

COVID-19 Status

SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

As of September 9, a total of 15,304 people in Alberta have tested positive for COVID-19, with 1,494 cases currently active. Two weeks ago, Alberta's active case count was 1,158. The average number of daily new cases confirmed for the week ending September 9 is 144, compared to 141 the previous week. This is a two-per cent increase.

Currently, 43 people are in hospital with the virus and seven of them are in an intensive care unit. In all, 13,557 Albertans have recovered from COVID-19.

Once again, we extend our sympathies to the families and friends of the 11 Albertans who lost their lives to COVID-19 in the past week. We also send our support to the caregivers who have lost patients to COVID-19. Since the COVID-19 outbreak began in March, 253 Albertans have died of causes related to the virus.

As of September 9, a total of 1,072,681 COVID-19 tests have been completed in Alberta since testing was introduced in January: 78,344 in the past week, an average of 11,192 a day.

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.

Summary, as of September 9:

- 46,672 employees (AHS, APL and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19, with 453 (or 0.97 per cent) testing positive.
- Of the 453 people who tested positive, 72 (or 15.9 per cent) were infected in the workplace. The source of infection for 115 of the 453 positive results is still being investigated.
- 3,065 physicians (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19, with 38 (or 1.24 per cent) testing positive.
- Of the 38 physicians who tested positive, three (or 7.9 per cent) were infected through workplace exposure. The source of infection for four of the 38 positive physician results is still being investigated.

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

Verna's Weekly Video Message: Supporting a Psychologically Safe Workplace

As an organization, we've taken huge strides to protect our physical health and safety by identifying, reporting and acting on hazards, as well as investing in equipment to reduce the physical risks of our everyday work.

But as the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear, we must also be aware of psychological safety and proactively care for our people's emotional well-being. We all face additional pressures and stresses in dealing with this public health crisis, and it can affect our overall health.

This week's vlog highlights the work of our Psychological Health and Safety Steering Committee and their efforts to support a psychologically safe workplace that protects the mental health of our people. Joining me (Verna) to discuss are:

- Dr. Mircea Fagarasanu, senior program director, Workplace Health and Safety
- Mona Sikal, executive director, Employee Relations
- Dr. Debrah Wirtzfeld, associate chief medical officer, Physician Health, Diversity & Wellness.

Mircea, Mona and Debrah share what makes a psychologically safe workplace, the work of the steering committee and the supports in place for staff and physicians.

I (Verna) invite you to [watch our conversation](#).



Safe Workers, Safe Patients

Sept. 17, 2020 is [World Patient Safety Day](#) — a day to recognize and bring together patients, families, staff and physicians to speak up about worker safety and patient safety. This year's theme is enhancing the safety of healthcare workers.

As we face the COVID-19 pandemic together, we are reminded our people are our most valuable asset. We recognize the many contributions you make every day — going above and beyond to keep all Albertans safe. We appreciate your ongoing dedication and hard work during these challenging times. In order for us to continue to serve and deliver high-quality care for patients, we must continue to take care of ourselves both physically and mentally.

COVID-19 Test Results Now Available by Text Message

Albertans can now receive their COVID-19 test results — either positive or negative — through a text message or an automated phone call.

As of September 10, people can opt-in to have texted or automated call results if they book a COVID-19 test through ahs.ca/covid or are tested on a drop in basis at an AHS assessment centre.

The AHS autodialer system has already delivered negative results to more than 500,000 Albertans since its launch in April.

People who don't choose the text or automated call methods will receive their results by a phone call from an AHS team member.

As part of standard contact tracing process, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will also be contacted by phone by AHS' Public Health team, for further follow-up and support.

AHS expects that the delivery of results through text message and autodialer will decrease the time it takes for Albertans to receive their results, after being swabbed, by a full day. In turn, this will further protect public safety.

"Faster delivery of test results will help Alberta limit the spread of COVID-19", says Dr. Laura McDougall, AHS Senior Medical Officer of Health. "Individuals who are asymptomatic and test positive can begin self-isolation sooner. Those who are symptomatic should be isolating while they await their test results, but getting their results earlier means they can visit ahs.ca right away for specific next steps to take care of themselves and keep their families healthy."

Albertans who opt for a text message are advised results are texted any time of the day, seven days a week. Automated phone calls are made between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., seven days a week.

