

Initiative Overview

Bariatric Friendly Hospital Initiative

The DON SCN is leading provincial initiative to improve and standardize how patients with obesity are cared for in Alberta hospitals. [Seven standards](#) for a bariatric friendly hospital have identified and agreed upon by provincial working groups.

Background

Bariatrics is the branch of medicine that deals with the study and treatment of obesity. Bariatric care encompasses all aspects of the healthcare of individuals living with obesity. As of October 2015, the Canadian Medical Association classifies obesity as a chronic disease.

The continuing rise in obesity is a global health issue. Approximately 29% of adult Albertans have obesity. Patients living with obesity coming into health care settings are at significantly higher risk for complications due to inadequate facility design, equipment, or lack of staff competencies in their care.

Many health care providers lack the knowledge of the complex nature and causes of obesity; and believe that if a person exercises more and eats less, they can lose weight (which is not true). **Weight bias** generally refers to negative attitudes toward a person because he or she has obesity.

The Initiative

The Bariatric Friendly Hospital Initiative focuses on implementing standards and guidelines for a bariatric friendly care hospital environment within AHS facilities, in alignment with AHS [Patient First](#) and [Our People](#) Strategies.

This initiative will support health care providers to become more knowledgeable about the complexity of obesity, and to be aware of their own personable biases and how they may be impacting patient care. It supports them to develop competencies in safe patient handling, as well as the unique care needs of patients with obesity, and to work effectively and compassionately with this patient population.

