

July 22, 2025



FAST SPOTLIGHT

Welcome to the first edition of the FAST Spotlight newsletter – your go-to quarterly source for updates, insights and stories from the Facilitated Access to Specialized Treatment (FAST) program.



On the radar

FAST news & updates

A new chapter for FAST

Welcome to the first edition of our FAST Spotlight newsletter. We're excited to share Facilitated Access to Specialized Treatment (FAST) news, updates and information with you on a quarterly basis. Earlier this year, FAST transitioned to Primary Care Alberta (PCA). In Feb. 2025, all zone FAST teams came together to form one unified provincial team—strengthening our ability to support timely, equitable access to specialty care across Alberta.

In response to the 2023 Alberta College of Family Physicians' report "[Decreasing Administrative Burden](#)," a review called a sludge audit was completed on the FAST program. This audit looked for unnecessary steps or delays that make it harder for people to complete tasks. It uncovered bigger system-wide problems such as gaps in technology, poor coordination between systems, referral issues and governance limitations. Some of the key recommendations from the report included:

- Improving leadership and decision-making across different parts of the health system
- Making sure the people responsible for results also have the authority and funding to make changes
- Looking at ways to encourage and support people to adopt better processes and tools

As a result, two major initiatives are now underway:

- FAST Stabilization
- Alberta Referral Program Action Plan

We're excited to share more about these initiatives in the articles that follow. Thank you for your continued commitment to improving access to care for Albertans.

Jill Robert, Executive Director, Referral Management
Jodi Glassford, Director, Referral Management

FAST stabilization underway

In early 2025, we launched the FAST stabilization project - a focused effort to strengthen the program and improve the experience for both referring and receiving providers across Alberta.

Actions include:

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- Standardizing procedures province-wide
- Improving how we collect and report data
- Boosting surgeon engagement to support retention
- Unifying our team through the transition to PCA

These efforts have already led to faster processing times for complete referrals and improved data for wait time reporting. Stay tuned for more results in our next edition.

Co-creating the Alberta Referral Program Action Plan

In response to partner feedback, system priorities and Alberta's health care refocus, PCA is developing a new referral management program in collaboration with system partners such as the Alberta Medical Association, patient advisors, and both referring and receiving providers. This work includes engaging partners, building a detailed action plan with support from external consultants, and preparing to pilot the new referral model with a champion specialty. More information will be shared in future editions.

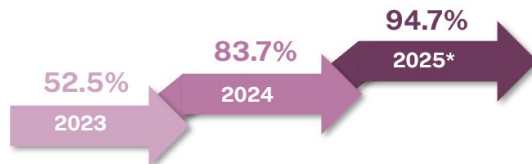


By the numbers

Data, results & performance metrics

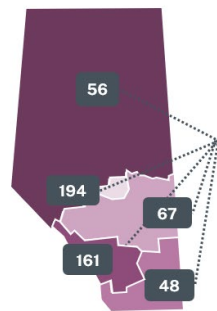
YOUR REFERRALS, FASTER!

complete referrals processed within 2 business days



FAST IS GROWING

Average number of referrals received every month



We connect you to

512 specialists**



*January to May 2025

** Specialists may accept referrals in multiple zones. Totals across zones exceed 512 due to overlap

We are here to help you



Call **1-833-553-3278**

Monday to Friday

*between 7:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.
(excluding stat holidays) for support*

In the last month, we have answered more than:

350 patient requests

600 provider requests

To subscribe to this quarterly newsletter, enter your email address [here](#).



**Primary Care
Alberta**



Your voice, your impact

Feedback, engagement opportunities & calls to action

Your feedback drives real change



When a primary care physician flagged an issue in the gynecology referral pathway—especially for patients with confirmed malignancy—our team listened.

Click [here](#) to give us feedback.

We responded immediately with the right information and worked closely with zone partners and the referral pathway consultant to update the pathway with clearer directions and priority contacts.

The result? A faster, clearer process for oncology referrals—and a grateful provider. In their words:

“Wow! Thank you for taking my feedback so seriously and adapting the pathway. I really appreciate that. Thanks so much for helping our patients!”

Your feedback drives real change. Keep it coming.

Primary care provider input required for future clinical pathway development

Earlier this year, the Provincial Pathways Unit (PPU) developed a survey to understand what clinical pathways should be developed next. Diabetes, autism and 10 other conditions were requested. To ensure future clinical pathways focus on the most valuable aspects of these preferred conditions, we would like your feedback once again.

Please take this short five-minute [survey](#) to help us further drill down on the specifics you'd like us to focus on.

Your input is important and will help us continue to create clinical pathways that work for you and your patients. For more information, go to albertapathways.ca or email albertapathways@primarycarealberta.ca.





In practice

Stories, testimonials & real-word impact

Enhancing orthopedic referrals through FAST

“Since Sept. 2022, Banff Sport Medicine - Orthopedic Surgeons have partnered with FAST to receive referrals for soft tissue injuries involving the knee, shoulder, foot, and ankle. This collaboration has significantly improved the quality of referrals within six months.

The process has been smooth and efficient allowing patients to be seen more promptly. Support staff no longer need to chase incomplete referrals and surgeons are now seeing patients who are appropriately prepared and meet surgical criteria. This has led to greater satisfaction among surgeons.”

Banff Sport Medicine **FAST: FACILITATED ACCESS TO SPECIALIZED TREATMENT**

Partnership began in September 2022

- Improved referral quality in 6 months
- Faster patient access
- Increased surgeon satisfaction
- Focus on soft tissue injuries (knee, shoulder, foot, ankle)

Expanding access to women's health services in northern Alberta

Expanding Access to Women's Health Services in Northern Alberta

Specialist accepting post-menopausal bleeding referrals

Serving communities in Lac La Biche, Elk Point and surrounding areas

Improved access to timely, specialized treatment

Since opting into the FAST program, one of our dedicated specialists has been making a significant impact by accepting post-menopausal bleeding referrals from communities in Lac La Biche, Elk Point and surrounding areas.

Previously, communicating this new specialist availability to referring providers was extremely challenging and referrals were sent into Edmonton. Patients from these regions often faced long wait times and had to travel to Edmonton for care. Now, thanks to her shorter waitlist, patients are being seen much more quickly and closer to home. While there is a gynecologist based in Bonnyville, she is currently not accepting new patients—making accessing this expanded specialist capacity through FAST even more vital.

This is a great example of how FAST is helping bridge gaps in care and ensuring timely, specialized support for women across Alberta.



Questions?

In addition to our phone information line (1-833-553-3278), you can reach out to your zone FAST teams via email:

- North: abfast.north@primarycarealberta.ca
- Edmonton: abfast.edmonton@primarycarealberta.ca
- Calgary: abfast.calgary@primarycarealberta.ca
- Central: abfast.central@primarycarealberta.ca
- South: abfast.south@primarycarealberta.ca
- General: abfast@primarycarealberta.ca

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Our mailing address is:
14th Floor, 10025 Jasper Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5J 1S6
ABFAST@primarycarealberta.ca
ahs.ca/FAST

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