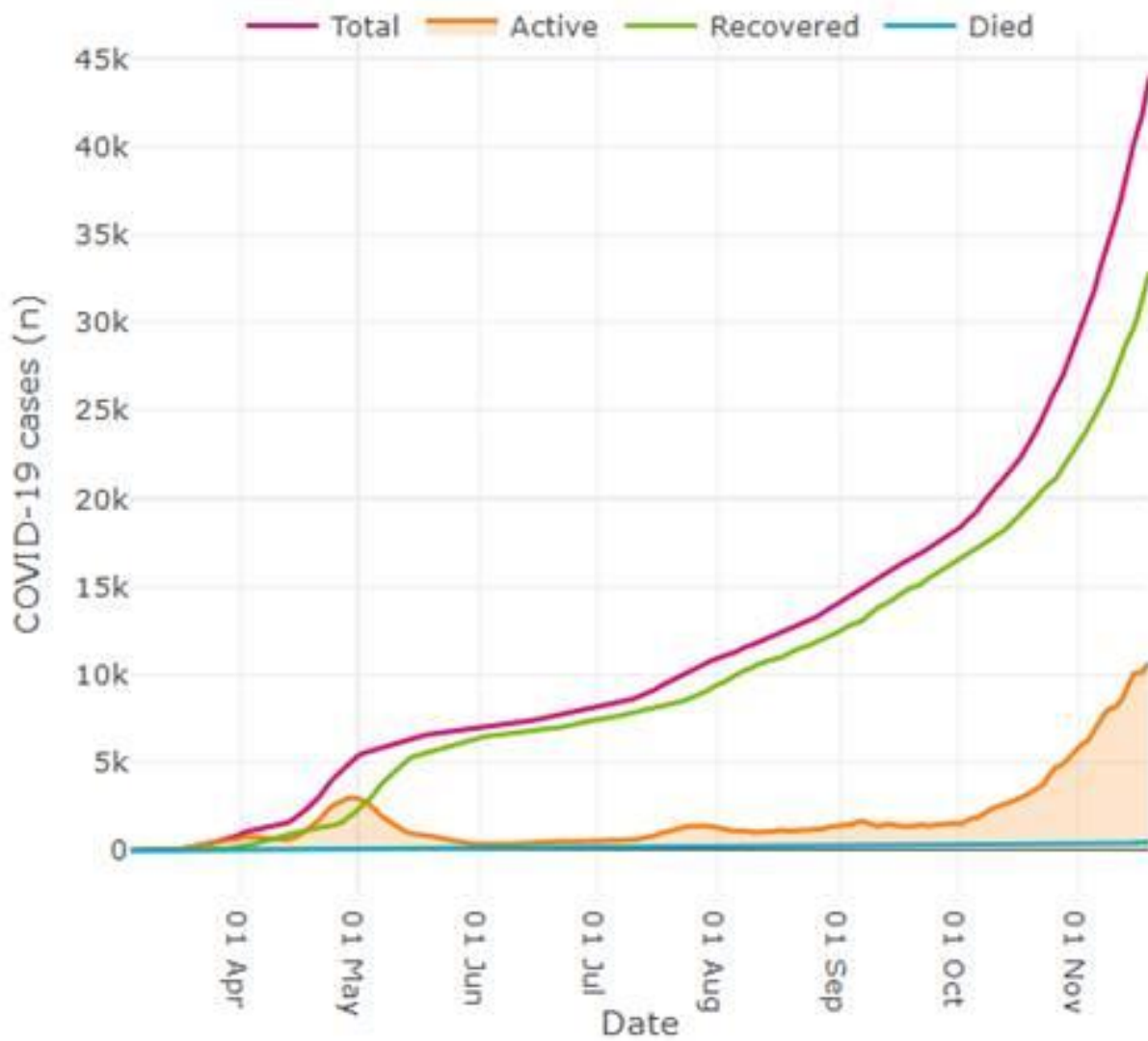


# COVID-19 Status

## November 20, 2020

Alberta reached a troubling milestone this past week when, for the first time, the province surpassed 1,000 daily new COVID-19 cases — not just once but three times, with 1,036 cases reported on Nov. 13, 1,107 cases Wednesday (Nov. 18) and 1,155 yesterday (Nov. 19). Overall, the average number of daily new cases for the week ending on Nov. 18 is 913, compared to 741 cases the previous week, a 23 per cent increase. Over that period, there were 3,622 cases among individuals aged 20 to 49 years, which is 57 per cent of all new cases.

