

# COVID-19 Status

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## **MAY 15, 2020**

We have confirmed 50 new cases of COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, bringing the provincial total to 6,457, with 1,131 active cases. 5,205 cases have now recovered. Of the total cases, we suspect 631 cases may have been acquired in the community from an unknown source (these cases are not included in outbreak data). Currently, there are 65 cases in hospital, with 10 in an ICU.

There has been another death in the past 24 hours, bringing the provincial total to 121 lives lost in Alberta related to COVID-19. We extend our condolences to the family and loved ones of this Albertan, and to the healthcare teams who have been caring for them. We continue in our commitment to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Alberta, so we can protect our people and prevent these kind of losses across our province.

4,816 tests were completed over the last 24 hours, bringing our total COVID-19 tests to 200,218 since the start of the pandemic.

## Things You Need to Know

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### **Indigenous Nurses Day**

Yesterday was Indigenous Nurses Day. We would like to recognize the incredible contribution that First Nations, Inuit and Métis nurses provide in the health and wellness of all Albertans.

In many First Nations Communities and Métis Settlements across Alberta, a single or small group of nurses care for an entire community. Repeatedly, we have heard stories of nurses who have left their communities to train and receive their education with the goal of returning home to serve and improve the health outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

Thank you to all Indigenous nurses for your leadership, strength, compassion and care; for the tireless work you do each and every day; and for all you give to ensure our healthcare system is a place where patients receive culturally appropriate and safe care.

### **Temporary Practice Changes for Nurse Practitioners at Long-Term Care Sites**

A [Ministerial Order](#) has been enacted, temporarily permitting Nurse Practitioners (NP) to practice to their full scope within Alberta long-term care sites. Changes remain in effect until Aug. 14, 2020, unless the order is terminated earlier, or the public health emergency is reduced or extended.

The [changes](#) enable NPs to:

- Have the authority to independently assess and direct care, including writing orders and prescribing treatment.
- Provide care as the most responsible provider (MRP). While this is in an NP's scope, it is a significant practice change in a long-term care setting. To support NPs in the interim, it's recommended they use applicable sections of the [Medical Staff Rules - Part 4](#) as a guiding document to outline the expectations and accountability of an MRP.

AHS will initiate stakeholder engagement to develop a provincial NP-specific framework, which supports the change and implementation. Although the order is temporary to support the COVID-19 response, work has been ongoing to make permanent changes to the legislation since 2018.

If you have questions about these changes, please contact [advancedpracticenursing@ahs.ca](mailto:advancedpracticenursing@ahs.ca).

### **Over 200,000 Tests Completed**

Yesterday evening, Alberta Precision Laboratories' Public Health Lab reached a significant milestone in our efforts to combat COVID-19. Our labs have now completed over 200,000 total tests.

Enhanced testing is a key part of our strategy to track the virus within our communities, prevent the spread, and provide Albertans who have tested positive with the help and treatment they need. Every test completed is also a data point which can show how well our public health measures are working, and provide a clearer picture of where the virus remains active. Understanding how the virus is moving and behaving in our communities will remain critical as we begin relaunching economic and recreational activities within Alberta.

Consider that in early March when the pandemic first reached Alberta, our labs were testing dozens of samples a day. Now they are testing thousands of samples every day. Enhancing our testing capacity in this way requires a true team effort – both within the lab and right across the health system.

Health Link staff are providing advice and arranging appointments, assessment centre staff are collecting samples from patients, transportation teams ensure samples arrive in the lab safely and on time, laboratory staff are working extended shifts so samples can be processed over 20 hours a day, procurement teams are working tirelessly to secure needed supplies, and new equipment has been purchased through funding partnerships between government and one of our foundation partners, the Calgary Health Trust.

We thank and acknowledge Alberta Precision Laboratories and everyone within Alberta Health Services who have contributed to our testing success. While Alberta remains a national and international leader in our per capita testing rates, we know there is more work ahead as we continue work to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our province.

### **Celebrating Nurses - AHS COVID-19 Podcast**

We continue to recognize how important nurses are across our province, as we celebrate National Nurses Week. In this episode of [AHS's COVID-19 podcast](#), Sean Chilton, Vice President, Health Professions and Practice and Information Technology, talks about the role nurses are playing during the COVID-19 pandemic and how the profession has grown into what we see today.



### **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.

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#### **Faceshields:**

Faceshields are to be removed by the sides and back straps, do not touch the faceshield itself. Remember to clean your hands at every stage of PPE removal.

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



## In the Zones

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### **Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC) Update – South**

Whether we are in a pandemic or not, there are heroes who work diligently behind the scenes to keep AHS functioning. We know our Linen and Environmental Services (LES) staff are among those whose work is invaluable across the province.

Our LES staff in South Zone were well-prepared for the challenges of COVID-19 as they came. These teams were faced with pressures of changing priorities and adapted very well, in spite of the uncertainty faced by all AHS staff and physicians.

