

# Emergency Department (ED) Wait to See a Physician

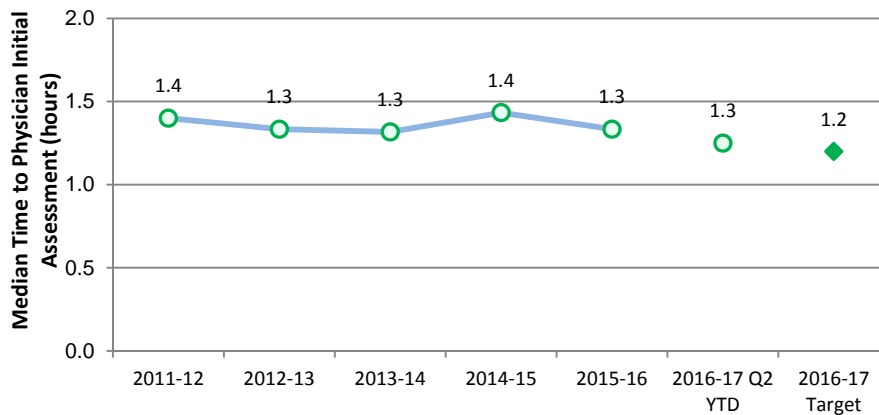
## Measure Definition

The average patient's length of time (hours) that they wait to be seen by a physician at the busiest emergency departments. This is calculated as the median wait which means that 50 per cent of patients wait to be seen by a physician in the emergency department in this length of time or less. This measure is the time between when a patient is assessed by a nurse in the emergency department and when they are first seen by a physician.

## Understanding this Measure

Patients coming to the emergency department need to be seen by a physician in a timely manner for diagnosis or treatment. It is important to keep this number low to ensure people do not leave without being seen.

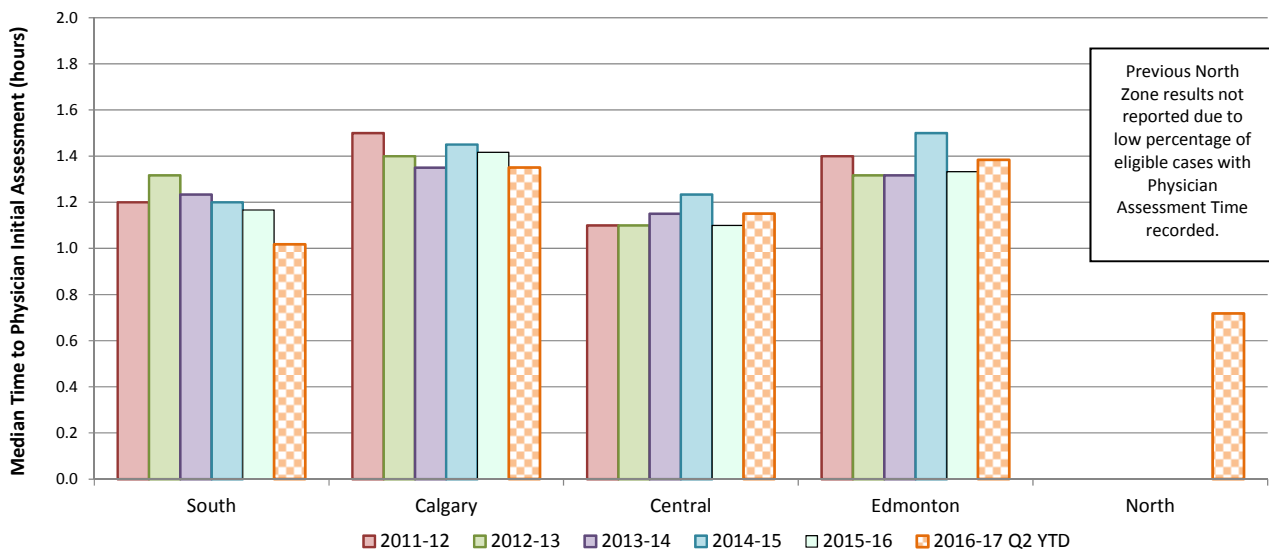
**ED Time to Physician Initial Assessment - Annual**



## How Do We Compare?

Alberta ranked 4<sup>th</sup> nationally out of 5 provinces in 2015-16.

