

Provincial Health Tour | Fall 2022

Camrose – October 12, 2022

What We Heard Summary

The Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services are jointly hosting a series of engagement conversations across Alberta over Summer and Fall 2022. The Provincial Health Tour has been designed to allow for Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services to engage with our healthcare staff, partners and stakeholders in communities from across the province; to share current approach and priorities, discuss current state and future opportunities, celebrate our successes and work together to identify strategies to address challenges within the healthcare system.

Camrose

16 Stakeholders participated, representing municipal and community leaders

MLA Garth Rowswell (Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright) welcomed stakeholders. MLA Jackie Lovely (Camrose) participated in the session.

Minister of Health Jason Copping provided an update on healthcare including sharing successes and an update on Government investment and areas of focus.

AHS President and CEO Mauro Chies shared the AHS Health Plan and priority areas, as well as the challenges and opportunities for our future vision.

The power of partnerships

Over the last two years, Alberta Health Services and Covenant Health have worked together to respond to the ongoing pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic. The successes of the response and recovery efforts to date is a testament to the strong partnership of the two organizations.

The St. Mary's Hospital, Camrose Foundation is an excellent example of a partnership that enhances care for patients. The Foundation supports staff growth and development by sponsoring education; funds many essential instruments for surgeries and routine procedures, as well as labour and delivery equipment and palliative care supplies; and helps to update furnishings and comfort care items for patients.



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Alberta Health Highlights

Budget

Alberta Health’s budget is \$22B, and anticipated to increase by \$600M a year over the next three years including key investments as follows:

- \$64M increase to EMS budget
- \$60M in new funding over three years to expand recovery-oriented support for people experiencing addiction and mental health issues
- \$3.7B for continuing care, community care and home care programs
- \$3.5B over three years in capital funding for health facilities, equipment and IT systems across the province.
 - The Health Capital plan also includes \$45M over three years for the Rural Health Facilities Revitalization Program.

Physician Recruitment

Approximately \$90M is being spent in 2022 including:

Rural Remote Northern Program:	~\$57M	Rural Medical Education:	~\$6M
Rural Integrated Community Clerkship Program:	~\$4M	Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP):	~\$9M
Locum Program:	~\$3M	Rural Physician On-Call program:	~\$12M

Alberta Health is working with RhPAP on its Rural Education Supplement and Integrated Doctor Experience (RESIDE) program to help address challenges in rural and remote areas.

System Recovery

Over the next three years, AHS will perform between 20 and 23 per cent more surgeries compared to 2018-19 to reduce surgical wait lists.

AHS will return to pre-pandemic surgery wait list status by the end of 2022-23.

AHS is resuming many regular public health activities in 2022-23.

AHS will add 50 permanent, fully staffed ICU spaces by the second quarter of 2022-23.

Government is providing funding for more ground ambulances and additional EMS staff.

In each of the next three years, AHS will add about 1,000 new continuing care spaces and increase the number of unique home care clients by four per cent.

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AHS Health Plan 2022-25

AHS is entering a new era of transformation and innovation. The Health Plan 2022-25 is the roadmap for this exciting journey. At the heart of this plan are the 10 priorities that align with direction from the Minister of Health and reflect feedback from patients, clients and families who have received care from AHS.

The 10 priorities are:



1. Alberta Surgical Initiative

Implementation of the Alberta Surgical Initiative, ensuring that, by 2025, all Albertans receive their scheduled surgeries within clinically approved wait times.



6. Rural Initiatives and Engagement

Rural engagement and rural initiatives, to strengthen partnerships with rural communities, to better support the rural healthcare workforce and to better meet the unique needs of Albertans living in non-urban communities.



2. EMS 10-Point Plan

Implementation of the EMS 10-Point Plan, designed to improve EMS services and availability, especially in rural and remote communities.



7. Continuing Care

Continuing care, increasing the numbers of continuing care spaces and living options, expanding home care hours, and shifting reliance from facility – to home-based care when appropriate.



