

COVID-19 Status

APRIL 24, 2020

We have confirmed 319 new cases of COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, bringing the provincial total to 3,270. Of the total cases, we suspect 313 cases may be the result of community transmission, 169 have been hospitalized and 46 have been in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Currently, there are 72 cases in hospital, with 18 in an ICU. 1,357 cases have now recovered.

4,336 tests were completed over the last 24 hours, bringing our total COVID-19 tests to 117,835 since the start of the pandemic.

We must report the sad news of two additional deaths in the past 24 hours, bringing the provincial total to 67 lives lost in Alberta related to COVID-19. The two deaths mentioned yesterday in Brooks have now both been confirmed as cases of COVID-19. Only one of those cases is reflected in today's data, due to the timing of the confirmation. The second case will be included in tomorrow's information. We cannot disregard the terrible toll COVID-19 has taken on some families in our province. We extend our condolences to those who are grieving those losses today.

Unfortunately, the long incubation period of COVID-19 means we will continue to see new cases in the days ahead, as many exposures happened before these cases and outbreaks were identified. One infected person can continue to result in many new cases weeks into the future.

This also means we need to remember that we cannot gather in large groups in the coming weeks, as noted by Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Chief Medical Officer of Health, today. We have seen in Alberta that large gatherings can be super-spreader events, where one sick person can expose many others to the virus, spreading COVID-19 across households, communities and even large geographical distances.

While we are getting more and more anxious to resume some semblance of normal life, now is not the time to start relaxing health protocols, meeting with family and friends, attending large events, or moving throughout the province. It is just too easy to unknowingly spread the virus, which would result in us taking steps backward in managing this pandemic.

Things You Need to Know

PPE Distribution to Community Physicians

AHS is coordinating allocation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic. A [revised process](#) is now in place for distribution of PPE to specialist physicians working in community (non-AHS) settings.

PPE distribution processes to the following groups has NOT changed and will continue as per usual:

- [PCN primary care physicians](#)
- [Non-PCN primary care physicians](#)
- [Pediatricians](#)
- [Obstetricians and gynecologists](#)

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.

Donning gowns:

[Gowns prevent contamination](#) of your clothing and arms. Make sure that both upper and lower ties are securely tied to adequately cover your back so that you avoid contamination. Also make sure that the cuffs of the gown cover your wrists. Find out more about donning gowns on the [donning poster](#) and in the [video](#).

In the Zones

Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC) Update – Calgary

The Calgary Zone has expanded its testing capacity with the opening of two new fast track assessment centres on Monday, April 20. One centre opened in High River and the other opened in Springbank.

These assessment centres are in addition to the four fast track assessment centres and one indoor centre already open in the Calgary Zone. The team is hard at work planning for yet another fast track assessment centre in Airdrie, set to open tomorrow.

Executive Director of Community Health Services, Laurie Blahitka, shared some recent photos, which include the team of nurses at the Springbank centre and the drive-through centre in High River, with some horse-powered transportation in the background. Laurie noted, “I am so privileged to work with such great staff at AHS.”



Construction at PeterLougheed Centre Update

Construction continues on a field hospital outside of the Peter Lougheed Centre in Calgary. The temporary structure, donated to AHS by Alberta company Sprung Structures, is now being fitted so it can provide additional inpatient capacity in time for the expected surge in demand from COVID-19. This video captures some of the work done April 13-17. The field hospital is expected to be complete in late April.