**ED Time to Physician Initial Assessment - by Zone**



## ED Wait to See a Physician

### ACTIONS

AHS continues to develop initiatives to assist in ensuring patients are seen and treated in a reasonable time. These include launching:

- Dementia Advice through Health Link in the Calgary and Edmonton Zones.
- HEAL (Health Education and Learning) program, an online resource aimed at providing families across Alberta easily accessible, reliable information about common minor illnesses in children.

South Zone is improving efficiencies in utilization of the ambulatory stream in the ED, strategic utilization of the internal waiting and treatment spaces, as well as increasing ED physician coverage during peak periods.

Calgary Zone is creating utilization efficiencies for physician assessments by optimizing clinical workspaces in high volume areas (such as EMS park areas), as well as implementing “Choosing Wisely” elements to reduce non-value added processes. Strategies will be developed to reduce Emergency Inpatient (EIP) volumes to increase available assessment spaces in all EDs.

Central Zone has increased operating hours for the Minor Treatment Area in the ED and harmonized physician schedules with ED demand and capacity.

Edmonton Zone is working on strategies to increase physician hours and improve workflow, reinforce triage standard protocols to improve access to care spaces for the sickest patients and those transferred from zone ED's, and optimize the team lead nurse role in acute care pods to focus on discharge planning and support front line nurses.

North Zone is supporting the advancement of enhanced primary care teams to reduce the presentation of Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale (CTAS) 4/5 visits to the ED. CTAS levels are designed such that level 1 represents the sickest patients and level 5 represents the least ill group of patients.

### SUMMARY

South and North Zones achieved target in Q2 YTD 2016-17. Provincial and Calgary Zone are reporting at the same or demonstrated improvement compared to the same period as last year. Edmonton and Central Zones demonstrated deterioration in Q2 YTD compared to last year.

In the Central Zone, occupancy rates have been high with very unusual spikes in the summer this year, notably for mental health beds. In addition, an additional evening OR theatre was used for emergency and for elective and flood backlog. This put increased pressure on surgical beds—which in turn, decreased overall patient flow out of ED. In Edmonton Zone, the deterioration in performance is due to increased ED volume, acuity and high admits through the ED. The zone is implementing an ED Surge Plan to improve the flow through the ED.

### DID YOU KNOW

AHS monitors transfer processes and has identified opportunities for improvement. This includes increasing communication and collaboration as patients move through the hospital.

**Dementia Advice** through Health Link was launched in North, Central and South Zones in September 2015. This service provides 24/7 telephone nurse advice for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.

The content for **HEAL** comes directly from the Pediatric Emergency Medicine experts at the Alberta Children's Hospital and Stollery Children's Hospital. While children with illnesses such as cough, fever, ear pain, vomiting and diarrhea can feel very uncomfortable, they are most often safely and best cared for in their own home; the majority of these illnesses do not require a visit to the ED.

Examples of other initiatives to ensure patients are seen and treated in a reasonable time include launching "Know Your Options", Dementia Advice through Health Link and offering estimated real time ED wait times on the AHS website.

## ED Wait to See a Physician

The average patient's length of time (hours) that they wait to be seen by a physician at the busiest emergency departments.

