

Allied Health Workforce Strategic Plan 2023-2026



Table of contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Current Challenges	6
Vision and Guiding Principles	7
Strategic Directions & Areas of Focus	8
Growing our Talent Supply.....	8
Retaining a Vibrant and Engaged Workforce.....	11
Optimizing the Workforce and Models of Care.....	13
What Success Looks Like	15
Intended Outcomes.....	15
Moving Forward	16
Appendices	17
Appendix A: Outcomes and Key Actions.....	17
Appendix B: Optimized Practice and Outcomes.....	20
How it works.....	20
Benefits and value.....	20
Appendix C: Career Pathways for Allied Health.....	21
Career Streams.....	21
Enablers.....	21

Executive Summary

Allied health professionals play a significant role across the continuum of care as independent, direct care providers and as members of the care team, with unique roles and value. Allied Health Professions (AHP) supports ten allied health disciplines, each of which have an essential role in service delivery, in patient experience and outcomes, and in AHS meeting its goals and priorities, now and into the future.

We are on a journey moving towards a more robust, sustainable, and engaged workforce. We want to continue to make AHS an employer of choice while remaining fiscally prudent. This will ensure that we continue to deliver high-quality and safe care focused on improving health outcomes for Albertans and their experience with the healthcare system.

As part of an integrated approach, the *Allied Health Workforce Strategic Plan 2023-2026* is an extension of the *AHS Health Workforce Strategy*. It expands on the *Health Workforce Strategy* goals and objectives within the context of our allied health disciplines, and covers new and ongoing work specific to the unique needs and challenges of allied health that go beyond, and yet still support, the *AHS Health Workforce Strategy*. The purpose of this Plan is to articulate the vision, strategic directions, and areas of focus that will enhance engagement of and support for the ten allied health disciplines in all the geographies and programs in which they work. As an evidence-based guiding document for the next three years, the focus is on innovative solutions organized within three interrelated, strategic directions:

- Growing our talent supply
- Retaining a vibrant and engaged workforce
- Optimizing our workforce and models of care.

A more detailed companion implementation plan moves the work forward at the provincial, zone, and local levels to achieve the expected outcomes, a summary of which is provided in Appendix A.

“The purpose of this Plan is to articulate the vision, strategic directions, and areas of focus that will enhance engagement of and support for the ten allied health disciplines in all the geographies and programs in which they work. “

