Healthy Children and Families

Mission:
Our mission is to promote health and prevent disease of Albertans by using a population health approach.

Population:
We focus our work on families from preconception through pregnancy, birth, infancy, childhood, and youth up to 18 years of age.

Approach:
Our work is mainly primary prevention – preventing disease by intervening to remove or reduce risk factors. Our initiatives are supported by evidence, aligned with the priorities of key stakeholders, and responsive to the needs of Alberta families. We work closely with, and would like to sincerely thank, Alberta Health Services (AHS) partners, the Government of Alberta, and external stakeholders. We look forward to our ongoing collaboration.

Functions:
- Health promotion
- Province-wide program planning, implementation and maintenance
- Performance measurement and evaluation

Strategic priority areas:
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Healthy pregnancies and birth outcomes
- Breastfeeding
- Early child development
- Child and youth mental health
- Child and youth nutrition and physical activity

For all Healthy Children and Families free resources, visit: https://dol.datacm.com
User ID: healthypublic
Password: healthy2013

Footnotes
1 AHS Surveillance and Reporting, 2018.
2 Families: includes either a couple (married or common-law) with children or a lone parent and their children.
Healthy Children and Families

that we serve

1,492,655 People\(^1\) ages 20-44 years

56,697 Total births\(^2\)

266,515 Children ages 0-4\(^1\)

4,338,189 Alberta total population\(^1\)

752,670 Children ages 5 - 19 years\(^1\)

63 School authorities (public, separate & francophone)\(^4\)

2,008 Schools\(^4\)

490,060 Families with children\(^2,3\) under 17 years of age

Footnotes


Healthy Parents, Healthy Children (HPHC) is a practical guide to pregnancy and being a parent. It provides comprehensive and reliable information based on evidence and best practice. The HPHC print and online resources were created in response to a need for standardized pregnancy, birth, and early childhood resources for expectant parents, parents of children up to six years of age, as well as their health care providers.

**HPHC consists of:**

- **Website:** [HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca](http://HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca)

- **Books:** *HPHC: Pregnancy & Birth* and *HPHC: The Early Years*

- **Health marketing:** Includes paid ads and social media to deliver health promotion messages and drive the target audience to the website

- 373,089 visits to website from Alberta
- 168,825 website visitors from Alberta
- 14,900 social media engagement (likes, comments, reposts)
Healthy Parents, Healthy Children Redesign

January 2017–June 2018
Print copies of Healthy Parents, Healthy Children disseminated:

- Individual copies of The Early Years
  - 21,440
- Two-book sets
  - 40,740

This year, the HPHC website and books underwent a complete content review, revision, and redesign. The changes were based on evaluation findings, latest evidence and best practice, and expert stakeholder review.

Key changes included:
- Content additions and revisions
- Changes to the organization of material
- Use of plain language and additional quotes from Alberta parents
- Improvement of the index to ensure ease of finding information
- Complete rebranding, including additional pictures and illustrations to help explain content and reflect greater diversity
- Website redesign to enhance navigation, search function, and user experience

As a new mom, I have a lot to learn. Whenever I was in a pinch, I found myself looking to Google to answer my questions. It often wasn’t super helpful, and I often found conflicting information... [my doctor] advised me to stop ‘Googling’ and start looking for answers in the Healthy Parents, Healthy Children books. Ever since I started doing that, I have found the books to be a great resource and a wonderful reference. It gives me peace of mind to know the information is accurate and evidence-based.

~ Farzana, mom of a young baby

What’s Next:
- Launch of updated and redesigned website and print books in fall 2018
- Development of HPHC Team Action Plan to outline the expansion and integration of HPHC into a multi-level provincial initiative
The Preconception Health initiative targets Albertans aged 18–44 who are planning to become pregnant, and those with no plans to become pregnant at this time.

The ReadyorNotAlberta.ca website was launched in January 2016 and highlights modifiable risk factors that affect reproductive health outcomes. It identifies actions and resources for each risk factor.

**Key accomplishments in 2017–2018 include:**

- Launch of cannabis, reproductive life planning, and travel (Zika virus) content
- Mobile optimization of six website tools
- Content development for four health care provider eLearning modules on the Alberta Perinatal Professionals Electronic Library

Two media campaigns occurred between October–May 2017 and August 2017–July 2018. The purpose of the campaigns was to increase awareness and utilization of the website. Strategies included:

- Quizzes on contraception, pregnancy, and fertility in Facebook ads
- Testing new creative concepts and using the design preferred by users for new ads on STIs, folic acid, reproductive life plan, and healthy weights
- Emphasizing awareness of preconception health within the harder-to-reach “not ready” audience
What’s Next:

- Launch of eLearning modules on the Perinatal Health E-Learning for Professionals (HELP) Module
- Completion of needs assessment with target audience and health care providers
- Update information including content on sexual and gender diversity
- Ongoing media campaigns

January 2017–June 2018

126,103 pages viewed by Albertans on ReadyorNotAlberta.ca

66,774 "Ready" page views

38,458 "Not Ready” page views
Teaching Sexual Health is a comprehensive sexual health resource that provides tools and information to help teachers and parents talk confidently with children about sexual health.

