

What are transitions in care?

Alberta Health Services defines transitions in care as

“The movement of any patient [person receiving care] between health care providers, services and/or sectors.”

Coordinated and Collaborative

Every time a person's care is taken over by a new provider, there is a transition. Collaborative teams work with the person to ensure that transitions in care between services, facilities and providers are coordinated and match the person's recovery goals.

Transitions in care happen all the time and in many different ways. Different terms are used to describe transitions in care (or aspects of it), including discharge planning, collaborative care, and case management. Transitions in care are all of those things and more.

How should transitions in care happen?

Transitions in care should:

- Be seamless, coordinated and comprehensive
- Be person-centred and culturally appropriate
- Include the person receiving treatment, the person's family members (if appropriate), and the providers who are transitioning care (both sending and receiving)
- Be trauma informed and recovery focused

When should transitions in care happen?

Transitions in care ensure that the person is receiving appropriate and timely care, resulting in improved health outcomes. Each person will transition at a different time, to a different place and for different reasons. This is a very individualized plan and should consider the person's recovery goals.

Where do transitions in care happen?

For all transitions, it is important to consider where the person is transitioning and connect them with appropriate local services and providers.

Transitions take place between:

- People receiving treatment
- Facilities and programs
- Providers
- Levels of care

Transitions may be from:

- Inpatient to outpatient services
- One setting to another such as hospitals, emergency departments, nursing facilities, the person's home, primary care or physicians' office, recovery housing or long-term care facilities
- Detox units or corrections facilities to community settings
- One healthcare provider to another

Transitions in care can happen:

- One level of care to another
- Between geographical locations
- From acute, corrections, or residential to community sites
- From urban to rural settings