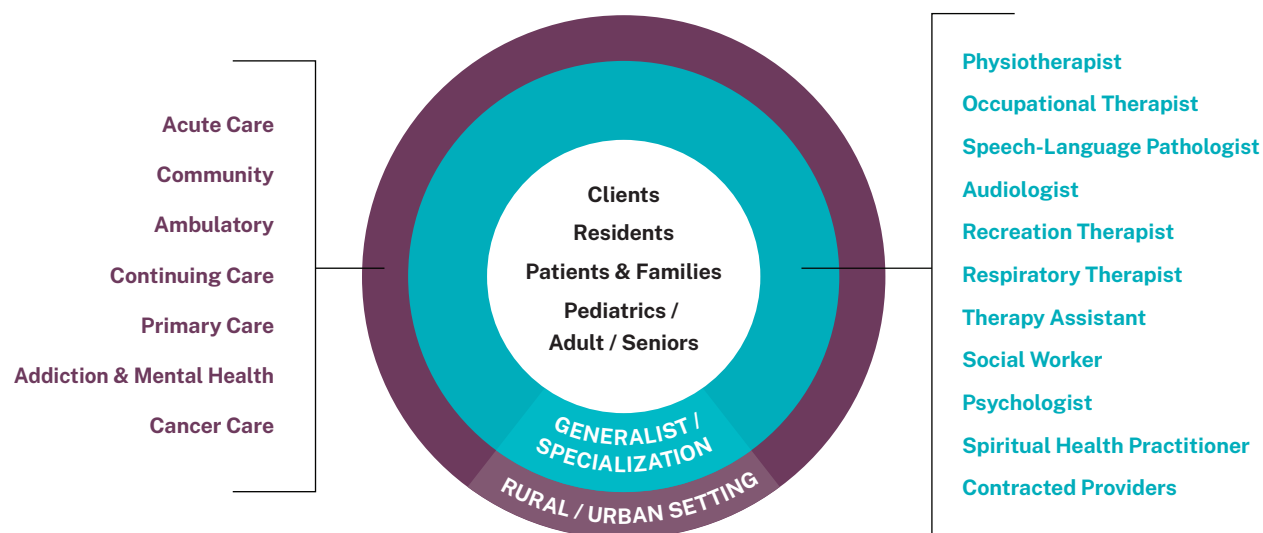
Introduction

The *Allied Health Workforce Strategic Plan 2023-2026* is one of two parallel provincial allied health and rehabilitation strategic plans. The desired outcomes of the 2022-2026 Provincial Rehabilitation Strategic Plan are directly tied to the *Allied Health Workforce Strategic Plan 2023-2026*. Now more than ever, there is a need for a strong, sustainable allied health workforce. Building and maintaining a workforce that optimizes professionals will ensure that essential services for Albertans are accessible; that programs, teams, and roles are consistent and coordinated; that staff are able to best use their skills and talents; and that effective and efficient services are enabled that will secure both quality and sustainability. A commitment to collaboration and communication will ensure efficiency in putting these parallel plans into action.

Who We Are

AHS Allied Health encompasses a diverse group of professionals with unique roles, working across the continuum of care. Allied health providers are found in nearly every facility across AHS and within many virtual or community-based programs and services. They are integral to core services and essential in meeting the health needs of Albertans. Like nurses and physicians, allied health professionals work independently and collaboratively alongside other healthcare providers.

Allied health from the inside out: Caring for Albertans across the continuum



Allied health aims for unwavering excellence in professional practice, which is defined as:

- A commitment to caring relationships with patients and families, and strong ethical values
- Utilization of specialized knowledge, critical inquiry, and evidence-informed decision making
- Continuous development of self and others
- Accountability and responsibility for insightful competent practice
- Demonstration of a spirit of collaboration and flexibility to optimize services.

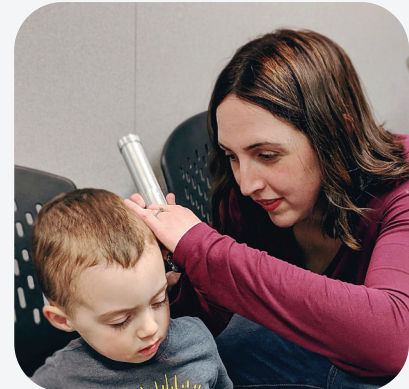
Successes

This new workforce strategic plan builds on the 2020-2023 *Allied Health Workforce Strategic Plan: Stronger Together*, and the achievements and progress on the priorities and key actions therein. Established governance structures enable shared decision making and prioritization amongst operational and practice leaders, thereby strengthening collaboration, coordination, and appropriate reporting channels for implementation and evaluation.

Over the past three years, Allied Health Professions has initiated several actions related to recruitment, retention, practice and service delivery, including planning for the first-ever nationwide, virtual AHS Allied Health Career Fair. Innovative student placement pilots have been initiated and evaluated, and an early career advisory group of practicum students and new-to-AHS employees has been established to provide advice. Career development is one of the key reasons cited by staff to remain at AHS. As a result, career data has been collected to understand the career trends for allied health staff within AHS and compare that to available national information. Allied health staff were interviewed to better understand important factors, enablers, and barriers to career development within AHS. This culminated in *Career Pathways for Allied Health* which identifies and describes six allied health career streams within AHS (see Appendix C for more information).

The Optimized Practice and Outcomes (OPO) approach for allied health has been established as a key strategy to advance allied health professional practice and outcomes. The purpose of OPO is to promote and enable practice optimization through an integrated approach to service planning and staff development, which takes into account patient and population needs on one side, and fiscal constraints on the other. Work is well underway to understand and model the real and potential future demands of our allied health workforce. Core clinical activities, which identify what Albertans can expect in a publicly funded healthcare system, have been established for each of the disciplines, and these serve to establish baseline activities (and competencies) based on local needs, priorities, context and sector.

Supporting staff in evidence-based and optimized practice continues to be a priority. Defining standardized services and approaches in priority areas, including practice guidance and educational opportunities will support competent and confident practice.



