

COVID-19 Status

As of September 16, 2020, a total of 16,274 cases of COVID-19 have occurred in Alberta, of which 1,483 cases are currently active. The average number of daily new cases for the week ending September 16 is 142.7, compared to 141.6 cases the previous week, a 0.8 per cent increase. Edmonton zone accounts for 51 percent of all active cases, an increase from 40 percent last week.

Currently, 41 people are in hospital with the virus and eight of them are in an intensive care unit. From the start of the pandemic, 750 individuals have been hospitalized, which is a rate of 4.6 individuals per 100 cases. The average age of all hospitalized COVID-19 patients is 62 years old. In all, 14,537 Albertans have recovered from COVID-19.

Two Albertans passed away between September 10 and September 16 and we offer our sincere 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, 254 Albertans have died from COVID-19. Of all the deaths, as of September 14, 72 per cent had three or more underlying conditions, while three per cent had no comorbidities. Please note that one death from the previous week was removed from the total, as it was determined that it was not related to COVID-19.

As of September 16, a total of 1,169,378 tests have been conducted. In the past week, 96,641 tests were completed for an average of 13,806 per day. The single highest number of tests completed in one day was on Saturday, September 12 for a total of 18,919 tests.

To date, [AHS](#) has confirmed that 64 individuals with COVID-19 were present at schools while infectious. Currently, 40 out of 2,415 schools in the province have reported that an infectious individual has attended their school. The first case of probable in-school transmission in an Alberta school was reported today.

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 September 16:

- 48,099 employees ([AHS](#), APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19, and of those tested, 479 (or 1.00 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 479 employees who have tested positive, 75 (or 15.7 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with 122 of the 479 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).

- 3,148 physicians (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and of those tested, 39 (or 1.24 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 39 physicians who have tested positive, three (or 7.7 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with four of the 39 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).

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

Changes to COVID-19 Testing Guidelines

Yesterday, Alberta Health announced updated COVID-19 testing criteria for Albertans. In an effort to reduce wait times, to speed up access to results, and to support Albertans during respiratory virus and influenza season, testing in Alberta has shifted to focus on those with symptoms, coupled with asymptomatic testing for only those in the risk groups outlined below. Asymptomatic testing is no longer recommended for Albertans who don't fall into these risk groups.

COVID-19 testing in Alberta is now recommended for:

- Albertans with symptoms of COVID-19;
- Albertans who are close contacts of a confirmed case, whether symptomatic or not;
- Albertans who are linked to a known outbreak, whether symptomatic or not; and,
- Asymptomatic Albertans who are:
 - School teachers and/or school staff;
 - Healthcare workers;
 - Staff and/or residents at congregate living facilities, including long-term care;
 - Experiencing homelessness; or
 - Require asymptomatic testing for the purpose of travel

Again, voluntary asymptomatic testing for Albertans that do not fall into the above list, is no longer recommended.

The [AHS](#) online testing tool has been updated to reflect these new criteria. Albertans booking appointments using this tool are guided by this new criteria. New appointments are not being offered to asymptomatic Albertans who are not in the priority groups. Health Link is also following this new criteria, as are pharmacies across Alberta.

Albertans who have already booked an appointment with **AHS** for an asymptomatic test, prior to this announcement, will still be tested. These appointments will be honoured.

Please note that Healthcare Workers continue to be prioritized for COVID-19 testing. As such, we remind all staff, physicians and volunteers that testing should be arranged through our formal processes. Testing arranged outside of these formal processes is not in keeping with **AHS** policy or privacy requirements, and is not supported by **AHS**. This includes self-testing and testing of colleagues.

We thank all staff who are managing these changes, as we work to implement them across the testing continuum.

Verna's Weekly Video Message: Building Skills and Knowledge through Simulation

While it's true an amount of uncertainty comes with a pandemic, one thing we can always count on is the strength of our people. Our teams always come together to support one another in providing quality care.

One of the teams supporting the COVID-19 efforts, especially at the frontlines, is our provincial eSIM (short for educate, simulate, innovate, motivate) team. They develop and facilitate exercises for participants to practice their skills in a simulated, realistic environment.

In fact, the eSIM team has coordinated and trained hundreds of clinical and non-clinical teams across the province on their COVID-19 responses since early March.

[This week's vlog](#) highlights our eSIM team and their efforts during the pandemic. Joining me, Verna, to discuss are:

- Dr. Vince Grant, medical director of eSIM
- Mirette Dube', a simulation consultant in Calgary
- Monika Johnson, a simulation consultant in Grande Prairie.

Vince, Mirette and Monika share examples of their work with teams, challenges they have faced and innovations they've made in rural communities.



New Continuing Care Online Visitation Request Tool

AHS has developed an online tool to simplify and automate the process of scheduling in-person and virtual visits with residents at continuing care sites. This tool is available to all **AHS** owned and operated, CapitalCare, Carewest and Covenant Health locations.