“Linen Services staff had to change their regular processes to meet the needs of patient care and fellow healthcare workers,” explained Dave Kortt, Director, Linen and Environmental Services, South Zone. “They dealt with additional soiled pick-ups and clean delivery of reusable isolation gowns across the zone, while managing a limited supply. Their regular hours, days of work and priorities changed, including extended laundry processing times for PPE. They were very understanding and their focus never wavered.”

Meanwhile, Environmental Services (ES) teams’ regular work routines also changed frequently, as areas of need shifted. Many were redeployed to support areas of increased priority, including additional isolations, designated COVID-19 spaces and enhanced cleaning in long-term care, continuing care and emergency departments.

“ES staff also did their best to rearrange hand sanitizer stock to maximize its availability when and where it was needed, ensuring not a drop was wasted,” Kortt said. “ES staff came to work every day committed to provide service where it was needed”.

Kortt also tips his hat to LES leaders and administrative staff, who continually provide the resources, supplies and support needed for frontline staff and physicians, while meeting the variable demands and requests from all sites and units in the south.



South Zone's Linen and Environmental Services teams have met the changing demands of COVID-19 across the South Zone with a smile on their faces (under their masks).

# Be Well - Be Kind

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## **Celebrity Gratitude for AHS**

We know our AHS teams go above and beyond every day, working long hours and providing care around the clock, in every corner of Alberta.

Messages of gratitude 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 and even supermodels have been reaching out to send us their videos of support for frontline healthcare workers at AHS and beyond.

Starting on Friday, May 15, follow AHS social media to see video messages of support from celebrities, including actors Andrew Phung and Andrea Bang; Calgary pop band the Dino Martinis; Olympic Gold medallist Mark Tewksbury; singer-songwriter Reuben Bullock from Reuben and the Dark; as well as supermodel and actress Heather Marks. We'll share a new video every couple of days.

Today, actor Andrew Phung from the TV show Kim's Convenience [shares a special message for AHS staff & physicians.](#)



### **Shout Outs**

Our teams are not only demonstrating their incredible capacity and resilience during COVID-19, they are doing it with creativity, endless energy and a true sense of enjoyment as they rise to every occasion.

Tonight, we have a shout out to the entire staff of the Brooks Asymptomatic Assessment Centre. Thank you for having positivity and excitement in your work, even in the face of stress and pressure in your community.

*From singing happy birthday to a woman who came in for testing on Tuesday, to dancing in the line ups, they turned a difficult job into something joyful and fun for everyone involved. Thanks to Leo Gayle, an addictions counsellor from Brooks, who has brought his amazing energy and optimism to work with the asymptomatic testing team. Each morning he has led the staff in*



*warm ups to get them prepared for the day, and consistently shown positivity and enthusiasm in his work.*

*South Zone ZEOC*



Teams at the Brooks Asymptomatic Assessment Centre start the day with some physically-distanced stretching fun.

As we all know, clinical care happens all the time, but exceptional clinical care requires a team. Again, we want to recognize some of those who work in supporting roles to help AHS deliver amazing care to Albertans. This high five is for our Information Technology (IT) teams.

### **(Reverse) Community Acts of Kindness**

Over the past weeks, we have seen many parades in our communities as a salute to healthcare teams across the province for their work during this pandemic. On Tuesday, in a reverse demonstration of support, Cathy Schwer, a frontline nurse in the Emergency Department at the Sturgeon Community Hospital in St. Albert, organized a convoy of healthcare workers, RCMP and City of St. Albert Fire Services to show appreciation for essential workers at local grocery and home improvement stores.

So many people in the community have shown their love of healthcare workers throughout the pandemic response, this time AHS teams wanted to help shine the light on other essential workers in St. Albert who are doing their part during the pandemic. Over 20 vehicles participated to thank those who help create safe places to buy essential items during the COVID-19 pandemic, sharing our love with our communities for their collective efforts to keep Albertans safe.



Led by Sturgeon Community Hospital teams, frontline workers thank other essential workers in St. Albert with a convoy of gratitude.

Another long weekend is nearly upon us, and with our fingers-crossed, it looks like it may bring beautiful weather across our province. We hope many of you will be able to enjoy the outdoors and time with loved ones. We want to remind you to be careful in your activities, keeping COVID-19 safety at the forefront of your practices. We must continue to be judicious in going out into public, maintaining hand hygiene whether we are working or not, staying home when sick and continuing to be mindful of the need to protect our most vulnerable Albertans. This is also a good time of year to remember other kinds of safety, too, including wearing helmets and other protective gear when taking part in recreational activities.

We should also remember in these very uncertain times to be kind and compassionate with one another as we each assess our own comfort levels with phase one of Alberta's re-launch.

Thank you for your enduring commitment to the health and safety of Albertans, and for your genuine love and support of each other.

*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](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 Nadine McRee*