| ED Time to Physician Initial Assessment - Busiest Sites   | 2013-14  | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | Q2 YTD            |                 | Trend | 2016-17 Target |
|---|--|---------|---------|-------------------|-----------------|-------|----------------|
|   |  |         |         | 2015-16 Last Year | 2016-17 Current |       |                |
| <b>Trend:</b> ★ Achieved Target, ✓ Stable or better than prior period, ✗ Area requires additional focus |  |         |         |                   |                 |       |                |
| <b>Provincial</b>   | 1.3  | 1.4     | 1.3     | 1.3               | 1.3             | ✓     | 1.2            |
| <b>South Zone Total</b>   | 1.2  | 1.2     | 1.2     | 1.2               | 1.0             | ★     | 1.1            |
| Chinook Regional Hospital   | 1.3  | 1.2     | 1.2     | 1.2               | 1.2             | ✓     | 1.1            |
| Medicine Hat Regional Hospital  | 1.1  | 1.2     | 1.1     | 1.1               | 0.8             | ★     | 1.1            |
| <b>Calgary Zone Total</b>   | 1.4  | 1.5     | 1.4     | 1.4               | 1.4             | ✓     | 1.2            |
| Alberta Children's Hospital   | 1.1  | 1.2     | 1.1     | 1.0               | 1.0             | ★     | 1.1            |
| Foothills Medical Centre  | 1.5  | 1.5     | 1.5     | 1.5               | 1.5             | ✓     | 1.3            |
| Peter Lougheed Centre   | 1.8  | 1.8     | 1.6     | 1.6               | 1.5             | ✓     | 1.4            |
| Rockyview General Hospital  | 1.3  | 1.4     | 1.4     | 1.4               | 1.4             | ✓     | 1.2            |
| South Health Campus   | N/A  | 1.6     | 1.6     | 1.5               | 1.5             | ✓     | 1.0            |
| <b>Central Zone Total</b>   | 1.2  | 1.2     | 1.1     | 1.1               | 1.2             | ✗     | 1.1            |
| Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre   | 1.2  | 1.2     | 1.1     | 1.1               | 1.2             | ✗     | 1.1            |
| <b>Edmonton Zone Total</b>  | 1.3  | 1.5     | 1.3     | 1.3               | 1.4             | ✗     | 1.2            |
| Grey Nuns Community Hospital  | 1.1  | 1.2     | 1.1     | 1.1               | 1.1             | ✓     | 1.0            |
| Misericordia Community Hospital   | 1.4  | 1.4     | 1.3     | 1.2               | 1.6             | ✗     | 1.3            |
| Northeast Community Health Centre   | 1.4  | 1.4     | 1.3     | 1.3               | 1.3             | ★     | 1.3            |
| Royal Alexandra Hospital  | 1.9  | 2.2     | 1.9     | 1.9               | 1.8             | ★     | 2.0            |
| Stollery Children's Hospital  | 0.8  | 1.1     | 1.0     | 0.9               | 0.9             | ★     | 0.9            |
| Sturgeon Community Hospital   | 1.3  | 1.5     | 1.3     | 1.3               | 1.4             | ✗     | 1.2            |
| University of Alberta Hospital  | 1.5  | 2.1     | 1.7     | 1.7               | 1.9             | ✗     | 1.4            |
| <b>North Zone Total</b>   |  |         |         |                   | 0.7             | ★     | 1.1            |
| Northern Lights Regional Health Centre  | North Zone results prior to Q1 2016-17 are not reported due to low percentage of eligible cases with Physician Assessment Time recorded. |         |         |                   | 0.6             | ★     | 0.9            |
| Queen Elizabeth II Hospital   |  |         |         |                   | 0.9             | ★     | 1.3            |

N/A: No results available. South Health Campus opened February 2013.

| ED Time to Physician Initial Assessment - Eligible Cases (Busiest Sites) | 2013-14  | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | Q2 YTD            |                 |
|--|--|---------|---------|-------------------|-----------------|
|  |  |         |         | 2015-16 Last Year | 2016-17 Current |
| <b>Provincial</b>  | 894,448  | 891,643 | 894,908 | 444,165           | 499,484         |
| South Zone   | 85,567   | 86,187  | 86,208  | 43,026            | 43,439          |
| Calgary Zone   | 363,570  | 367,775 | 365,513 | 180,962           | 181,755         |
| Central Zone   | 54,730   | 55,861  | 55,893  | 28,190            | 27,945          |
| Edmonton Zone  | 390,581  | 381,820 | 387,294 | 191,987           | 197,066         |
| North Zone   | North Zone results not reported due to low percentage of eligible cases with Physician Assessment Time recorded and not comparable historically. |         |         |                   | 49,279          |