

Provincial Health Tour | Fall 2022

Edmonton – October 3 & 5, 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.

Edmonton

102 Stakeholders participated representing municipal and community leaders



MLA Garth Rowswell (Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright) welcomed stakeholders.

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

AHS Board Chair Gregory Turnbull, Interim CEO Mauro Chies, Sean Chilton, VP, People & Technology, and Deb Gordon, VP & Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Operations, 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 has received significant support from its philanthropic partners in response to the ongoing pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic. The successes of the response and recovery efforts to date is a testament to strong partnerships.

Foundations provided financial support for projects such as the creation of a biorepository or the development of the Text4Hope program.

Local foundations have also shown outstanding support for our frontline staff. From the *Foundations of Gratitude* campaign to partnering with the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation, our philanthropic partners have continually found ways to show appreciation and support staff.

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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?*
- *In addition to what is currently being done, how can we better address challenges?*
- *What can you do to improve the provision of health care in your community?*



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

What we are doing well

The **quality of healthcare** available to patients was celebrated by Edmonton Zone stakeholders, with participants highlighting the focus on **patient-centred** care, the **variety of services** available – including emergency care, homecare and community supports, surgical facilities and the paramedic program.

The **passion** and **professionalism of healthcare staff** was highlighted, and participants expressed appreciation of **technology** and **innovation**, including Connect Care.

The increase in **collaboration** and **partnerships** with community members and community-based providers, such as Continuing Care sites, were highlighted as positive impacts of the COVID response. Efforts to be **accountable**, the value provided by Health Advisory Councils and other commitments to improve communication and increase engagement with the public were noted.

“As one large health provider, able to share resources and skills.”

“Care by all healthcare providers is exceptional.”

Top healthcare challenges and opportunities

Participants identified **workforce** challenges as their primary concern. The **retention** and **recruitment** of healthcare professionals was discussed, with many comments made about the importance of staff training, mentorship and education; appropriate compensation of skilled staff; and the need to re-build public support and respect for healthcare professionals.

Funding was also highlighted as a top concern, with comments made about the need to ensure that services are adequately funded; that flexibility is created in funding models; and that funding follows the patient or client.

Continuing Care was identified as a challenge in the Edmonton Zone; participants identified a need to increase beds, stabilize funding and create partnerships. Providing support to **informal caregivers** was discussed as an opportunity.

“Health promotion initiatives to keep seniors active and social/publicly funded day programs for seniors.”

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Access to care was identified as a challenge by community partners: both the availability of family doctors, and barriers such as transportation and community services. The need to **build trust** between AHS, Alberta Health and Albertans, and to **seek partnerships to improve care**, were highlighted. This included cross-ministry collaboration and work with educational partners to support existing staff and to train more healthcare professionals. The **integration of primary care** into the healthcare system was also discussed.

Investing in **health promotion** and **prevention**, as well as **public education** around the health system, were highlighted as opportunities, as was the need to better **support home care** and **informal caregivers** as a means of better supporting Albertans. Likewise, the need to invest in **mental health** and **harm reduction** were raised.

AHS' structure was also discussed, with comments made about the size of the organization and the importance of seeking and listening to local experts.

Evaluation of event

Of the 92 individuals who completed a survey (both internal and external events in Edmonton):

- 86 (96%) responded that the topic was highly relevant, and something they wanted to know more about (60 ranked as 5 out of 5; 26 as 4)
- 83 (90%) felt strongly that the session was a good use of their time (50 ranked as 5 out of 5; 33 as 4)

Respondents highlighted the importance of ongoing communication and collaboration and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the event. Many said they felt heard and enjoyed the face-to-face conversation, though many also said they are concerned with what will be done with the information that was shared.

What was the most valuable part of the session?
“Personally, hearing about some factors within AHS that I had not thought of. It built on my empathy and hopefully my support.”

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