Audiologists:

- Screen, assess, diagnose, treat and manage hearing loss, vestibular, and associated disorders across the lifespan
- Provide education about hearing health to patients, families, groups, professionals and communities
- Advocate for hearing health and the prevention of hearing disorders



Psychologists:

- Assess, diagnose and treat mental health related problems, conditions and disorders, at all levels of complexity
- Perform psychological assessment to clarify diagnoses, functioning, and needs
- Provide evidence-based approaches to psychotherapy, counselling, and other psychological interventions

Current Challenges

The World Health Organization and other national and international authorities predict a growing global shortage of healthcare workers over the next decade. Despite World Bank estimates that by 2030, 65 million people worldwide will work in healthcare, there will still be a gap of 15 million workers.¹

Additionally, the World Health Organization identified an increase in demand for rehabilitation services, noting, “Globally, 1 in 3 people today are estimated to be living with a health condition that would benefit from rehabilitation.”²

Supply challenges are impacted by other trends, such as:

- The strains of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has contributed to staffing shortages, retention issues, and staff burnout.
- Increases in the frequency and complexity of addiction and mental health needs, which particularly impacts the need for services provided by psychology, social work, and spiritual care.
- Increases in diversity of the population and its needs, such as increasingly complex social issues, psychological factors, and care needs.
- Changes in work/life priorities as people are tending to look for different types of work relationships and more flexibility than they have historically.
- Competition for allied health providers with the private sector and with other public sector agencies.

THE VALUE OF ALLIED HEALTH

Dire Need Escalation Process: Improving the processing time for Service Canada-related pensions and benefits

- Reduce the time from submitting an application to approved status so that the benefit/funds can be deposited as quickly as possible

- Clients are able to remain in their home in community longer. Financial instability can result in crisis and increase likelihood for an acute care admission for a non-health reasons
- Significant reduction in overall length of stay within the client's episode of care

Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision

Healthy Albertans, healthy communities, together through a healthy, productive, and sustainable allied health workforce that embraces the right staff and skill mix, establishes guiding standards, and supports best practice and optimization.

Guiding Planning Principles

The planning principles below identify the foundational concepts, values, and assumptions that intersect, and form the basis for implementing the strategic plan.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES	DESCRIPTION
Excellence in Professional Practice	Practice that reflects the commitment to caring relationships with patients and families, and strong ethical values; utilization of specialized knowledge, critical inquiry, and evidence-informed decision making; continuous development of self and others; accountability and responsibility for insightful competent practice; demonstration of a spirit of collaboration and flexibility to optimize services.
Patient and Family Centered Care	A commitment to an approach to planning, delivery and evaluation of healthcare that is grounded in mutually beneficial partnerships among healthcare providers, patients and families, shared decision making and actions consistent with trauma-informed care, equity, and inclusion.
Stronger Together	Incorporate the rich diversity of our people's voices and experiences so we can thrive in a positive workplace with shared purpose working to our full potential, including appropriate professional autonomy, growth in leadership, and agility.
Collaboration and Partnerships	Build strong relationships with internal and external partners to support proactive planning, coordinated approaches, and collaborative care.
Evidence-Informed Approach	Relevant and sound information from multiple data sources and areas of expertise are integral to decision making and health system planning in the short, medium, and longer term. Innovative solutions are based in evidence and have the greatest impact on improving the health and well-being of Albertans.
Flexible and Adaptable	Recognition of and response to the unique needs of different programs, geographies and populations, and adaptations to changing needs to be operationally grounded, impactful, and feasible.
Sustainability	A commitment to excellence in care, high-quality, equitable services while being fiscally responsible.

¹ World Bank. (2020). Global Health Workforce Labour Market Projections for 2030 ² Rehabilitation (who.int)

Strategic Directions and Areas of Focus

The three strategic directions are aligned to organizational priorities and centre on recruitment, retention, and optimization. The first two strategies focus on having and retaining the right workforce and the third on using our workforce wisely. It will take all three interrelated strategies together to safeguard a healthy and vibrant workforce to meet the needs of Alberta's population now and into the future.

Further detail on each of the areas of focus is included in Appendix A and each will be tailored for implementation through established working groups.

Growing Our Talent Supply

GOAL:

Develop and maintain a robust pipeline of candidates/professionals.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

Allied Health sectors are continuously and appropriately staffed.

Build the workforce of the future by increasing the supply (student pipeline)

Growing our talent supply starts with inspiring young people to consider allied health professions by providing job shadowing and other exposure opportunities for high school and pre-professional university students. Students in professional programs are key to sustaining a vibrant talent pipeline. Clinical placements are a foundational component of the academic experience and critical in preparing students for practice. Working with academic partners and forging innovative student placement models is critical to growing placement opportunities and enhancing student and preceptor experience. A clinical placement is the first opportunity to develop a relationship with future professionals and provides a starting point on a clear pathway from student to AHS employee.

Attract candidates from Alberta and beyond to AHS as the “employer of choice”

There is a need to continue to develop population-based modelling and projections to ensure the appropriate provider mix is available to address changing demographics and new models of care.

