

COVID-19 Status

As of July 29, a total of 10,716 people in Alberta have been confirmed with COVID-19, with 1,408 active cases. Two weeks ago, Alberta had 807 active cases. The average number of daily cases confirmed this week is 105, compared to 124 the previous week, an 18 per cent decrease. Currently, 91 people are in hospital with the virus, with 18 in an intensive care unit. A total of 9,113 Albertans have now recovered from COVID-19.

We are saddened to see COVID-19 continue to take Albertans lives. Since the COVID-19 outbreak began, 195 Albertans have died of causes related to the virus. In the past week, 19 people died. As always, we offer our genuine sympathies to the families and loved ones of these individuals. We also acknowledge the loss our caregivers feel when their patients are lost to COVID-19.

As of Thursday afternoon, a total of 676,913 COVID-19 tests have been completed since the pandemic outbreak, with 8,670 tests completed in the previous 24 hours.

Currently, Alberta Health has designated 21 out of 142 regions in the province as being under watch status, meaning they have 50 or more active COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population. See the Government of Alberta's [interactive COVID-19 case map](#) for details.

In response to the high number of COVID-19 cases, this week we “stood up” Zone Emergency Operation Centres (ZEOCs) activities in all five zones. As well, we ramped up activities in staffing in our provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC).

Things You Need to Know

COVID-19 Testing for Healthcare Workers – The Latest Numbers

The testing data for healthcare workers tracks the number of AHS, Covenant Health and Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) employees and physicians tested for COVID-19. The data also includes the number of positive tests and those confirmed to have been exposed in the workplace. Full details are in the [AHS Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Testing dashboard](#).

Summary, as of July 29:

- 40,217 employees (AHS, APL and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19, and 330 (or 0.82 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 330, 62 (or 18.8 per cent) were infected through a workplace exposure; the source of infection for 57 of the 330 positive results is still being investigated.
- 2,595 physicians (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19, with 34 (or 1.31 per cent) testing positive.
- Of the 34 positive tests, three (or 8.8 per cent) were infected through workplace exposure; the source of infection for two of the positive results is still being investigated.

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

Who Does Your Mask Protect?

As we continue to support all staff, physicians and volunteers in their continuous masking, we want to know: who does your mask protect?

Today, posters have been sent to all sites across AHS, for staff, physicians and volunteers to proudly complete and display on-unit or anywhere on site, to tell colleagues, patients and visitors who they are wearing a mask to protect.

The [poster](#)—also available online—reflects those we care for and about.



My mask protects

Thank you for masking.
We are in this together!

ahs.ca/covid



We cannot overstate the importance of consistent compliance with the provincial continuous masking directive. Specifically, all staff, physicians and volunteers are required to mask continuously in all

areas where they may come in contact with patients, families, visitors, or the public. Examples include elevators, common areas and gift shops.

In other areas such as corporate settings, health records departments and laboratory services, masking is required when physical distancing of two metres or six feet cannot be maintained.

This is a **requirement**, not an expectation, and applies to all zones, and all AHS or subsidiary facilities (clinical and corporate).

Our leaders are showing their commitment to masking, too. I, Verna, will kick off [a social media campaign](#) today wearing a mask and will say who I'm protecting, and I will challenge others to do the same.

Show your commitment—wear a mask and be proud of it. Post on social media, or simply complete a poster and display it where you work.

Wearing is caring, and we are all in this together.

Verna's Weekly Video Message: The Great Work of Assessment Centres

Since this pandemic started, our people and teams across AHS have done amazing things. For example, we were able to set up our first assessment centres in Calgary and Edmonton only two days after the first recorded case of COVID-19 in Alberta. Now we have more than 70 active drop-in and drive-through centres and swabbing sites across the province. These are essential, as they provide rapid screening for COVID-19 for all Albertans, and help coordinate the collection of specimens while ensuring the safety of the public and healthcare workers.

[In this vlog, I, Verna, am joined by five guests from across Alberta to talk about the great work being done at our assessment centres.](#) They are:

- Laurie Blahitka, executive director for Community Health Services in the Calgary Zone
- Leslie Gwozdz, director of operations for Public Health in the Edmonton Zone
- Shawna Willson, a licensed practical nurse in Red Deer
- Tracey Hanson, a registered dental assistant in Lethbridge
- Patricia Nordstrom, a manager from Public and Population Health in Grande Prairie.


My guests talk about the importance of these centres, the challenges they've overcome, and how they are working to meet the increased demand for testing.



PPE Question of the Week – Common Questions About Continuous Masking

Our PPE Question of the Week features Dr. Mark Joffe, AHS' vice president and medical director of CancerControl Alberta, Clinical Support Services and Provincial Clinical Excellence. [He urges staff and physicians to think about who they're protecting when they wear a mask: vulnerable populations, patients, colleagues and themselves.](#)

PPE Question of the Week

**Wearing is Caring:
Who is your mask
protecting?** 



Dr. Mark Joffe answers PPE question of the week.

