

Backgrounder

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‘Time is brain’: seconds count when treating stroke patients

LETHBRIDGE – There are 17 designated stroke centres across five Alberta Health Services zones.

Over the past year, the average time it takes to treat stroke patients with the clot-busting drug tPA from their time of arrival at hospital decreased across all zones.

Here is additional data on progress made in the South Zone compared to provincial averages. It’s important to note average treatment times can be inflated by cases that involve difficult diagnoses or other life-threatening complications, such as cardiac events.

Stroke teams in the South Zone, which don’t have 24/7 staffing by a neurologist, sometimes face the added complication of having to obtain a neurological consult via videoconference with neurologists in Calgary.

Zone/Facilities	Average DTN time (2012)	Average DTN time (Oct. 2016-Dec. 2016)	Percentage reduction in average DTN time (From 2012 to Oct. 2016-Dec. 2016)	Number of stroke patients (Oct. 2016-Dec. 2016)	Fastest DTN Since start of initiative
Provincial	70 minutes	32 minutes	54%	118 patients	6 minutes
South Zone Brooks Health Centre, Chinook Regional Hospital (Lethbridge) and Medicine Hat Regional Hospital	82 minutes	42.5 minutes	48%	12 patients	15 minutes

Stroke teams continue to work toward achieving a provincial average door-to-needle time of 30 minutes.

Know the signs of stroke

Improving treatment times for stroke patients arriving at hospital is just one part of the equation in helping people survive without debilitating long-term consequences. It’s critical to recognize the symptoms of a stroke and seek emergency medical care immediately – time is brain.

You can use the mnemonic device **FAST** to help remember the signs of a stroke.

Face: is it drooping?

Arms: can you raise both?


Speech: is it slurred or jumbled?

Time: to call 9-1-1 right away.

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Partners

Background

Several organizations across Alberta have collaborated in QuICRR (Quality Improvement and Research) program funded by Alberta Innovates: 

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.

Alberta Innovates delivers 21st century solutions to the most compelling challenges Albertans face. Building on our province's strengths in environment, energy, health, food, fibre and emerging technology sectors, we work with our partners to diversify Alberta's economy, improve our environmental performance, and enhance our well-being. Through Alberta Innovates you can access technical expertise, the opportunity to establish new partnerships, and secure funding that will catalyze innovation. We support a broad range of research and innovation activity – from discovery to application. Partner with us to innovate faster.

The University of Calgary is making tremendous progress on its journey to become one of Canada's top five research universities, where research and innovative teaching go hand in hand, and where we fully engage the communities we both serve and lead. This strategy is called Eyes High, inspired by the university's Gaelic motto, which translates as 'I will lift up my eyes.' *For more information, visit ucalgary.ca. Stay up to date with University of Calgary news headlines on Twitter @UCalgary. For details on faculties and how to reach experts go to our media center at ucalgary.ca/mediacentre.*

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Covenant Health is Canada's largest Catholic health care organization with over 15,000 physicians, employees and volunteers serving in 12 communities across Alberta. A major provider in Alberta's integrated health system, Covenant Health works with Alberta Health Services and community partners to positively influence the health of Albertans through a broad range of programs and services. Covenant.Health.ca

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