

# WE ARE AHS

Your  
guide  
to living  
our values



Whether you've just started or you've been with us for a while, you're a vital part of Alberta Health Services. We're a large and diverse workforce in hundreds of communities across the province. Our shared purpose and values connect and define us.

**This booklet is your guide to understanding the foundational pieces that shape your role and how we work together.**

## THE AHS STORY

Together we  
do amazing  
things

.....

We do incredible life-changing work every day by serving the health needs of more than four million Albertans.



It may be when a grandmother has a stroke. Or when a teenager breaks a leg. It might be when a new mother learns to breastfeed her newborn. Or when a city faces a natural disaster.

We help people during illness, disease, disaster, trauma, birth, life and death. Much of our work is in hospitals and health centres, but includes the entire spectrum of healthcare.

From health promotion in school classrooms to end-of-life care in a family's

home, we are increasingly taking healthcare into our communities to deliver services and programs where they are most wanted and effective—where people live.

It's a huge task and one we accomplish by also working with families, other healthcare providers, communities, businesses and governments.

In all, AHS is a team of over 130,000 staff, volunteers and physicians dedicated to making a difference in the lives of Albertans.

**Our people are at the heart of everything we do. As a whole, we are compassionate, reliable, diverse, caring, warm and professional.**

# WE CAN GUIDE YOU

## how to use this book

This booklet is your guide to being successful at AHS. It introduces you to the foundations of everything we do. From starting a new job and growing skills to working together, reaching goals and advancing our careers.

You can use this booklet to better understand AHS’:

- vision and mission
- code of conduct
- values and competencies.

We’ll show how these all fit together—and what they mean to you and your job. You can use this information to think about your own role and performance. And you can use it to discuss your growth with your leader.







# THEN AND NOW

where we started

In 2019, AHS turned a decade old. In just 10 years, we have become recognized as a national and international leader in many areas of healthcare and research. Our success is rooted in a strong history across the province. We came together in the spirit of collaboration and innovation to build on our strengths and to provide quality healthcare to patients and families.

However long you've been a part of AHS, you're part of where we're going.

# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

## AHS milestones

08



Single provincial  
healthcare system  
announced

Ground ambulance  
services added  
to AHS

09



One province, one  
healthcare system

Finance transitions  
to provincial scope

10



Innovation focus for  
new hip and knee  
surgery centre

Lois Hole Hospital  
for Women opens  
in Edmonton

11



The President's  
Excellence Awards  
and Brain Centre  
Campaign are  
launched

Cutting-edge  
rehab equipment  
funded by Glenrose  
Rehabilitation  
Hospital Foundation

12



Healthcare  
innovation in  
Alberta driven  
by new Strategic  
Clinical Networks

Calgary's  
South Health  
Campus opens

13



New Enhanced  
Recovery After  
Surgery program  
launches for  
surgery patients

Healthy Parents,  
Healthy Children  
program launches

14

New Early Supported Discharge program improves stroke survivors' quality of life

New equipment improves colorectal cancer screening for residents of Rocky Mountain House

15

Glenrose becomes second hospital in Canada with Ekso CT exoskeleton

AHS Patient First Strategy: What matters to you, matters to us

AHS launches 811 for Health Link

16

Albertans say thanks for care received with [thanksforcaring.ca](https://www.thanksforcaring.ca)

New ambulatory care wing opens at Chinook Regional Hospital

17

New High Prairie Health Complex opens

Improved obstetrical and newborn care for moms in Central Alberta

Alberta becomes first in Canada with Stroke Ambulance

18

AHS wins three top employer awards

Permanent dialysis unit welcomed in Lac La Biche

Virtual reality eases pain for wound-care patients

19

A decade flew by

10

Together

To learn more, visit the digital timeline on Insite: [ahs.ca/timeline](https://ahs.ca/timeline)

# A SHARED PURPOSE

our vision and mission

## The AHS vision is:

Healthy Albertans.  
Healthy Communities.

**Together.**

## The AHS mission is:

To provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

## Why do we have a vision and mission?

Our vision sets us on a path for the future—it shows where we want to go. It's our hope of what we want to achieve.

Our mission defines our shared purpose (why we exist) and describes how we will work toward our vision.

It gets us excited about where we are going and how we will get there.

By having a vision and a mission, we ensure our workforce of more than 130,000 people works together towards common goals.





compassion

accountability

respect

excellence

safety



# WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

our values

## What are values?

Our values reflect what we care about and what we believe in. They guide us in everything we do. We strive to live our values together, because we are stronger together.

Our five values form the framework for how we act and make all of our decisions. They express what's important to us and we strive to reflect them every day so patients, clients and their families have quality care experiences in every encounter.