Improved Vanch Masks Coming to Front-lines

In response to concerns expressed by staff following the rollout of the original Vanch medical mask, AHS Contract, Procurement and Supply Management (CPSM) has worked closely with the Vanch mask manufacturer, and produced a redesigned mask that will better meet the needs of AHS frontline workers.

The redesigned Vanch masks, which are rolling out across the province now, directly reflect all feedback from staff related to odor, skin irritation, and fit. The product, which is unique to AHS, now includes these improvements:

- Nosepiece is longer and fully aluminum
- Earloops are shorter and have more “memory” post-stretch
- Length from nose to chin is increased by two cm
- Pleat size increased
- Material feels softer

Prior to the ongoing roll-out to the front-lines, the improved Vanch mask was evaluated by members of AHS Quality Review Group. The group includes RNs and LPNs, nurse clinicians, sonographers, radiation therapists and nursing attendants, as well as individuals from Respiratory. They wore the new masks for multiple shifts in May and June to ensure the product was well evaluated.

Feedback from this group has been overwhelmingly positive. Improvements to fit, comfort and skin irritation were proactively noted in feedback from our group members, with reports on overall wearability and confidence in product significantly improving.

AHS front-line staff will be able to identify these “new” Vanch masks by noting the colour and slight alterations to the layout on boxes. Specifically, the improved Vanch masks come in a white box, whereas the old Vanch masks came in a blue box.

This pandemic has seen historic challenges in sourcing PPE with massive global shortages and intense competition for supplies. We are pleased the efforts of our teams have enabled this positive change for those directly caring for Albertans.

Updates to Family Support & Visitation in Acute Care Settings

Based on the valuable feedback received from our patients, families and workforce, we are updating guidelines for family support and visitation in acute care settings starting Tuesday Aug. 4. Changes apply to outside visits, pets, gifts and personal belongings.

Changes include:

Anyone entering a facility to access a designated outdoor area for visiting must undergo health screening.

Pets will be allowed for outdoor visits under strict protocols.

More flexibility on bringing gifts and personal belongings to sites.

We have also further clarified the difference between a designated family/support person and visitor. Patients can determine who will be their designated family or support person and the extent the person is involved in their care, including collaborating with the healthcare team.

Learn more about these new and previous updates at ahs.ca/visitation.

Support services for staff on the updated guidelines are available from teams with [Health Professions Strategy & Practice](#) (HPSP), [Clinical Ethics](#), and [Engagement & Patient Experience](#).

These changes reflect the balance we must keep to address the ongoing risk of COVID-19, as well as the well-being of patients and residents as well as families, visitors, staff, physicians and volunteers.

As we evolve our response to the pandemic, we must all remain vigilant and actively follow guidelines to protect Albertans.

We thank everyone for working to support those in our care.

AHS COVID-19 Podcast: Rehabilitation Advice Line

This episode of AHS COVID-19 podcast features physiotherapist and Rehabilitation Advice Line supervisor Kira Ellis. In it, [she answers questions about the new phone service and talks about how it can support Albertans recovering from COVID-19](#).



Be Well - Be Kind

Sharing the Love: Thanking Our People

An Inspiring Leader

Cassandra Drouin, AVIRT team support for Prenatal and Postpartum in Calgary Zone Public Health shared the photo below and these comments:

"I took this photo at the newly opened Stampede East, Calgary swabbing site. The person at the vehicle asking for ID to verify appointment information, is none other than our Calgary Public Health director, Carrie Collier, helping out her fellow front-liners.

"As a front-line staffer, this was a rare site to see.

"Upon discussing with Carrie how much it meant to me to see her on the front-lines, doing the work we did, she humbly responded with "Oh, Cassandra, we're all in this together, all of us, who would I be to direct staff without knowing their roles, and doing the work myself?"

"It hit me hard. This is a true leader. And I am grateful to ever have had the opportunity to work under such a stand above leader. I just wanted to send my sincerest kudos to Carrie Collier, a step above the rest."



A great team of flaggers

Victoria from the South Calgary Health Centre writes:

"We have a great team of traffic control flaggers at South Calgary Health Centre COVID-19 Assessment Centre. Rain or shine, snow or hail storm, Wray B., Bradley B. and James B. have been working tirelessly with their dedication and passion since day one. Our clients and staff members all appreciate the joyful environment they have brought to everyone at the clinic."

Wrapping Up

With the number of COVID-19 cases higher in July than they were in June, , we are seeing our teams and Alberta's communities work as hard as ever to fight back the pandemic. It is one of the greatest human efforts in history, in Alberta and around the world.

We know we can conquer COVID-19 with time and persistence, especially if we continue to physically distance, continually wear masks and wash our hands often. It's a message we cannot say enough. When we do this at our sites, every one of them, it sets an example for people across the province.

We are so grateful for the sacrifices you make to demonstrate leadership and give care, day after day, week after week and month after month.

As summer hits its mid-point, we hope you have an opportunity to relax and refresh safely with the people in your "social bubble." The late summer and fall will continue to test us and we need to be ready for it.

As always, with gratitude and appreciation,

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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