Parents and guardians will also be able to consent to receive automated test results for dependents (aged 17 years and younger). Each test result is delivered by a dedicated call or text. This could mean multiple calls or texts are delivered to a single number provided for a family.

Albertans 14 years of age and older can also access test results online through [MyHealth Records](#), a secure Alberta government service. Albertans need to [sign up for a MyAlberta Digital ID](#) to use this service.

Alberta Surgical Wait-Times Initiative: Surgical Recovery Plan Announcement

Today, Alberta Health and AHS [announced a plan to clear the surgical backlog](#) created during the pandemic, by increasing surgical activity volume to 150 per cent in order to meet the 2023 Alberta

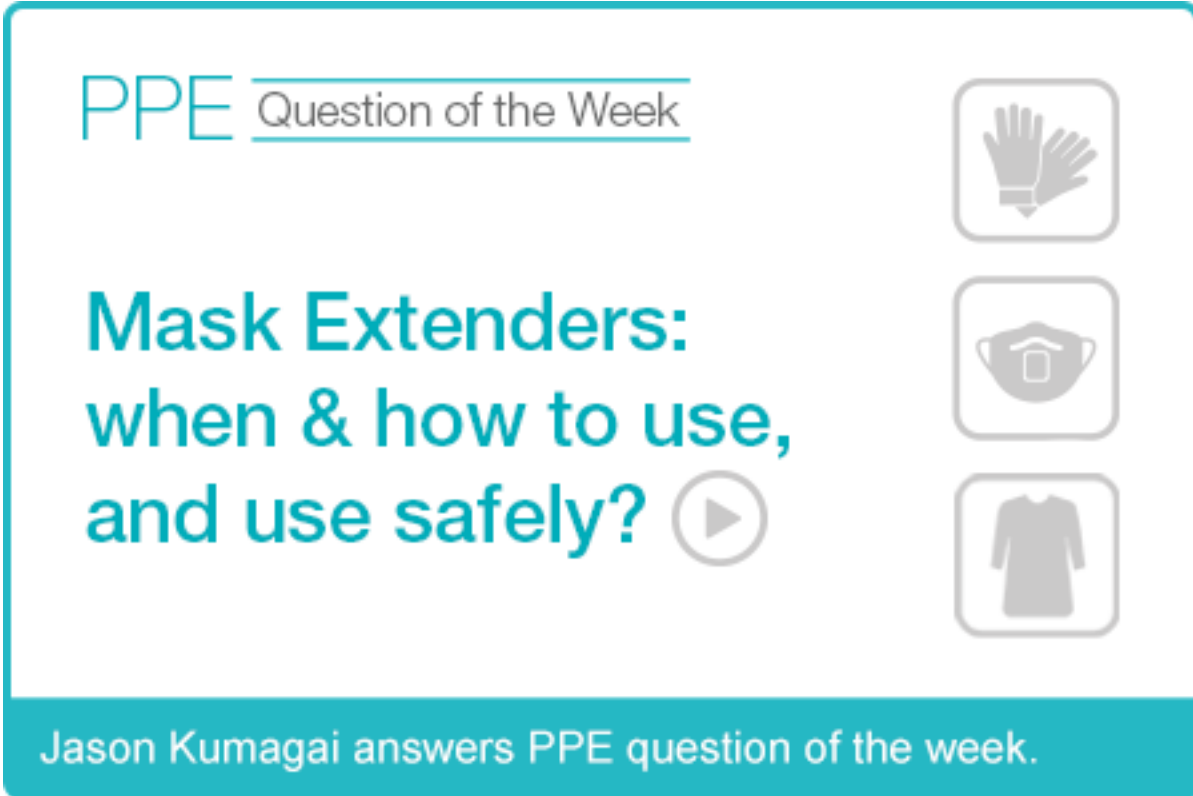
Surgical Initiative (ASI) commitment of providing all scheduled surgery within clinically acceptable times. This plan will support surgical activity in both urban and rural communities across the province.

For more information, see the [news release](#).


PPE Question of the Week – Mask Extenders: When and How to Use?

Wearing a PPE mask for long periods can put pressure on the back of the ears and cause discomfort. To relieve this pressure, many of AHS' workers use mask extenders, or ear savers.

In this edition of our [PPE Question of the Week](#), we look at mask extenders, talk about a survey among AHS workers and offer tips for using a mask extender.