**WHAT WE  
BELIEVE IN**  
our values



# compassion

**We show kindness and empathy for all in our care, and for each other**

Three weeks before his son's wedding, Ron Chomyc was admitted to the University of Alberta Hospital. When the Chomyc family and unit staff realized Ron wouldn't live to see the wedding day, they arranged an impromptu wedding in 24 hours.

The unit clerk brought flowers. A resident doctor donated her bridal garter. A nurse made a cake. Others secured donated food, photography and fizzy drinks.

As the ceremony drew near, unit staff flanked the bride as she walked down

a hallway to join her groom at his father's bedside. The hospital chaplain declared the couple husband and wife. And Ron, who listened to the exchange of vows with closed eyes, whispered to his son: "I heard every word and am so happy." Two days later, he died, surrounded by family.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

our values

# accountability

We are honest, principled and transparent

Built one link at a time, AHS' supply chain is considered one of the best anywhere. Why? It sources and delivers healthcare processes and products—from prosthetics to painkillers—from around the globe to patients across the province. Safely, quickly, efficiently.

The supply chain works so well that it's poised to become the world's first such clinical system that can track and trace how well it works for specific patient groups. And it can identify ways for all Albertans to get the best value from the tens of thousands of items in the supply chain.

A study published in the journal Healthcare Quarterly found AHS gets \$7 of value for every \$1 it invests in its supply chain. If there was an Olympic competition in health supply chain management, AHS would win the gold medal.



# respect

**We treat others with respect and dignity**

Few people are comfortable talking about sexual assault, making it the least reported form of violence.

Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre staff wanted to change the conversation and show their respect for victims.

They donned t-shirts emblazoned with “Made to Respect” to recognize Sexual

Assault Awareness Month.

“Sexual assault can happen to anyone. Most victims know who attacked them, but only three per cent of victims actually report it,” says Ronnie Biletsky, Central Alberta Sexual Assault Response Team (CASART) coordinator.

Ronnie says healthcare



providers want to do everything they can to support survivors.

“Sexual assault affects everyone,” she says. “Even the smaller steps we’re taking to raise awareness, like wearing these t-shirts, is helping more people feel comfortable to come forward and talk about it.”

# WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

our values

## excellence

We strive to be our best and give our best

Surgical patients at the Chinook Regional Hospital are in very good hands. The hospital is one of 83 in the world recognized by the American College of Surgeons for exemplary surgical outcomes.

The college's National Surgical Quality Improvement Program considered the surgical teams at more than 800 international hospitals.

The hospital's accomplishment is the result of operating room staff and physicians going above and beyond to serve patients and provide safe, timely care.

The hospital team performs 10,000 surgeries a year and constantly works to reduce infections, illnesses, and deaths related to surgical procedures.

Their many results include reducing post-operation infection by 27 per cent and decreasing the number of patients re-admitted to a hospital by nearly half.

The surgical teams at Chinook Regional Hospital have demonstrated how to use clinical data as a decision-making guideline for improvement work that is world class.



What do the AHS values mean to you?  
How would you make them part of your job?

# safety

Safety and quality improvement are at the heart of all our decisions

The tendency to wander and explore spaces is common with mental health patients with dementia and behavioural issues. Foothills Medical Centre staff used a little paint and a lot of inspiration to create scenic wall murals and a calm atmosphere that deter wandering.

Colourful, joyful focal points make hospitals safer, promote healing, and improve moods and the patient experience.

“I’ve always been motivated to create art. I feel it improves everybody’s quality of life and well-being,” says Jelena Marjanovic, a registered nurse who painted several unit murals.



One masks exit doors with a painting of a huge aquarium. Another features a girl reading as she drinks tea and her puppy naps.

The murals have made the space more inviting and comforting for patients, families and staff. They also helped reduce Code Yellows (missing person alerts).

# RIGHT THING TO DO

## our code of conduct

### Principles guide us and help us do the right thing

Our Code of Conduct is based on both rights and responsibilities. It protects and guides everyone who works for or on behalf of AHS. It anchors AHS policies and procedures.

It recognizes:

- The challenges we face
- The high standards expected and needed of us
- The importance of our shared duty to the people we serve.

The Code of Conduct calls for each of us to:

- Treat people with respect, compassion, dignity and fairness
- Be open, honest and loyal
- Act ethically and uphold professional standards
- Take responsibility for our own actions and expect others to do the same
- Respect confidentiality and privacy.

To learn more about the Code of Conduct, visit [Insite](#) or talk to your leader.



# VALUES IN ACTION

our competencies

## Behaviours that show our values in action

Success at AHS depends on a safe, healthy, inclusive workplace where we can reach our full potential, together.

Our values are a part of the DNA which makes us who we are. Our competencies help us understand how we can

live those values through actions and how we can reach success by connecting our efforts.

Simply put, it's not just what we do, but how we do it. How we act affects how we work together, the care and services we provide, and our relationships.