Sadly, there's another grim milestone to report. The number of active cases in the province surpassed 10,000 this week. As of Nov. 18, there are 10,382 active cases. The Edmonton Zone leads with 4,388 active cases, accounting for 42 per cent of all active cases. The Calgary Zone is close behind with 4,219 active cases, accounting for 41 per cent of all active cases.

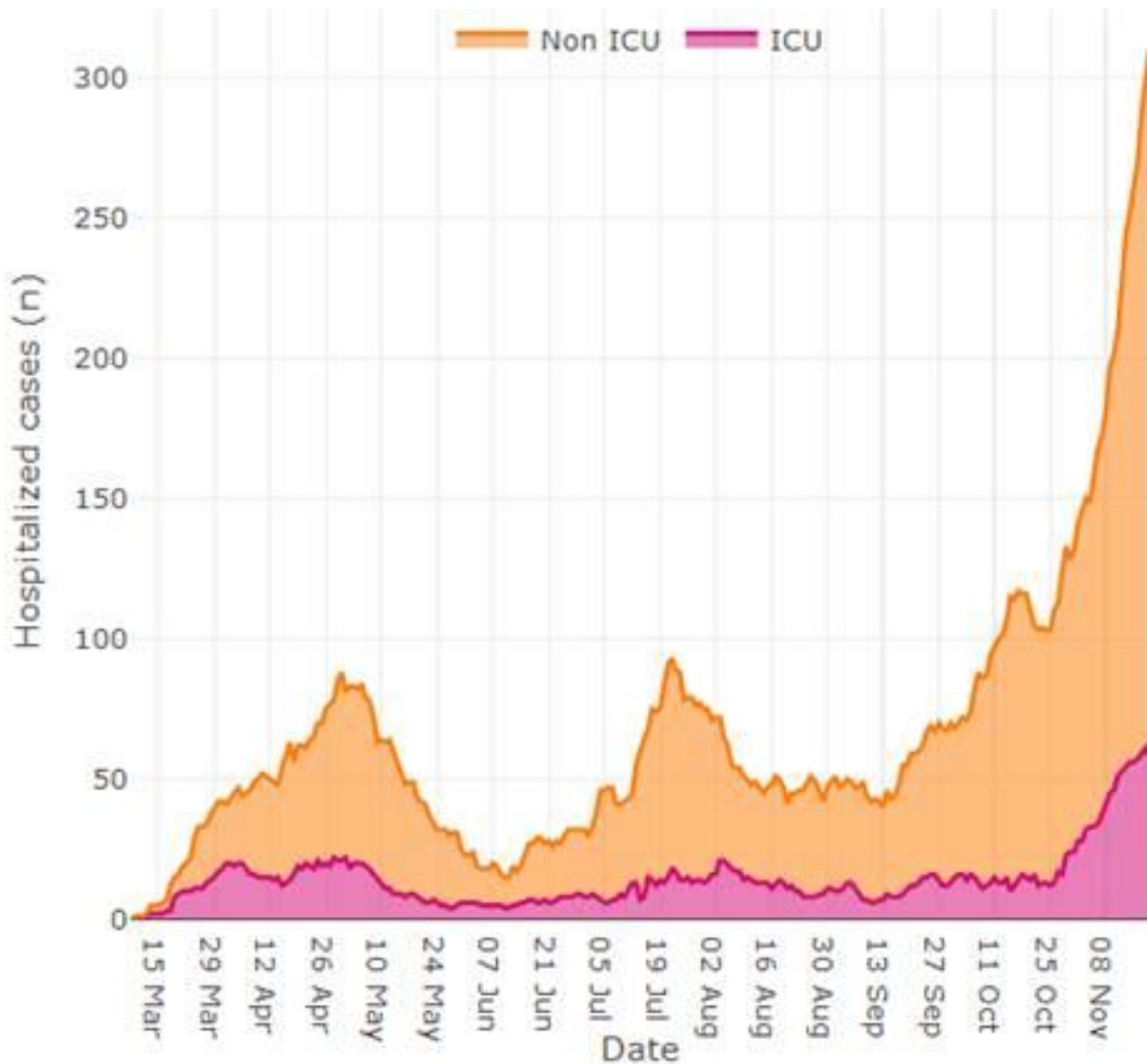


### Hospitalizations and ICU admissions

The record numbers of new daily cases and active cases continue to drive up our hospitalization and ICU numbers, with both measurements hitting new highs this past week. On Nov. 17, there was a record number of 293 of individuals being treated in Alberta hospitals with 59 in ICU. Currently, there are 284 hospitalizations, with a record 61 in ICUs. This is 36 per cent increase in total hospital admissions from the previous week ending Nov. 11.

