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## Initiative to improve patient flow, keep ambulances on road

### *Rapid Transfer Units to open within next six weeks at two city hospitals*

EDMONTON – Alberta Health Services (AHS) today announced a local pilot project that will see the creation of Rapid Transfer Units and increased capacity at two emergency departments.

The pilot project will also change how Emergency Medical Services (EMS) crews transfer patients to emergency department staff. The changes are intended to improve patient flow at emergency departments, reduce the amount of time EMS crews spend in emergency departments, and ensure ambulances are available to respond to calls.

“We need our EMS crews out in their communities responding to emergency 911 calls,” says Vickie Kaminski, AHS President and CEO. “The new system will help get paramedics and other EMS providers back on the road soon after they bring their patients to emergency departments.”

“These changes, along with the recently announced additional continuing care beds, will help improve overall access to care in our emergency rooms and help ensure our resources are used where they are needed most,” says Health Minister Stephen Mandel.

The pilot project is being implemented at the University of Alberta Hospital and the Royal Alexandra Hospital. Results will be evaluated with the goal of implementing across the province, including rural and regional sites.

The new Rapid Transfer Units will be opened at both sites in the next six weeks. Each unit will include eight to 15 beds. The two pilot sites will also add dedicated EMS stretcher capacity as well as additional clinical staff within six weeks.

To gain efficiencies at other Edmonton and Calgary hospitals, EMS crews are continuing to consolidate care of patients being brought into emergency departments. When appropriate and safe, one EMS crew will take charge of two to three patients. This prevents multiple EMS crews from each tending to a single patient, and allows more ambulances to return to the road.

Rapid Transfer Units are also expected to improve patient flow at the two pilot sites.

Patients who need to be admitted to hospital, are awaiting an inter-facility transfer, or who have been medically cleared to leave hospital but are awaiting discharge, can be moved to a vacant bed on the Rapid Transfer Unit.

The pilot projects will cost approximately \$2.1 million and will be covered by AHS’ existing budget.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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