The online booking tool allows designated family/support persons and other visitors to request scheduled visits with their loved one(s) who currently reside in a continuing care site. It supports the updated visitation process outlined in the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) Order [29-2020](#), whereby every attendance of a designated family/support person or visitor must be prearranged with staff at the site.

Albertans who would like to schedule a visit can go to ahs.ca/ccvisit and complete the online booking request form specifying the location and preferred date and time of the visit. Visitation requests are then sent directly to an administrator assigned at each site.

Site participation is voluntary, recognizing that some locations have effective request/booking systems already in place. We are launching the tool in phases at various locations across the province. Please go to ahs.ca/ccvisit for the most up-to-date information on which sites are currently accepting online bookings.

New Information on Ordering PPE at Non-clinical Sites

Sites and facilities that do not provide direct patient and client care can now order Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as needed, through a new form.

As noted above, **AHS** continues to ask staff who are able to work from home within their role continue to do so until further notice, to mitigate risk and avoid contributing to the spread of COVID-19.

PPE and supplies required to help manage the spread of COVID-19 are in high demand, so administrative sites should only order supplies as necessary and in situations where there is a strong business case for returning to the workplace. Please continue to safeguard supplies from misuse.

Sites that provide direct patient and client care will continue to receive their required PPE through existing delivery channels.

Updated Interpretation Feature on Zoom

To support access to the language line, which connects healthcare teams with language interpreters for patients, Zoom now offers physicians and clinicians the ability to dial out of a Zoom call. Please note: This should only be used when absolutely necessary, for interpretation services.

Recording sessions outside of interpretation can be done through Skype for Business, and **AHS** Telehealth. For more information on Zoom, please visit the [Virtual Health webpage](#).

Third COVID-19 Pulse Survey Continues to Guide our Actions

Thank you to the more than 15,000 people who participated in the third COVID-19 Pulse Survey held August 24 to 27. Your feedback helps us better understand what you need and how we can support you today, and as the pandemic continues.

While results from the third and final Pulse Survey were consistent with the first two, and showed that you continue to feel well prepared to do your job and to address risk, they also highlighted the increasing need for meaningful connections with your leaders.

We learned that many of you are looking to your leaders for proactive support in handling whatever comes next, so we can safely care for Albertans and support each other. **AHS** is not alone in this regard. Gallup has seen a similar trend with many other organizations they work with, where the ongoing combination of stress, fatigue and uncertainties around COVID-19 is impacting people's wellbeing.

Over the next few weeks, we will continue working to help leaders find ways to connect and share resources that are available to support you today and through the pandemic.

Please watch for more information about upcoming CEO virtual town halls on Insite and in these COVID-19 Updates.

Big Thanks to Advisory Council Members and Patient and Family Advisors

On behalf of **AHS**, we wish to extend a huge thank you to the many Advisory Council members and Patient and Family Advisors who volunteer with our organization to bring the voice of Albertans into healthcare planning and services. Your dedication to your communities, lived experience of healthcare services and your partnership with **AHS** have helped us continually improve our COVID-19 response. Your perspectives are needed to be sure we remain true to our mission of providing a patient- and family-centered, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans throughout this pandemic. We know many of you have made yourselves available for consultation on

short notice, during your summer vacations, and through the start of an unprecedented school year, to consult on the design, delivery, and evaluation of our COVID -19 response. Thank you for your passion, dedication, experience and gift of time.

Learn more about our [Community Engagement and External Advisory Councils](#) and [The AHS Patient and Family Advisory Group](#).

Harvest Celebration to Recognize 10th Anniversary of the Lois Hole Hospital for Women

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Lois Hole Hospital for Women, and the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation is inviting all Albertans to recognize this milestone as part of their Harvest Celebration this coming Saturday.

With physical distancing restrictions on larger groups still in place, this year's in-person gala will now take place as a one-hour television special for everyone to enjoy. Dr. Deena Hinshaw and I, Verna, are excited to bring greetings as part of the special, which will also include music from Jann Arden, Ceileigh Cardinal and Aaron Goodvin, along with celebrity well wishes and patient impact stories. The special will air this Saturday, Sept. 19 at 5 p.m. on CTV Edmonton and will also be available for viewing on the foundation's website and Facebook page that evening at 7 p.m.

To learn more about this event, visit harvestcelebration.ca or the foundation's [Facebook page](#).



Be Well - Be Kind

Resilience, Wellness and Mental Health Supports

As we continue to adjust to new routines at work and home, please remember confidential supports are available to help you and your loved ones address [stress](#) and anxiety. You can access resources and support services through our [Employee & Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) to help navigate various life challenges.