AHS has the ability to create temporary ICU space in spaces that would otherwise be used to care for patients who have other conditions requiring specialized care, such as coronary care and post-operative recovery, and from other areas able to support ventilators and cardiac monitoring. In Edmonton and Calgary, 20 beds are being added in both zones. More ICU and acute care beds will be added in the days and weeks to come.

AHS has been training additional staff in the use of ventilators, an intervention that is needed in approximately 60 to 80 per cent of COVID-19 patients admitted into an ICU.



**Other notable COVID-19-related information:**

- As of Nov. 18, a total of 42,797 cases of COVID-19 have occurred in Alberta and a total of 1,516 individuals have been hospitalized, which amounts to 3.5 individuals for every 100 cases. In all, 31,964 Albertans have recovered from COVID-19.
- Since the start of the pandemic in this province, 451 Albertans have died from COVID-19, including 58 in the current week. We extend our condolences to the families of these individuals, and to all who have lost loved ones during this time.
- Alberta Health is still experiencing some issues with its laboratory testing data of COVID-19 but we know that there have been a total of 1,388,093 people tested at least once for COVID-19, and a total of 2,051,622 tests performed by the lab.
- As of Nov. 19, AHS has confirmed 1,806 individuals with COVID-19 were present at schools while infectious or acquired the disease in the school setting. Currently, about one in four schools in the province (649 of 2,415) has reported an individual attending the school while infectious or had in-school transmission.

## Things You Need to Know

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**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 Nov. 18:

- 64,143 employees (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and, of those tested, 1,451 (or 2.26 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 666 employees who have tested positive and whose source of infection has been determined, 191 (or 28.6 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure. An additional 785 employees who have tested positive are still under investigation as to the source of infection.
- 4,109 physicians (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and, of those tested, 74 (or 1.8 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 42 physicians who have tested positive and whose source of infection has been determined, seven (or 16.7 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure. An additional 32 physicians who have tested positive are still under investigation as to the source of infection.

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

**Provincial PPE Safety Coach Program Launches**

As we continue to work together to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our facilities, appropriate selection and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) remains critical.

To support AHS staff in appropriate selection, donning and doffing of PPE, AHS has launched the [Provincial PPE Safety Coach Program](#). The voluntary program will train staff to provide peer-to-peer

support and on-site education of proper PPE selection and donning and doffing techniques, complementing existing programs, or as a standalone program in areas that do not currently have a PPE support program.

Once trained, these safety coaches will be available and accessible on each shift to provide PPE guidance and support to their colleagues. If you are interested in becoming a PPE safety coach, please speak to your manager directly, no later than Dec. 3.

Identified staff will be required to complete online training that has been developed by AHS' Infection Prevention and Control, and endorsed by Workplace Health and Safety.

It is our goal to have PPE coaches active on sites before the end the year.

Thank you for your continued effort to keep yourselves, your colleagues and your patients safe.

### **Verna's Weekly Video Message — Our Outbreak Response**

One of the many things we're proud of is our reputation as a learning organization.

You've helped build our culture of learning and innovation, which has been serving us well during this pandemic. It's allowed us to be nimble and adapt our provincial response to COVID-19 as needed.

Much work has been done by our provincial Acute Care Outbreak Prevention and Management Task Force to understand how best to reduce the risk of an acute care outbreak occurring, while ensuring our response is carried out efficiently and effectively.

Joining me to [talk about COVID-19 outbreaks in AHS facilities](#), how we've responded and what we've learned are:

- Linda Iwasiw, Interim Chief Zone Officer, South Zone
- Dr. David Zygun, Edmonton Zone Medical Director
- Dr. Peter Jamieson, Medical Director, Foothills Medical Centre; Associate Calgary Zone Medical Director; and Medical Advisor for the AHS Emergency Co-ordination Centre.

