

# Venting Wisely

Critical Care Strategic Clinical Network

## The Problem

Patients who develop life-threatening illnesses often need life support, which can only be provided in intensive care units (ICUs). Respiratory life support (also known as mechanical ventilation) is when machine-assisted breathing is used in patients to try and save their lives.

Many patients who need mechanical ventilation suffer lung failure. Lung failure prevents oxygen from being delivered to the body. It can be caused by severe infections such as pneumonia. Some patients develop very severe lung failure, known as Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS). More than half of patients with severe ARDS will die. Treating ARDS correctly is essential for these patients to survive.

Several treatments for lung failure have been proven to improve a patient's chance of survival (e.g., delivering small breaths via breathing machines). The Critical Care community found that these treatments are not used consistently in Alberta ICUs, or as often as they should. We view this as an opportunity to improve care and help more patients.

## The Solution

Our solution is the VENTING WISELY care pathway, which ensures these treatments in an organized and standardized way.

Our goal is to ensure the right patients get the right treatment at the right time. We believe using the Venting Wisely pathway in ICUs across Alberta will:

- improve outcomes for respiratory life support patients in Alberta,
- improve care for patients (helping patients survive more often),
- improve the experience for providers (making care more efficient), and
- benefit the healthcare system (patients spending less time on life support and in the ICU)

For questions related to the Venting Wisely care pathway, please email [ventingwisely@ahs.ca](mailto:ventingwisely@ahs.ca).

8/19/2021