Innovative recruitment tactics will be necessary to entice people to consider AHS in the context of a competitive allied health market. For some disciplines, our provincial and national supply of allied health professionals will not meet our demand and international recruitment efforts will be necessary. Every interaction and initiative is an opportunity to inspire people to want to join and build their careers with AHS.

For rural residents, this may involve “grow your own” approaches, which often result in residents being more likely to remain, or if studying or working elsewhere, seeking to return to home communities.

Ensure wrap-around supports for beginning professionals and those in career transitions

Practicing professionals moving to Canada, existing staff moving to a new role or location and people transitioning into a professional career can be understandably anxious and benefit from clinical practice supports, especially in rural areas where it is common for allied health staff to be sole providers or work in isolation. Beyond the clinical needs, personal support for settling into a new community or role can help ease and support transitions. Now more than ever, transitional graduate positions and strong professional practice structures and resources (supervision, mentoring and communities of practice) hold potential to support transitions to and within AHS.



Occupational therapists:

- Coach individuals to engage in meaningful occupations (to be able to do the things that are important to them)
- Teach and optimize skills, overcoming barriers for successful return to activities of daily living (self-care, productivity and leisure)
- Adapt the physical and social environment to enable occupational performance



Spiritual health practitioners:

- Provide trauma-informed spiritual care across diversity of existential, spiritual, and religious beliefs, cultural perspectives, and practices
- Address spiritual and moral distress, ethical dilemmas, and decision making
- Provide palliative and end-of-life spiritual care

Provide rapid relief to address staffing gaps

Despite attention to the student pipeline and recruitment processes and activities, the need for leaders to access interim resources and supports will continue as part of the ebb and flow of staffing. Within this strategy, opportunities to address staffing gaps for different challenges and local contexts will be pursued. This includes sharing of staff within and across programs and zones, contracting private providers (especially in rural areas), establishing supernumerary positions, and enacting locum programs.

THE VALUE OF ALLIED HEALTH

“I was only able to sit in my wheelchair for two hours or less due to pain. Thanks to rehab, I was able to go down the aisle at my daughter’s wedding and enjoy a full day in my chair without assistance.”

– Home care client



Recreational therapists:

- Address leisure barriers, isolation and inactivity due to illness, disability, chronic conditions or aging and promote optimal health and wellness
- Address leisure barriers and provide practice opportunities to build skill, confidence and independence within the client’s community, home or facility
- Educate clients and families about the health benefits of a balanced leisure lifestyle

“People need stimulation, challenges, autonomy when it makes sense, caring engaged leaders that they can aspire to become, and should have the ability to cross-pollinate skills and experiences.”

Allied Health
Executive Director



Retaining a Vibrant and Engaged Workforce

GOAL:

Retain our staff, from hire to retire, in a range of roles within the organization.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

Positive, supportive, safe and inclusive environment that supports growth in professional practice and staff wellbeing.

Participate in meaningful work and growth opportunities

Retaining a vibrant and engaged workforce is a key driver to building and maintaining a safe, healthy, and sustainable workforce. Cultivating a people-centred environment will support these efforts, and begins with listening to our employees and building, from evidence, the professional practice environment necessary for people to feel that their personal and professional needs are being met. This environment is advanced by providing meaningful work, strong professional supports, well-designed job opportunities, professional and leadership development, and incentives to support areas in high demand, while providing a healthy work environment and encouraging personal well-being. At its core is workers feeling that they are supported to be and do their best every day.

Ensuring role clarity and optimizing the scopes and responsibilities of allied health disciplines contributes towards providing a sense of shared purpose, meaning in work, and opportunities for progression, which are all key to strong employee engagement. As a foundation to aid clarity and consistency, *Career Pathways for Allied Health* identifies five career streams in AHS, related competencies and suggested resources to support career progression within and across career streams (see Appendix C for more information).



Physiotherapists:

- Assess and treat disorders that impair physical function
- Assist with the management of acute and chronic pain
- Prescribe therapeutic exercise and activity plans to improve function and quality of life

Invest in our people's professional development and growth opportunities

Ensuring ongoing access to relevant, timely professional development and a range of practice supports that build confidence and competence is a significant part of providing safe, quality care in changing and complex environments. It is also essential that staff are enabled to engage in ongoing reflection to support clinical decision making.

Attention to these facets of growth sets the conditions for our people to thrive. Meaningful ongoing relationships are central to effective support, beyond formal or self-directed learning, and are enacted through clinical supervision and mentoring/coaching, including ongoing development conversations.