3. Mental Health and Substance Use Recovery

Mental health and opioid recovery, which includes adding AHS-managed treatment spaces, and expanding in-person and virtual recovery-oriented programs and services.



8. Workforce Recruitment and Retention

Workforce recruitment and retention, which involved supporting our current workforce following more than two years of pandemic response, as well as recruiting and retaining needed healthcare workers.



4. Pandemic Response and Recovery

Pandemic recovery, which involves adding acute care spaces (ICE beds), supporting continued access to vaccines and treatments to COVID-19, and establishing specialty clinics to support Albertans with ongoing COVID-19 symptoms.



9. Quality of Patient Outcomes

Quality of Patient Outcomes, ensuring patient safety and high-quality care are maintained and enhanced during a period of transformative change in the organization.



5. Digital Health Evolution and Innovation

Digital health evolution and innovation, including the ongoing rollout of Connect Care and continued expansion of virtual health to support more community – and home-based care, programs and services.



10. Sustainability

Financial sustainability, ensuring that AHS is run efficiently, with Albertans getting full value for every health dollar.

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At the event, we held a working session where participants reflected on the following questions:

- *What is our healthcare system doing well?*
- *What challenges currently exist within the system?*
- *In addition to what is currently being done, how can we better address challenges?*



Here's a sampling of what we heard in Camrose.

What we are doing well

Camrose stakeholders stressed that, once in the system, residents feel they are receiving necessary healthcare services. Urgent care is provided immediately, and the majority of services people require are available in Camrose.

Camrose residents report **technology** has advanced care, with HealthLink and virtual follow-up being noted as success stories. Staff are expanding their **scope of practice** and interdisciplinary teams are being created for the benefit of local residents.

Participants cited the **community paramedic program** as an example of an improvement in local care.

“The system is really there when you need it and the triaging is effective.”

“Patients are able to access state of the art, quality care.”

Top healthcare challenges and opportunities

Camrose residents say **funding, staffing** and **access** are significant challenges, limiting care in their community. They would like to see more efforts to **recruit and retain** staff - including a focus on rural living. **Enhanced incentives** and **educational programs**, such as collaborations with local schools and colleges, and career fairs to promote the healthcare profession and local opportunities, were raised as potential solutions. An increase in communication between multidisciplinary care teams was also highlighted as an opportunity to improve local healthcare.

Camrose stakeholders urged more funding for **seniors' health programs and care**, and improvements in access to homecare and long-term care.

“Focus on meeting the social and cultural needs of new recruits - ask what the needs are and listen.”

Stakeholders also identified a lack of proper **infrastructure** in Camrose as a challenge and identified a need for more **walk-in** clinic access. They say a **shortage of physicians** has equated in a lack of availability and access.

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Camrose participants called for a reinvestment in local **programs** that were cut as well as local **recruitment** initiative programs in collaboration with community partners.

“Reinvest in FCCS and in programs that work.”

As has been consistent throughout the tour, Camrose residents shared numerous accounts of the experience of a **shortage** of nurses and physicians and called for a community response that builds partnerships and seeks to meet the needs of both existing staff, and new recruits.

Evaluation of event

Of the 22 individuals who completed a survey (both internal and external events in Camrose):

- 20 (91%) responded that the topic was highly relevant, and something they wanted to know more about (13 ranked as 5 out of 5; 7 as 4)
- 19 (86%) felt strongly that the session was a good use of their time (14 ranked as 5 out of 5; 5 as 4)

Residents of Camrose say there has been an increase in attention to rural matters in their community and overall, as one participant noted, the quality of care is excellent.

“[The most valuable part of the session was the] ability to speak/share - feel we can be part of the solutions.”

Next steps

- All notes and partnership ideas generated from the Provincial Health tour will be shared with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services leadership.
- A regular newsletter is being distributed to event registrants and participants.
- A report and recommendations will be produced by Alberta Health.

Thank you

We are grateful to all who took the time to meet with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services leadership to discuss the future of healthcare in Alberta. Your experience and personal insights will inform future planning and changes that will improve healthcare for all Albertans.

Contact us: community.engagement@ahs.ca