A graphic with a teal border. At the top left, it says "PPE Question of the Week" in teal. In the center, the main title "Mask Extenders: when & how to use, and use safely?" is written in teal, followed by a play button icon. On the right side, there are three icons in rounded squares: a pair of gloves, a face mask, and a long-sleeved gown. At the bottom, a teal bar contains the text "Jason Kumagai answers PPE question of the week." in white.

PPE Question of the Week

Mask Extenders:
when & how to use,
and use safely? 

Jason Kumagai answers PPE question of the week.

Be Well - Be Kind

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.

Big Thanks to a Big Team

The leaders of Communicable Disease Control share their gratitude for all their large team does:

The teams in Communicable Disease Control have many roles and responsibilities in AHS' efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19. We'd like to recognize their work and offer our deepest gratitude to them. They have been diligent and amazing. And they are making a huge difference to halt COVID-19 in Alberta. We can't thank them enough.

- To our administrative support team: thanks for the data entry, completing our daily staffing assignments, SharePoint maintenance, fielding many calls, assisting with access requests, distributing equipment and so much more.
- For those who recently joined, or were redeployed or re-assigned to our team: you have learned a wealth of information and processes in a very short period. We thank you for your patience and understanding as you waited for IT access, equipment, schedules, etc.
- To those who were buddies for new hires: thanks for guiding and supporting new staff even as some of you were learning yourselves.
- For our team leads: thanks for helping our teams with the workflow, bringing issues forward, supporting the team, acting as mentors and sharing messages of changed processes.
- To Communicable Disease Control support team: we appreciate your willingness to answer clinical questions and urgent requests from managers and unit leads.
- To unit leads: you expertly guided the team, took sick calls, rearranged schedules, responded to medical officers of health needs and to AH inquiries, provided clinic support and so much more.
- To our case, contact tracing and surveillance teams: you have shown dedication and commitment, and worked extra hours to ensure we had the staffing we needed. You kept us going as we built our larger team.
- To our community and facility outbreak teams: thanks for working to contain outbreaks and support facilities, workplaces, daycares, Medical Officers of Health, etc. as well as complete reporting and guide outbreak management.
- To the home monitoring team: thanks for learning Connect Care processes and boldly taking on this new initiative while it's still being developed.
- To our entire team: you assisted with orientation needs, cleared an enormous amount of data and records and improved our documentation processes, including providing data to others.
- To our broader team: thanks for doing our routine work so we can focus on the COVID-19 response. We appreciate the assistance you gave when called upon.
- To our HR team: thanks for assisting us in hiring a massive team.
- To our managers: you've been doing an incredible job of onboarding and training more than 600 staff in the past six weeks. As well you've been updating guidance documents and department standards of practice, responding to a dynamic environment and incorporating and improving processes on an ongoing basis, plus many other things.

Special thanks to all of you who contributed to clearing a backlog of case investigations, contact tracing and surveillance cases. All of your efforts are sincerely appreciated and we could not have done this work without you.

So Proud

Registered nurse Collette Vogel penned this thoughtful praise for everyone at AHS:

I am so encouraged by the amount of the beautiful supportive messages I have seen on this page. There is so much love and hope out there and it is a blessing to see all of this. I am so proud to be a part of this team. For whatever role you play in patient care, I am so grateful to call you a part of my

team. These past months have not been easy and some days very hard to keep walking in the doors to work, but together we can encourage others.

Thank you to those who continue to care with you. My love and hope I share. The world has come to a halt but we will show up without fault. Together, we will come out on top because we will not stop. Every day we walk in the doors, our path laid out on these floors.

Side by side we will show up, and with extra coffee in our cup. Walk with our heads high, these troubling times we will defy. Behind the mask we wear in place, allow a smile to come to face. These times have been tough, and this road all too rough. The world has come to a stop, but I have learned we will not.

I am proud to work among you and I hope you can say the same, too. Our love and compassion does not stop, even though the world did, we did not.

Wrapping Up

Work, family life, visits with friends, getting groceries and going for a haircut. These and almost every other part of daily life changed abruptly six months ago with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Change, of course, is not always easy no matter how essential.

We would like to thank all of you for being nimble, kind, courageous and skillful in the face of all the changes we've weathered since March.

You've continued to help people from across the province, supported your colleagues and teams, and kept moving forward in times of uncertainty.

For more than 180 days you've astounded and surprised us with your ability to change.

As always, we are grateful and appreciative of all you do to serve and protect the health of Albertans.

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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