Develop and enable strong operational and practice leaders

Skilled and confident leaders are key to building a thriving workforce. A positive culture starts at the local level with the direct manager and supervisor. Intentional efforts are being undertaken to cultivate leaders and ensure they have the time to focus on staff by reducing administrative burden. Also important is providing access to leadership learning opportunities for exempt and in-scope leaders. Leadership that allows staff the time, autonomy, and authority to enact leadership within their own current and future roles will be an intentional focus.

Foster workplace culture and professional practice that is healthy, inclusive and vibrant

Staff feeling and doing their best, including leaders, supports a healthy and inclusive workplace. Efforts to create a strong allied health culture are a critical aspect of the retention strategy. While broader than one approach, this includes acknowledging fatigue and burnout through visible opportunities to address resilience, ensuring that people feel physically and psychologically safe, valued, appreciated, and empowered and that they have the technology and equipment to do their jobs. When people feel confident and competent in their work and workplace and have the technology and equipment needed to do their jobs, they are better equipped to look up and forward with creativity and agility to participate in optimization and innovation.

"I couldn't be where I am without mentors and those to encourage me to grow".

Allied Health advanced practice clinician



Speech-language pathologists:

- Provide assessment, diagnosis and treatment for people who have challenges with:
 - communication (speech production, receptive and expressive language, social use of language, cognition, voice, resonance, fluency, and hearing)
 - feeding and swallowing
- Take a lead role in facilitating communication access

Optimizing the Workforce and Models of Care

GOAL:

Maximize the value of Allied Health within AHS in keeping with quadruple aim (improved clinician experience, better patient outcomes, reduced costs, and improved patient experience).

INTENDED OUTCOME:

Staff are appropriately integrated and resourced across care sectors.

Current Challenges That Provide Opportunities:

Leverage collaborative strategic planning

Allied health and rehabilitation governance structures such as the Senior Leader Council, and External Stakeholder Advisory support the goals of this strategy, enabling shared decision making, prioritization, and avoidance of duplicate effort. Additionally, information exchange and leveraging work on plans such as the *AHS Health Workforce Strategy*, Zone workforce committees and the Provincial Rehabilitation Strategic Plan, ensures clear alignment with organizational priorities, transparent accountabilities, and avoids duplication. This collaborative approach also simplifies, streamlines, and improves processes for operational leaders to enable success.

Build and implement a system-level approach to optimized practice and outcomes

Consistent approaches and avoiding unnecessary variation in practice supports effective responses to increasing healthcare needs, and complexity of needs. This begins with drawing a clear line of sight between the needs of Albertans and the types and levels of services required. Central to allied health workforce optimization is the Optimized Practice and Outcomes (OPO) approach. It sets the foundations of standardization and is an integrated approach to service planning and related staff development. See Appendix B for more information on OPO.



“The Optimized Practice and Outcomes approach provides clarity for core clinical activities and their related competencies.”

The Optimized Practice and Outcomes approach provides clarity for core clinical activities and their related competencies. This paves a path to designing and providing services based on patient and population need, and includes resource modelling and activity guidelines with benchmarks and evaluation. Spread and scale of best and leading practices will be enhanced, and the workforce more fully engaged and energized.

Optimize and sustain allied health roles and skills

Opportunities to optimize the skills and services of our professionals to best serve population service needs will occur through several initiatives. Specific innovative optimization initiatives directly supporting organizational priorities are currently underway, including therapy assistant optimization, respiratory therapists' expanded scope as anesthesia assistants, and allied health professionals in emergency departments and addiction and mental health. Connect Care will be leveraged to implement best practices and improve workflows, and staff will be supported as they expand into new practice areas.

Design and implement innovative service models and virtual service delivery

Being agile and “thinking outside the box” with respect to where, by whom, and how services are delivered advances goals that centre on access, reducing wait times, leveraging technology to reduce barriers, and judicious use of workforce and fiscal resources.

Specific evidence-based and innovative models of care to meet population needs and leverage technology to improve equity and efficiency currently in place or in active planning include prehabilitation as part of the Alberta Surgical Initiative, telerehabilitation as part of leveraging virtual service delivery, pediatric rehabilitation including virtual universal and targeted services, and the Rehabilitation Advice Line to expand direct, personalized services.