And our competencies guide us by showing how we can act in three areas:

**knowing ourselves,**  
**caring together** and  
**contributing daily.**

AHS competencies are how we show up and strive to be our best.



## know myself

- take responsibility
- eager to learn
- recognize my emotions



## care together

- show kindness
- communicate effectively
- work with others



## contribute daily

- stand up for safety
- commit to quality service
- act with purpose



A photograph of two women with long dark hair, smiling and engaged in conversation outdoors. The woman on the left is wearing a denim jacket, and the woman on the right is wearing a patterned jacket and a lanyard. The background shows a brick wall and a window.

# VALUES IN ACTION

our competencies

A celebrated anesthesiologist with Cree and Anishinaabe roots, Dr. Alika Lafontaine knows well how biases can affect patient care, especially for Indigenous people.

And he's spoken up against them across Canada.

"We all have these biases that we've grown up with. Some of them come from experiences that we've had as kids, or things

we've inherited from our parents or people we've looked up to as mentors," says Alika, who works at the Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Grande Prairie.

He has garnered many accolades, including the Public Policy Forum's Emerging Indigenous Leader Award in 2017.

Within AHS, Alika helped the launch of the North Zone

Indigenous Cultural Safety Work Plan.

"The plan also signals to Indigenous patients that it's time for a change to happen and AHS wants to co-design a way forward with you," he says. "I'm incredibly excited about the plan and I think it will make a major impact."



## know myself

### How we reflect and look for opportunities to grow

#### take responsibility

- own my decisions and actions
- follow through on my commitments
- acknowledge and try to fix my mistakes

#### eager to learn

- own my growth and development
- seek and use feedback for self-improvement
- learn from my experiences

#### recognize my emotions

- notice how my emotions affect others
- stay calm and respectful in difficult situations
- focus on finding solutions





## VALUES IN ACTION

our competencies

True puppy love is spreading throughout the South Health Campus in Calgary.

The hospital has used pet therapy and visits for years to comfort palliative and mental health patients. More recently, dogs have been brought into the emergency department.

“We had thought about it before, but we always hit a bit of a stumbling block—

would it be appropriate?” says Karen Cameron, an assistant in the Volunteer Resources Program. “After several consultations and discussions, we decided to give it a trial run.”

The canines have since been welcomed with open arms. “You can just see the energy lift when one of the dogs walks on the unit,” says Carla Seal-Riemann, unit manager for

SHC Emergency.

The dogs have been so well received that a second pilot program was launched for staff, where a team of five dogs are on call to comfort team members following a critical incident.

“Emergency department staff deal with so many traumatic things and the exposure to the dogs really helps them,” says Karen.





## How we treat others and work together

### show kindness

- consider and respond to others' needs
- understand and respect for others' differences
- be friendly, helpful and caring

### communicate effectively

- seek others' opinions and perspectives
- provide timely, complete and appropriate information
- adapt to meet others' needs and to be understood

### work with others

- build positive relationships
- work together to get things done
- encourage and appreciate others



# VALUES IN ACTION

our competencies

Few things build team morale and improve the patient experience more than encouragement, appreciation, and praise.

This was true for Jessica Brown, a positive-minded Protective Services site manager. Her security team relies on people skills to keep the peace and promote safety across their site.

“There are times when we have to go and do the peace officer thing, for sure. We have to make difficult decisions, sometimes with difficult people,” Jessica says.

She sees the link between workforce engagement and the patient-care experience every day. Jessica is a big believer in practicing NOD (stating your name, occupation and duty),

a courtesy to patients, as a way to lessen anxiety and add to their understanding of their care.

“NOD sets the tone for the conversation if you walk in and say, ‘Hi, my name is Jessica from Protective Services. You seem a little upset. I’d really like to help you with that.’ ”



## contribute daily

### How we make a difference and achieve our goals

#### stand up for safety

- follow safety protocols and standards
- be alert for hazards and speak up
- share safety knowledge with others

#### commit to quality service

- strive to understand clients' needs
- focus on what matters to clients
- look for ways to improve our services

#### act with purpose

- make decisions in a timely manner
- embrace new ideas and ways of working
- move forward and adjust as needed

# THE DNA OF AHS

how we work

Vision, mission, values, code of conduct, competencies...

How are all of these connected and how can we live them at the same time? All of these foundational pieces are a part of the DNA of AHS.

Like DNA, they are what makes us both the same and

different. We share many common traits. We share some traits with groups. And we have individual traits.

At AHS, we share a vision, mission and values. They give us a common direction so we are better able to face challenges and meet our goals.