Linda, David and Peter discuss their experience with outbreaks, how we can support our people through them, and the work of the Acute Care Outbreak Prevention and Management Task Force.



### **Accreditation Canada Commends Your Work and Dedication**

In fall 2020, accreditation activities resumed across the province, and focused on urban and regional hospital programs (emergency department, inpatient (medicine) services, peri-operative and invasive procedures, and transplant care), EMS services, as well as provincial Corrections Health and South Zone rural hospitals (both deferred from spring).

Accreditation Canada surveyors conducted more than 900 interviews at 64 locations and commended our staff for making them feel very welcome and demonstrating great pride in the work they do every day.

Surveyors felt confident the care being provided was truly a standard, acknowledging the unwavering dedication of our staff to providing quality care throughout the pandemic. The surveyors highlighted our caring, compassionate people and the collaboration that occurs at all levels of the organization.

Thank you to those involved for showcasing to the surveyors what a great organization we are. The demonstrated ability to balance many important priorities, including Connect Care implementation as well as quality and safety work, while at the same time delivering excellent patient care, is commendable.

We want to thank everyone who participated. The surveyors want to extend their gratitude to all staff, physicians and volunteers across the organization for their dedication and compassion throughout the pandemic to keep Albertans safe.

### **Your Straight Talk Shared in New Video Series**

With rising numbers of new COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and ICU admissions, Albertans are being urged to avoid gatherings, wear masks in public, maintain physical distancing and wash their hands regularly. Straight Talk is a video series in which public health messages are being delivered by healthcare workers, who talk from the heart about what they're seeing and experiencing at work and in their communities as the virus spreads across the province. AHS is posting a new Straight Talk video every day on YouTube and sharing it through our AHS accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Please feel free to share these with your networks and on your social platforms as you see appropriate.

Here is one of these videos, featuring Lynne Seidler, site manager of Alberta Children's Hospital.



"There's a feeling of intensity that's building right now and it's becoming more worrisome as the numbers come out ... and they keep going up. There's a bit of cringing every time those numbers come out," Seidler says in the video.

You can see all of the [Straight Talk videos](#), and new ones daily, on the AHS website.

#### **Photo of the Week — 'I Got You'**

We wish to highlight a photo every week that illustrates your efforts, compassion and achievements as we respond to the pandemic and support Albertans who come to us for care.

This week's photo illustrates the joy of teamwork. "Whatever happens, I got you," registered nurse Mia Torres, left, says to her colleague, respiratory therapist Joanna d'Abadie. The pair work together in the intensive care unit at the Peter Lougheed Centre in Calgary.





To see all our AHS photos, visit our [Instagram Gallery](#) on the AHS website.

### **Influenza Immunization Update**

More than 1.2 million doses of influenza vaccine have been administered in Alberta, an increase of more than 93,000 doses from last week. To date, there have been no reported cases of seasonal influenza. The fourth weekly influenza data report is now available at [ahs.ca/influenza](https://ahs.ca/influenza).

This continues to be a great start to the season. However, with cases of COVID-19 on the rise, we need to continue doing what we can to keep influenza out of our healthcare system, so we can focus on COVID-19.

Now more than ever, each of us must do our part to protect ourselves, our patients, families and vulnerable members of our society from any illness, including influenza.

Getting immunized against the flu is one simple action we can all take to reduce the chance of getting sick and prevent the spread illness to others while also helping to limit the strain on our healthcare system.

All staff and every Albertan are encouraged to get the vaccine.

And remember to take your family. Attend a local pharmacy, doctor's office or public health clinic. Check [ahs.ca/influenza](https://ahs.ca/influenza) for age eligibility, vaccine availability and other details about this year's public health flu campaign. Remember to [submit your immunization status](#) if you get the flu shot at a community-based option.

While there are no reported cases of influenza yet, it's important to take influenza seriously. It's an illness that can have devastating consequences for people who are immunocompromised, pregnant, seniors, young children and those with chronic health conditions.

Save Lives...Immunize!

### **Beware of Phishing Emails and Ransomware**

Hospitals are prime targets for cyberattacks and this is especially true during COVID-19. The consequences not only disrupt patient care but can be lethal. Hackers use phishing emails to trick employees into downloading [ransomware](#), a type of malicious software that attacks computer systems when an infected link or attachment is opened. The ransomware logs out users and shuts off access to critical information until a 'ransom' is paid by the organization.