Respiratory therapists:

- Assess and treat patients with cardio-respiratory disease at all stages of life
- Perform diagnostic testing, sample collection, and/or analysis
- Manage artificial airways, invasive and non-invasive ventilation and administer medications (all routes) and specialty inhaled gases



Therapy assistants:

- Provide goal-oriented services through assignment by a therapist
- Teach and support patients in learning or practicing skills, lead activity sessions, perform standardized assessments and screens, and provide education to clients
- Observe, document and report patient performance and behaviour to the therapist

What Success Looks Like

With implementation, the *Allied Health Workforce Strategic Plan 2023-2026* will position AHS to ensure the allied health workforce is best leveraged and supported to meet current and future patient and population needs across services and sectors.

Intended Outcomes

STRATEGIES	OUTCOMES
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovative strategies that support a sustainable talent pipeline are implemented.• AHS is the employer of choice for allied health professionals.• New graduates and those in career transitions feel supported.• There are processes to support rapid relief for staffing gaps.
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff are able to access opportunities across a range of career streams.• Supports are in place to maintain a confident, competent workforce.• Every allied health clinician is able to identify a practice lead or clinical lead who is accessible to help them in their practice.• Every leader and clinician feels valued and has the supports required to thrive in AHS.
Optimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaders experience system processes that support shared decision making, prioritization, and information exchange.• Staff are confident and competent to provide high-quality core services to efficiently meet patient needs.• Staff and service models are optimally used in achieving patient and system outcomes.• Allied health roles are fully utilized across the care continuum.• Innovative service model implementation and utilization is expanded for accessibility, appropriateness, and acceptability.

Moving Forward

The engagement and consultation process that informed this plan included allied health operational and practice leaders, corporate divisions, future allied health staff (students and recent grads), external partners including regulatory and professional bodies, post-secondary programs, and community agencies.

The *Allied Health Workforce Strategic Plan 2023-2026* represents a commitment to patients, families, allied health staff and leaders. We will work to intentionally support attraction, retention, and optimization of our staff and our programs to enable access to services while sustaining the ability to deliver and continuously improve and innovate safe, high-quality services to Albertans.

To be successful, we will require organizational leadership with the ability to challenge some of our ways of being and doing with regard to service design, delivery and funding. Integrated planning and shared direction setting, prioritization and decision making must occur amongst operational and practice leadership, with our external partners, our staff, and most importantly, with patients and their families.

We look forward to healthy Albertans and healthy communities working together with a healthy, productive, and sustainable allied health workforce.



Social workers:

- Address patient, family and caregiver unmet social concerns (housing, financial strain, social inclusion) that impact patients' access and receipt of healthcare services
- Provide supportive counselling and mental health and substance use assessment and intervention
- Identify and address immediate safety related to abuse and neglect of children, adults and seniors

THE VALUE OF ALLIED HEALTH

“The inpatient rehab team helped my youngest...with sitting and other movements. A team member listened and gave hope to my worries when I grieved the fact that my son seemed to be worse than I could have imagined, and they showed me strength when I needed to be able to be strong for my son.”

– Parent

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Outcomes and Key Actions

Growing Our Talent Supply: Recruitment

GOAL: Develop and maintain a robust pipeline of Allied health candidates/professionals.

OUTCOME: Allied Health sectors are continuously and appropriately staffed.

AREAS OF FOCUS	OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS
Build the workforce of the future by increasing the supply (student pipeline).	Processes and resources to support a sustainable talent pipeline are implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovative and positive student placements• Student/preceptor experience• Collaborative relationships with educational institutions• Exposure and work experiences for students
Attract candidates from Alberta and beyond to AHS as the “employer of choice.”	AHS is the employer destination of choice and the recruitment experience is timely and smooth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rural incentives• Candidate experience• Candidate management• Grow your own strategy• Recruitment campaigns (multimedia)
Ensure wrap-around supports for beginning professionals and those in career transitions.	New graduates and those in career transitions can access a range of people and resources to experience a smooth entry to a new role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structures and activities to support clinical practice: supervision, community of practice, mentoring• Activities to support settling into a new community, profession and role• Transitional graduate program• Orientation in both the role and the community
Provide rapid relief to address staffing gaps.	Processes are in place to alleviate non-permanent staffing gaps and meet patient needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing staff/mutual aid• Locum program• Regularized relief• Supernumerary positions• Contracted providers

Retaining a Vibrant & Engaged Workforce: Retention

GOAL: Retain our staff, from hire to retire, in a range of roles within the organization.

OUTCOME: Positive, supportive, safe, and inclusive environment that supports growth in professional practice and staff wellbeing.