Check out the supports and resources below:

- [EFAP's Life Smart Coaching Services](#)
- [Wellness Seminars](#) (register through [MyLearningLink](#))
- [Resilience, Wellness and Mental Health Resource Guide](#)
- [Self-Care Tip Sheets](#)
- [Supporting Your Mental Health](#)

If you have questions or would like to provide feedback on the resources, contact wellness@ahs.ca.

Celebrity Shout-Out – Will Arnett

Musicians, actors and athletes all over Canada keep sending messages of gratitude to our staff, teams and volunteers. Today's shout-out comes from [Canadian-born actor and comedian, Will Arnett](#).

"We know how hard you've all worked and just, tirelessly and bravely over these last few months," says the Netflix [BoJack Horseman](#) and [Arrested Development](#) star. "If it wasn't for people like you, we wouldn't be able to get through this, so thanks again. Keep going."

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



Sharing the Love: Thanking Our People

Thank you for recognizing your team members and colleagues as we continue to work together to respond to the needs of Albertans during this pandemic. We love how you share the love and appreciate each other.

September 21 – 26 is Environmental Public Health (EPH) Week

We want to take a moment to recognize and celebrate the hard work and dedication of the Environmental Public Health (EPH) Teams. The **AHS** EPH teams are making a huge difference in helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Alberta and support the province to gradually reopen businesses, resume activities and get people back to school and work.

Public education is an important aspect of the work the EPH team carries out to provide guidance to the public related to COVID-19 and beyond. Whether it be food safety, day care, personal services, and more, EPH is responsible for communicating to the public about possible health risks (e.g. safe water, housing or disease control) that may arise, and perhaps most frequently right now, about the risk of COVID-19 exposure or transmission. EPH is a primary source of public health information, creating countless resources for the home, businesses and communities.

As Alberta continues to reopen, **AHS** EPH teams work with our partners to provide further clarity to businesses, their staff, clients, schools and the public on how to act and operate safely, playing a very important role in reducing the spread of COVID-19 in our province.

Fashionable Physical Distancing

Staff on Unit 5E4 at the University of Alberta Hospital are reminding others of the importance of physical distancing with an eye-catching T-shirt worn while on duty. LPN, Burcu Iltan, had a friend in Ontario who was able to provide the unit with the shirts, which say “Keep Six Feet Back, Nurse at Work”.

The exclusive T-shirt is showing up at the site in many roles. As Cathy Osborne, Senior Operating Officer of the UAH was preparing for leadership rounds, unit manager and PPE coach, Tosha Draper, wore her T-shirt with pride to help Cathy don full PPE. Cathy spent time speaking with staff, families and patients during the rounds.

With PPE coaches, supportive leadership, and a cordoned off area for donning and doffing, staff on 5E4 have felt quite safe coming into work and continue to provide excellent patient-centred care. Everyone adheres to social distancing and masking guidelines, and patients and their loved ones know they are well taken care of. Tosha, unit manager for 5E4, is proud of how her staff have handled this pandemic and the ongoing changes it continues to bring.

“The staff have been so flexible with the minute to minute updates and they have done a tremendous job in adapting quickly,” says Draper. “I commend their hard work and positive attitude.”



Cathy Osborne (left) and Unit Manager, Toshia Draper, supporting each other with PPE.

Wrapping Up

We've talked often in the past months about how we need to take care of ourselves and stay well, especially in these challenging times. And that is so very true. But, we've also had feedback that with the intense demands this pandemic has placed on so many of us, taking time to rest and recharge has been very difficult – even unrealistic.

We have heard you. We are having discussions among leadership, and with units and frontline teams about how we can keep up the pace, maintain our passion and bolster our commitment, when at times we are exhausted. We are in the process of hiring staff into key areas to increase support, including adding to our contact tracing teams, assessment centres and those testing at Alberta Precision Laboratories.

Our desire for you to stay well and look after yourselves is genuine and not meant to be insensitive. We are awed by what you have accomplished through the course of this pandemic. We see the long hours, the extra days and the added shifts. We see days where those around us are showing fatigue and strain. We know there are growing pressures at work, and that you also have lives outside of work which have their own sets of demands.

We genuinely want you to stay well. We want to sustain you and find ways to strengthen you. So please, tell us your ideas. Let us know what you need from us as leaders.

There are great days and there are those that are harder than we could have imagined. And, there is still a long path ahead of us as we continue to manage COVID-19 and protect our province.

Throughout the ups and downs, we will remain steadfast to the **AHS** vision to improve the health of Albertans, together. We will always be here for you and for those who need us, no matter what.

But today, we want to recognize that while we are indeed resilient, we are also human. We might not be able to take away all of the pressures or the stress these days bring, but we are with you, behind you and wanting to support you. We are listening and open to your suggestions.

*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 ***

Forwarded on behalf of the Provincial Indigenous Health Hub

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