

In 2019, there were approximately 180,000 adult gastrointestinal endoscopic procedures performed in Alberta. Since that time, during the pandemic, concerns over long wait times and wait lists in relation to deferred procedures and reduced endoscopy capacity have intensified. However, without an effective method to gather data on indications and acuity for endoscopy and standardized approaches to patient scheduling and waitlist reporting and management, it was not possible to report on wait lists or the urgency level of those waiting for endoscopy procedures. ACATs-E presents an accurate method to capture this data and to refine the way patients are scheduled for endoscopies.

The foundation of ACATs-E is a set of standardized diagnosis-based codes, designed by a provincial team of medical professionals, that identify a spectrum of conditions ranging from severe pathologies, such as colon cancer, to milder diseases such as reflux disease. These codes will indicate both the reason for the procedure and the urgency of the case, and whether the procedure is needed for diagnostic, therapeutic, or monitoring purposes.



From a provincial implementation perspective, the integration of ACATs-E into Connect Care, Alberta Health Services' provincial electronic clinical information system, has created an ideal digital infrastructure to capture, analyze and report on wait times at provider, site, zone, and provincial levels in near real time.

In addition to its operational relevance in scheduling endoscopies, ACATs-E data will also be used to:

- Monitor and evaluate trends in demand and supply for endoscopies across Alberta and whether they are being performed within clinically appropriate timeframes.
- Inform strategic decision making around resource allocation.
- Assist in supporting a coordinated pandemic response.
- Allow for assessment of the frequency of low-yield procedures.

Dedicated ACATs-E team leads are currently providing education and support to endoscopy providers across the province as they implement ACATs-E. These team leads will work with physicians and their booking teams to ensure they understand how to use the codes, and how to generate and use the reports, in order to ensure a smooth transition from current systems to a single electronic platform.

ACATs-E will be implemented provincially in a staggered approach at all 50 endoscopy sites – with the first 22 sites scheduled for completion by September 2022, and the remaining 28 sites implemented according to the Connect Care schedule, beginning with launch five.

For more information on ACATs-E, please visit the [Digestive Health Strategic Clinical Network website](#) or email ACATsEndoscopy@ahs.ca.