AREAS OF FOCUS	OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS
Participate in meaningful work and growth opportunities.	Allied health staff are able to access opportunities across a range of career streams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible opportunities for career progression • Consistent implementation and use of provincial job descriptions • Enacting professional practice in action
Invest in our people's professional development and growth opportunities.	Supports are in place to ensure a confident, competent workforce engaged in meaningful work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible, timely and relevant professional development • Practice supports • Clinical supervision, mentoring coaching/ ongoing development conversations
Develop and enable strong operational and practice leaders	Clinicians are able to identify a professional practice lead and/or clinical lead who is accessible to help them in their practice..	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice leadership supports and structures • Leadership development and succession planning • Reducing administrative burden
Foster a healthy, vibrant, and inclusive workplace culture and professional practice.	People and processes are in place so every leader and clinician feels valued and supported to thrive in AHS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible work environment (FTE, hybrid work) • Psychologically and physically safe workplaces • Recognition and appreciation • Attention on resilience including staff supporting each other

Optimizing the Workforce and Models of Care: Optimization

GOAL: Maximize the value of Allied Health within AHS in keeping with quadruple aim (improved clinical experience, better patient outcomes, reduced costs, and improve patient experience).

OUTCOME: Staff are appropriately integrated and resourced across care sectors.

AREAS OF FOCUS	OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS
Leverage collaborative strategic planning.	Leaders experience smooth, transparent system processes that support shared decision making, prioritization and information exchange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimization of allied health & rehabilitation governance (committee structure) to support shared decision making and prioritization • Leveraging broader organizational information and actions
Build and implement a system-level approach to optimized practice and outcomes.	Staff and service models are optimally used in achieving patient and system outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement and optimization, resource modelling, and activity guidelines • Standardized services and approaches applied consistently • Core Clinical Activities • Practice leadership and education Modelling current, emergent, and future population needs
Optimize and sustain allied health roles and skills.	Full and appropriate utilization of allied health roles across the continuum of care to provide high-quality core services to efficiently meet patient needs and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and enhance innovative initiatives and models of care: • Allied health in the emergency department and in addiction and mental Health programs • Therapy assistant optimization • Respiratory therapists as anesthetist assistants • Leveraging Connect Care to improve workflow efficiency
Design and implement innovative service models and virtual service delivery.	Innovative, evidence-based service models are expanded to improve accessibility, equity and efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASI/Prehabilitation as part of the Alberta Surgical Initiative • Rehabilitation Advice Line evolution of service provision • Telerehabilitation optimization through virtual service delivery • Universal and targeted pediatric rehabilitation services optimization.

APPENDIX B: Optimized Practice and Outcomes

Allied Health Professions (AHP), in collaboration with operational leaders and clinicians, is focusing on an integrated approach to practice optimization called Optimized Practice and Outcomes (OPO). The purpose of OPO is to promote and enable practice optimization through an integrated approach to service planning, practice guidance and staff development, taking into account patient and population needs, available evidence and resource constraints.

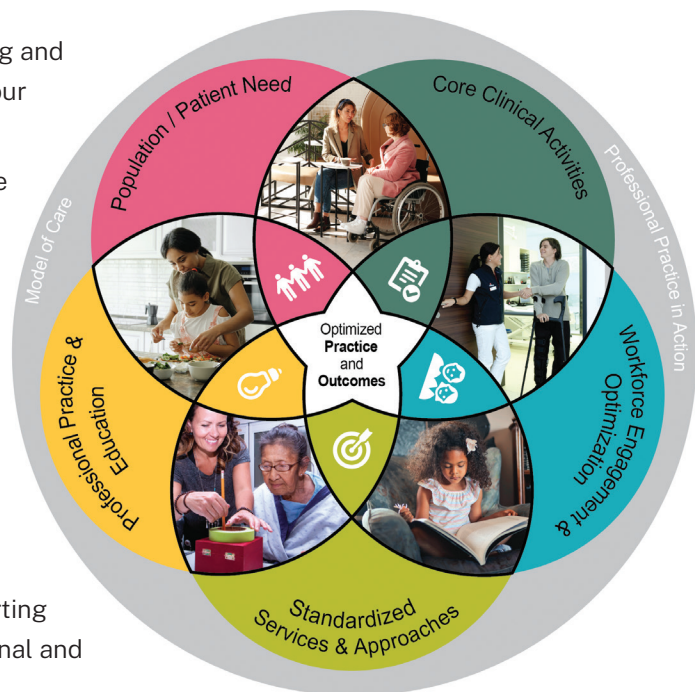
We believe that by optimizing practice at both a system and an individual level, we can achieve optimized outcomes for our patients with cost-effective and efficient service.

