About Connect Care

What is Connect Care?

Connect Care is the bridge between information, healthcare teams and patients. The foundation of Connect Care is a clinical information system (CIS) that allows healthcare providers a central access point to patient information, shared clinical standards and best healthcare practices.

With it, the entire healthcare team, including patients, has the best possible information throughout the care journey, improving care for patients and healthcare providers.

Connect Care is in place in Acute Care Alberta hospitals, Primary Care Alberta clinics and community health sites, Assisted Living Alberta* (Community and Home Care) facilities, Recovery Alberta (mental health and addiction) facilities, cancer centres, as well as at Carewest, CapitalCare, Covenant Health, and Alberta Precision Laboratories.

*Assisted Living Alberta is on track to be fully operational by fall 2025.

What does it do?

Connect Care creates a seamless health information network. With it, healthcare providers can:

- Access comprehensive, up-to-date patient information in one place
- Document care using desktop computers, mobile devices and other technology
- Support transitions of care through a single patient record
- Order lab, diagnostic imaging and other tests, with results appearing in the patient's electronic medical record
- Order and dispense medication, record medication histories and reconcile medication
- Securely communicate with other members of the care team to coordinate care, ask for referrals or advice, and follow up on a patient's progress
- Securely communicate with patients, who have access to their own medical records through Connect Care's patient tool, MyAHS Connect (MAC)
- Access clinical best practice information to inform care orders
- Access analytics tools to chart a patient's progress, or to see how groups of patients respond to treatment
- Access specialized modules of tools and resources
- Most importantly, we will be better supported in delivering safe, high-quality care for patients, leading to better health outcomes.

Who did we partner with to build Connect Care?

Through a competitive process, AHS selected Epic Systems Corporation as the partner for Connect Care.

Why do we need Connect Care?

Before Connect Care's implementation began in 2019, AHS was using more than 1,300 independent health information systems, many helped manage patient information. Patient information was often fragmented, and didn't always provide a complete picture of a patient's health history. Managing so many independent systems was complex and unsustainable. Now, Connect Care is in place across all four provincial health agencies – Acute Care Alberta, Assisted Living Alberta*, Primary Care Alberta and Recovery Alberta – along with AHS and other service providers, such as Carewest, CapitalCare, Covenant Health, and Alberta Precision Laboratories, allowing providers to easily collaborate and patients' information to follow them when they're seen at a facility using Connect Care.

*Assisted Living Alberta is on track to be fully operational by fall 2025.

Connect Care puts the focus on patients by:

- Giving them on-demand access to their health information wherever they have Internet access, helping them to be active members of their healthcare team
- Reducing the length of hospital stays
- Improving communication

Connect Care leads to better health outcomes by:

- Giving healthcare teams a more complete picture of a patient's health
- Providing the healthcare team with the best possible information throughout the care journey
- Building provincial best practice standards into the system

Connect Care makes us more efficient by:

- Providing a single access point to health information for AHS and its partners
- Reducing the use of paper and printing supplies, and its storage
- Improving the efficiency of laboratory and support services
- Reducing unnecessary variation in clinical practice

What kind of clinical information and tools does the Connect Care CIS contain?
- Clinical documentation — templates, flowsheets, forms and questionnaires
- Clinical decision support tools — references, reminders, alerts, assists (including calculators, decision rules and order sets) and guides (including pathways, plans of care and guides to best practice)
- Clinical inquiry support tools — chronic disease registries, key performance indicators and in-system analytics that help users answer questions about personal or system performance

Do other provinces use similar systems? Can we connect with other systems in the future?
Alberta is the largest CIS in Canada and other provinces have looked to us as an example for their own healthcare systems. Some other Canadian sites currently use Epic Systems and others have modeled their upgraded systems after AHS, including Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services. However, the health information of Albertans will not be routinely shared with other provinces through the Connect Care CIS. Access to patient health information is governed according to AHS' obligations under the Health Information Act. If Albertans are seeking care in another province, the patient portal will be one way for them to source and share health information.