Here are a few examples:

- Appointments were postponed in Quebec due to a recent [cyberattack of a health board](#).
- A recent [ransomware attack in Germany](#) meant that a patient had to be rerouted to a hospital 20 km farther away, delaying care and likely contributing to her death.
- An early morning cyberattack at [Universal Health Services' U.S. facilities](#) disabled multiple antivirus programs, logged off users and shut down system access. Affected hospitals had to redirect ambulances and relocate patients in need of surgery to other nearby hospitals. Universal Health Services operates in both the U.S. and U.K. and is similar in size to AHS with more than 400 facilities and more than 90,000 employees providing healthcare services to about 3.5 million patients annually.

You can help stop these attacks. Always check for AHS' external email warning message; don't open unsolicited email attachments or click on links; and always report suspicious emails using the 'Report Phishing' button on Outlook or forward to [stop.spam@ahs.ca](mailto:stop.spam@ahs.ca), then delete.

Learn more at [InfoCare](#).

## Be Well - Be Kind

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### **Let's Be Kind; Show Compassion and Respect**

At AHS, we value compassion and respect. We have been hearing more and more reports of our people being harassed or bullied, not only by patients who are frustrated, but sadly also by our own staff. While this is a stressful and tiring time for all, there are many ways we can show each other and our patients kindness and respect. More than ever, we need to work together to get through this. AHS has many resources to support you in having safe interactions with each other and those we care for:

- [Supporting Each Other – Returning to Work](#)
- [How to Stay Safe and be Respectful with Each Other](#)
- [Building Healthy Work Relationships – Behaviour Continuum](#)
- [How to Support Mask Wearing](#)

You can also use the [Safe Care, Together Posters](#) and [Please Be Kind to Us Poster](#) to encourage compassion and respect from our patients and families. Additional resources and tools include:



- [Self-Care and Safe Communication Strategies for working with the public](#)
- [POHV Recommendations for COVID-19 Assessment Centre Staff](#)
- [POHV Recommendations for COVID-19 Non-Clinical Screening Tables](#)

In addition, the following training is available:

- [Respectful Workplaces and the Prevention of Harassment and Violence Policy course](#)
- [Preventing and Responding to Patient-to-Worker Harassment and Violence course](#)
- [Patient-to-Worker Harassment and Violence Prevention Training Guide](#)

### **Gratitude from Albertans**

Everything you and your colleagues do every day to provide safe quality care to all Albertans is being noticed. Messages of gratitude keep pouring in from across the province and beyond during the COVID-19 pandemic. We want to share a few recent messages of thanks with you — and you can see others on our [Sharing the Love webpage](#).

Thanks for all the hard work. Time has been tough but the world is getting better because of you. We love you and thank you.

— Dustin Lo

Thank you for all of your bravery and compassion. Without you, who knows where we would be.

— Jana Elsalhy

Thank you for all the hard work and sacrifices you make to ensure that everyone stays healthy and safe during the pandemic. I understand that it must be incredibly difficult to deal with the crisis as cases keep rising but just know that your sacrifices are not in vain.

— Jay Lim

### **Wrapping Up — Let's Focus on What's Within our Control**

We know the latest numbers are troubling. We know many of you are worried, tired and perhaps frustrated with people who continue to participate in large gatherings and flout public health guidelines. At times like this, it's important to focus on what we can control. We know you do your very best every day to provide, or support the delivery of, high-quality patient care. Thank you for your hard work and commitment. What else can we control? For starters, let's make sure we remain careful when we don and doff personal protective equipment and ensure it's used appropriately. Let's remain vigilant when it comes to infection prevention and control. Let's make sure we never come to work when we're feeling sick, and monitor ourselves regularly when we're at work to make sure symptoms aren't appearing during our shifts. Finally, let's remember we are all leaders on our teams and in our communities. So let's reinforce with family and friends the importance of avoiding gatherings at this time, seeing fewer people in person, wearing masks in public, maintaining a two-metre distance from others not in their cohort, and washing their hands regularly with soap and warm water. These are all things we can do — and these are all things that can slow the spread of COVID-19 in the province and relieve demands on our health system.

As always, with gratitude and appreciation.

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**\*\*\*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 AHS - Provincial Indigenous Wellness Core