OPTIMIZED: Providing appropriate interventions to the target population in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

How it works

OPO consists of multiple overlapping initiatives:

- **Patient and Population Needs** — understanding and modelling the real and potential demands on our system
- **Core Clinical Activities** — establishing baseline activities and competencies based on local needs, context and sector
- **Workforce Engagement and Optimization** — including workforce planning, skill mix, guidelines and resource modelling
- **Standardized Services and Approaches** — determining baseline evidence-informed standards to ensure equity, sustainability, quality and innovation
- **Professional Practice and Education** — supporting competency and confidence through educational and practice supports



Supporting and enabling optimized practice is the Model of Care and Professional Practice in Action, guiding service planning and broadly defining the way in which healthcare is delivered.

Benefits and value

OPO will advance program effectiveness and efficiencies wherever allied health disciplines are an integral part of service delivery. OPO will impact programs by reducing variance, streamlining services, and standardizing clinical practices and processes. OPO's activities will ultimately reduce health inequities and improve the health of Albertans.

APPENDIX C: Career Pathways for Allied Health

The allied health workforce is agile, creative and dynamic with a diverse set of skills that can be applied to many exciting and varied career pathways. *Career Pathways for Allied Health* harnesses the full potential of AHS's valuable allied health professional workforce. Clarifying the career pathways available, exploring opportunities for new pathways, and engaging professionals in career planning will help to remove barriers to advancement and support retention. A companion action plan identifies key actions required to enable the framework.

Career Streams

Six career streams have been identified for allied health professionals:

- **Clinical Practice** — provide a range of direct and indirect care services to clients and patients, including advanced or specialized skills.
- **Practice Leadership** — facilitate role clarity, professional identity, practice standardization, and effective interprofessional collaborative practice and leads to improved clinical competencies and outcomes.
- **Operational Leadership** — lead and manage service delivery programs, business units or departments, within or outside a direct allied health context.
- **Education** — provide instruction and education to build skills and abilities of allied health professionals; patients, families, and communities; and/or students in clinical and/or academic environments.
- **Research and Innovation** — undertake systematic investigation to increase knowledge and establish an evidence base; are involved in translating research findings into practice; develop and analyze policy; and/or contribute to clinical informatics
- **Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Career Stream** — support teams to continually improve the quality and safety of the care we deliver through accreditation, quality assurance reviews, and helping teams identify and address patient safety risks...

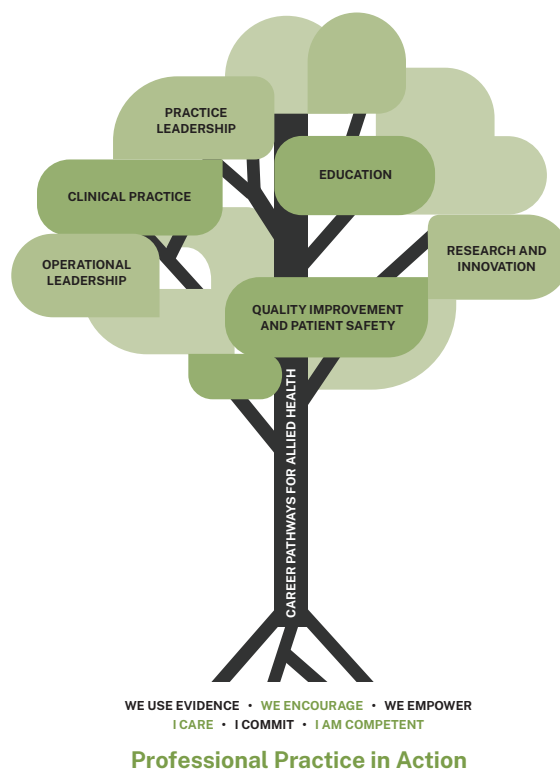
As population needs and healthcare delivery models evolve, new and innovative possibilities even beyond these identified career streams will inevitably emerge.

Enablers

Structures and processes that enable career advancement such as:

- job descriptions,
- tools to support individuals and their leaders in having career conversations, and
- resources to support career transitions (for example, training and mentorship).

Organization-wide education programs that teach skills necessary to allow allied health professionals to reach their goals within the range of career path opportunities.





For more information, please email
AlliedHealthProfessions@ahs.ca