Through system design, AHS is working to ensure we incorporate international data standards into the system. This will enable us to share our health system and patient outcome data with other health authorities or jurisdictions.

For Patients

Were patients involved in the design of Connect Care?
Yes. AHS has a team of volunteer Patient and Family Advisors who work with us to ensure patient and family voices are heard. Advisors from all five zones were involved in Connect Care as participants in the Patient & Family Advisory Committee, in our Direction Setting and Adoption/Validation sessions, and by offering their perspective in areas such as chronic disease management, cancer care and patient access.

How can I access my healthcare records?
You can access your MyAHS Connect account if you have an Alberta.ca account, by using MyHealth Records and your Alberta.ca verified account. When you login to MyHealth Records, you will see two tools: My Personal Records and MyAHS Connect. If you don't have an Alberta.ca account, you can sign up for one [here](#).

More information about MyAHS Connect can be found [here](#).

Alberta Health Services

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Where can I go to get help or support with my MyAHS Connect account?

Once you have access to your own MyAHS Connect account, there is a MyAHS Connect User Guide and other helpful tip sheets available in the Resources section of the menu.

If you are unable to find an answer to your question or need help setting up your account, call the support line at **1-844-401-4016**. The Support Line is available 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. It is not available evenings, weekends, or statutory holidays.

The support line can help you:

- set up or use your Alberta.ca Account
- use MyHealth Records to get to MyAHS Connect
- use MyAHS Connect
- contact Health Link if you have questions about your health information and would like to speak to a registered nurse

How does Connect Care affect patients?

Connect Care means that a patient's medical information with AHS will be available online to them as well as their entire healthcare team. They are no longer asked to repeat their history as often. It enables electronic communication with their care team and supports them to take an active role in their health.

How is patient information protected?

In accordance with the Health Information Act, access to patient information is limited to those who are authorized to do so, such as members of your care team. That has not changed.

All the work we do at Alberta Health Services is in compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Health Information Act. Protecting our patients and staff information is the law. When we create, implement or update any clinical system, we are governed by these security principles and policies. We will continue to work closely with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta to ensure any new systems at AHS comply with privacy legislation and acts.

Connect Care offers privacy protection consistent with AHS' other large clinical systems, including comprehensive auditing and monitoring capabilities.

By reducing the number of clinical information systems we use, we reduce the number of security risks we are exposed to and can focus our security initiatives on fewer systems.

How do we address patient concerns about sensitive information being viewed by other healthcare providers?

There are many specific situations where confidential information is shared with care providers, but patients do not want the information to be broadly accessible. In these circumstances, Connect Care has the ability to "mask" or restrict who can view specific information.

All access to any type of information is recorded electronically and can be audited. Patients can also see who has looked at their record.

How do I audit who has checked my patient records?

A person can request a log of who has accessed their Connect Care record by completing the Access Audit Log Request Health Information Act form.

Who owns the health information collected in a CIS?

Albertans own their health information and have access to it under this program.

Health service providers throughout Alberta, including Alberta Health Services, must protect the privacy and security of that information when shared in a clinical information system. Healthcare providers are all

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responsible for using health information for supporting patient care and maintaining a high standard of patient privacy.

Where will all the Connect Care information be stored?
AHS stores information in a provincial data centre, which has ample capacity for Connect Care's recommended computing and storage equipment. All patient information is controlled by AHS and stored in Alberta.

Where can I find more information about Connect Care?
There is a section dedicated to patients and families with additional information and resources at ahs.ca/connectcare. It is updated as new information becomes available. You can also send any questions to connectcare@ahs.ca.

For Community Clinics

Will community clinics be able to join the Connect Care system?
AHS is working closely with Alberta Health to better understand any potential opportunities to leverage Connect Care in the community. This work is tied together with upcoming work on the Health Information Act, so it may take some time to come to a conclusion. We would be happy to keep your contact details on file and reach out once we have more clarity.

Reach out at connectcare@ahs.ca.

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