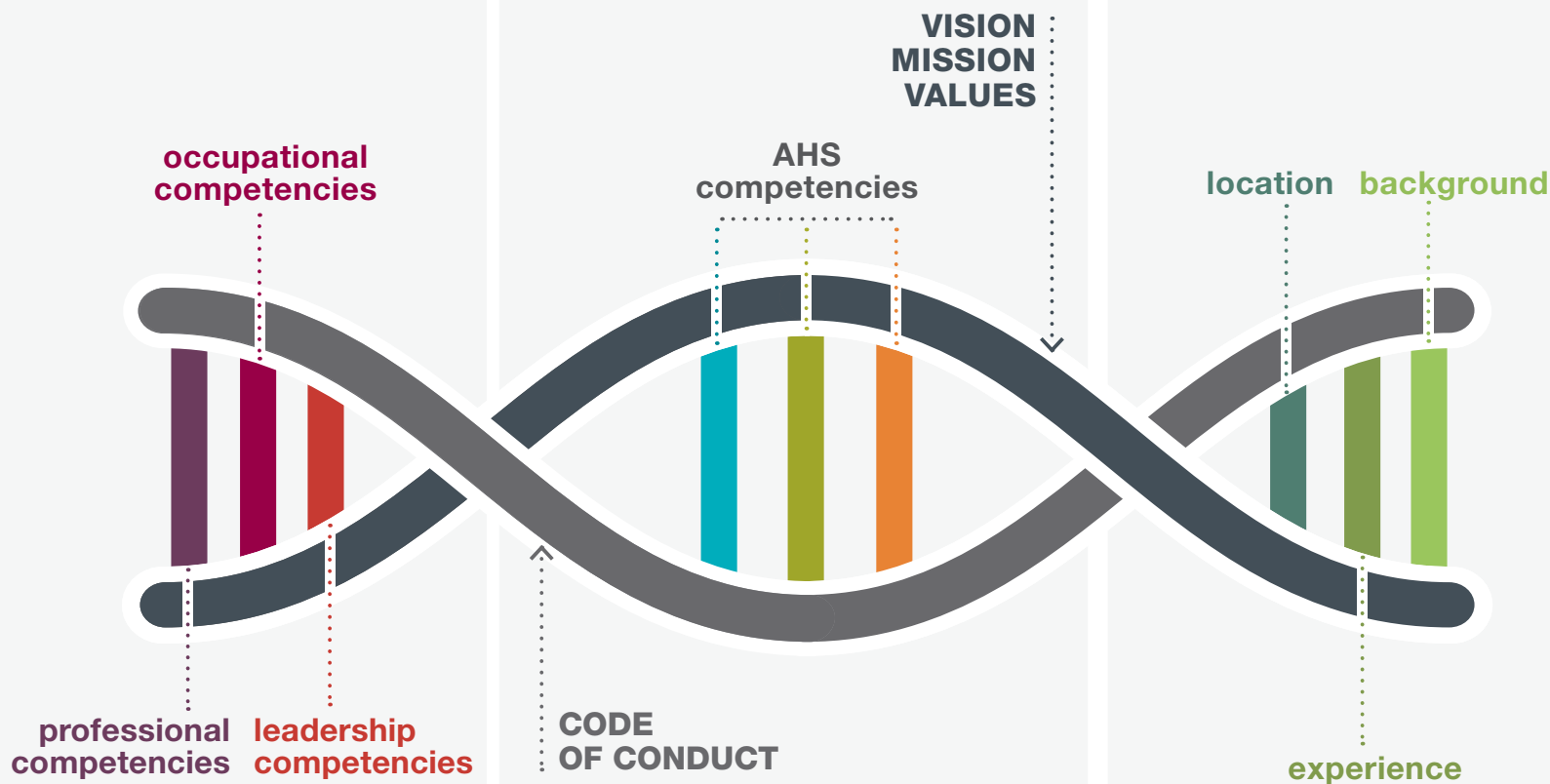
How we contribute and get to those goals is what makes us different.

You will need to know many things specific to your role, where you work in the province and the type of care or service you provide.

**Vary by  
what we do**

**Common  
to all of us**

**Vary by who  
and where we are**



# HERE FOR YOU

next steps

You've used this booklet to understand how our shared values and competencies connect and define us—and how they shape your role and relationships at AHS.

## **Use this checklist to take the next steps:**

- Explore more information about our values and competencies on Insite.
- Reflect on the AHS competencies. Ask yourself what they mean to you. Which are your strengths

and which can you improve?

- Write down your reflections and share your thoughts in your next conversation with your leader. Discuss which AHS competencies you should focus on developing.
- Expand your skills. Check out learning opportunities for each AHS competency in the Learning Navigator on Insite.
- Revisit this booklet when you have questions or want to refresh your knowledge.

**And remember, you're not in this alone. Your leaders and colleagues are here for you. They can help you find answers, build on your strengths, identify opportunities, and reach success.**







compassion  
accountability  
respect  
excellence  
safety

**How can we help you?**

Visit Insite for more information  
or connect with your leader.