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New website helps Calgary-area patients Find a Doctor

More than 239 family doctors taking patients in Calgary area

CALGARY – Patients looking for a family doctor in the Calgary area can now find one at the click of a mouse, thanks to the launch of an interactive new website.

Developed by seven local Primary Care Networks and doctors in partnership with Alberta Health Services (AHS), www.calgaryareadocs.com allows patients to search which physicians and clinics in Calgary and surrounding communities are accepting new patients. This user-friendly service is free to use and can also be accessed by calling Health Link at 8-1-1. More than 239 family doctors are currently taking new patients and more than 1,200 physicians are listed on the site.

“The Find a Doctor website makes it easier and quicker for patients to find a family doctor in the Calgary area,” says Dr. Linda Slocombe, medical director for Calgary Foothills Primary Care Network. “Research shows that patients who regularly visit a family doctor are healthier and live longer. We hope this website encourages people living in the Calgary area to make their family’s health a priority and ensure they have access to a family doctor.”

On the new website, patients are able to search for a doctor where they live or work, or wherever is most convenient. There are no delays or long waits. Once patients find a doctor accepting patients in their area, they can call the clinic and request an appointment.

In Alberta, most family physicians are members of Primary Care Networks (PCNs). First established in 2003, PCNs improve access to family doctors and strengthen the services offered at clinics. There are seven PCNs in the Calgary-area and together they help to provide care for about 1.1 million patients.

“Family physicians play a key role in keeping Albertans healthy and they are often a patient’s first line of contact with the health system,” says Dr. Francois Belanger, Vice President and Medical Director for AHS Calgary Zone. “This website is an easy and reliable way for the public to find a family doctor and ensure they and their loved ones receive the care they need.”

The new user-friendly Find a Doctor service is one of two options available to visitors to the website. Patients can also fill in an online form and ask a PCN to find them a family doctor – an updated and streamlined version of the PCN ‘Need a Doctor’ service that has been available to Calgary-area residents since 2010 at www.needadoctorcalgaryandarea.com. That site now redirects to www.calgaryareadocs.com.

Olena Badham, of Calgary, had been looking for a family doctor for months when she heard about the Find a Doctor website.

“I’m seven-and-a-half months pregnant and it was very difficult to find a doctor,” said Olena, 27, who is expecting her first child and heard about the website when she contacted a maternity clinic. “I went onto the site and clicked a couple of different locations. I found one near where I live and gave them a call. They were accepting patients so I have a family doctor now. I was surprised how easy it was. I didn’t know about this service and it’s great to know it’s available.”

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The listings on the website are updated a minimum of once a month and in urban areas they are typically verified at least once a week to ensure the data is as up-to-date and as accurate as possible. The seven Calgary area PCNs serve patients in urban Calgary and surrounding communities including Airdrie, Okotoks, Canmore, Banff and Lake Louise.

Patients looking for a doctor in the Edmonton area can visit www.edmontonareadocs.com. For communities elsewhere in Alberta, patients can visit <http://www.pcnpmo.ca/alberta-pcns/Pages/map.aspx>.

ABOUT PRIMARY CARE NETWORKS: Primary Care Networks are groups of doctors who work with other health professionals and Alberta Health Services to meet the everyday health needs of patients throughout Alberta. There are seven PCNs in Calgary and the surrounding areas and together they help to provide care for about 1.1 million patients. Many PCNs include health teams and offer after hours care, as well as a range of clinics and workshops. For more information about Calgary-area PCNs, please visit www.mypcn.ca.

ABOUT ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES: 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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