Be Well - Be Kind

Mental Health Supports for Patients

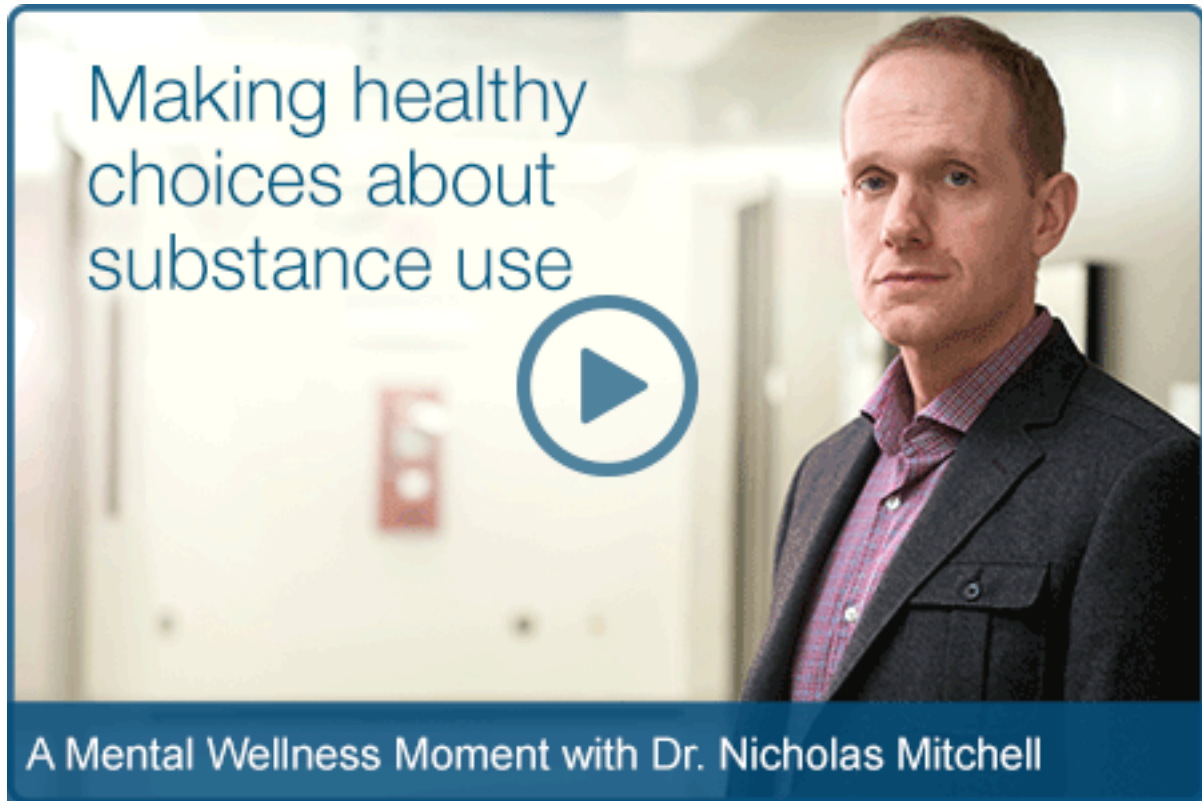
During COVID-19, it's important that patients struggling with mental health concerns are aware of the supports available to them. Please encourage patients and colleagues who are struggling, to reach out to the healthcare provider or mental health professional who usually provides their care. This might include their family doctor, counsellor, therapist, psychologist, nurse/nurse practitioner or social worker.

Albertans can also call the Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-303-2642 for 24/7 assistance. Additionally, AHS has [resources and services](#), including [Text4Hope](#), available to help you or someone you know, especially during this difficult time.

Mental Wellness Moment – Making healthy choices about substance use

More stress. More time at home. More opportunity. There are many reasons alcohol and drug use could increase during a time of pandemic. In this Mental Wellness Moment, Dr. Nicholas

Mitchell [suggests other ways to manage stress and anxiety, and offers advice on how to make healthy choices about substance use.](#)



This clip is one in a series of short [Mental Wellness Moment videos](#) where Dr. Mitchell talks about protecting your mental health in a time of pandemic. AHS has more resources to look after your mental health at ahs.ca/covid.

Shout Out

The Foothills Medical Centre (FMC) team has launched a new video series which highlights FMC team members who are stepping up to ensure patients, staff and physicians are supported in a safe environment during COVID-19. [Thank You FMC!](#) will be available each week profiling new teams whose dedication is inspirational.

Please check out the first [video from FMC](#), featuring Dr. Luanne Metz and the entry management/staff screening team.

Our Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) has been the heart of pandemic management for AHS in Alberta. There are dozens of team members at the ECC who have been working some very grueling days, over the course of many weeks now. Within the ECC director group, Kathy Sokol, ECC Logistics Chief, has performed some logistical miracles, working tirelessly to provide critical personal protective equipment (PPE) to thousands of providers beyond AHS. We want to recognize Kathy and her commitment to responding to the needs of Albertans at this unprecedented time. According to other ECC members, “Kathy answers her phone 24/7 and expedites PPE to be transported to all kinds of external agencies, no matter what time of day. The word “no” is not in her vocabulary. She takes

each challenge head on and never appears daunted by the task.” Thank you to Kathy, and our ECC teams, for the incredible job you are doing to keep Albertans safe.

Community Acts of Kindness

As part of our ongoing recognition for volunteers during National Volunteer Week, we want to thank our many volunteers who are finding innovative ways to support patients, clients and residents during the pandemic. Using technology, volunteers have been able to provide spiritual care services, entertainment, and even virtual patient visits to those who may be feeling isolated. Through their creativity, AHS has been able to continue some entire programs from a safe physical distance. As an example, Wendy Townson, North Zone Manager of Volunteer Resources, shared how one of their favourite visitors, Bob the miniature pony, has been making stops outside residents’ windows to brighten their day and maintain their connections to these special programs. This kind of support helps reduce social isolation and enables positive health outcomes.



As the sun has (finally) started to shine (more consistently) and the temperatures are warming up, we hope you can take a few moments to safely enjoy some of this spring weather. Whether it's taking your coffee outside on a break, or finding some time to enjoy a walk in a local park, getting outside even briefly can provide a boost to your spirits.

Thank you for another day of pouring your energy into protecting Albertans and reducing the spread of COVID-19. Together, you are doing amazing things.

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 ***

*****For Indigenous Services Canada please**

email sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca ***

Josipa Pavicic on behalf of Nadine McRee

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