The TeachingSexualHealth.ca teacher portal is an Alberta Education authorized resource. Free teacher workshops are also offered throughout the year and were redesigned in October 2017.

The parent portal provides parents of children birth–18 years with information and resources.

The website was redesigned and relaunched in February 2017. Changes included:

- New consent videos and lesson plans
- Updated content and an interactive tool on sexual and gender diversity
- New interactive STI and birth control tools
- Kahoot lesson plans for grades 4–CALM
- Free parent guides and FAQ Flash Cards
- Improved functionality and accessibility

Two media campaigns targeting parents occurred between February–April 2017 and August 2017–March 2018.

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Gender Identity

A person’s internal sense of identity as female, male, both or neither, regardless of their biological sex assigned at birth.
January 2017–June 2018:

- Visits to teacher portal from Alberta: 61,297
- Lesson plan & teacher resource downloads: 143,220
- Visits to parent portal from Alberta: 64,987
- Parent workbook downloads: 1,652
- New Facebook followers: 919
- People reached on Facebook: 93,762
- New Twitter followers: 183
- People reached on Twitter: 193,400
- Online teacher workshops: 6
- Teacher participants: 135

What’s Next:
- Launch of revised lesson plans and learning activities for grades 4–CALM
- Launch of revised teacher FAQs
- Evaluation of teacher workshops
- Development of new content on technology and media
- Ongoing media campaigns
Comprehensive School Health

Supporting student wellness
Healthy Children and Families (HCF) works actively with 48 school authorities to create school settings that support healthy eating, active living, and positive mental health for nearly 575,000 students. The evidence-based Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach guides this work.

Examples of our work to facilitate CSH:
- Strong partnerships at all levels of the education system, including provincial agencies, school authority wellness committees, health champion networks, and student-led wellness projects
- Professional learning opportunities. Nearly 90% of attendees reported sessions having a ‘noticeable’ or ‘very strong’ impact on awareness, knowledge, and confidence to apply CSH
- Creation and distribution of evidence-based CSH resources, such as the Boost Student Success with CSH infographic
- Outreach events including workshops and exhibits at teachers’ conventions, Healthy Active School Symposia, and provincial and national conferences

CSH in action
We use the CSH approach to guide school communities in carrying out interventions tailored to their unique needs:

- Student involvement, partnerships, and policies to complement the Alberta School Nutrition Program
- School environment changes, equipment, and training to improve students’ physical literacy
- Supporting nutrition policy implementation through communication tactics and vending/contract reviews
- Standing desks built by students and movement breaks to reduce sedentary behaviour
- Evidence-based social and emotional learning programs and supportive training for school staff
- Art projects on mental health themes as a way of embedding health across curriculum
Healthy school policy: Laying the foundation for success

Healthy school policies demonstrate a long-term commitment to student health and shape school culture by defining values, standards and expectations.

A key CSH priority for HCF is to support the development and implementation of evidence-based policy.

HCF supported 22% of school authority partners with policy development and 33% with policy implementation this past year.

In 2017–2018, this work focused on supporting school authority strategic plans on mental health and resiliency as well as overarching wellness policies.

Based on a scan and appraisal of school authority health policies, HCF created several resources:

- Developing and Implementing Effective Healthy School Policies
- Introduction to Policy Evaluation
- Healthy Eating in Schools: Policy Recommendations
- Physical Activity in Schools: Policy Recommendations

Healthy school policy: By the numbers

School authorities in Alberta with policies posted online related to:

- Active Living: 38%
- Healthy Eating: 69%
- CSH/wellness: 43%
- Safe and Caring Schools: 100%

71% of School Authority partners that embed Comprehensive School Health in their business plans

What’s Next:

- Launch of MyLearningLink module on CSH for AHS staff
- Develop an external website that consolidates AHS school health promotion content and resources.
- Ongoing work with school authorities to create, improve, and implement health policies and interventions aligned with CSH

Up-to-date provincial CSH resources:
[ahs.ca/csh](ahs.ca/csh)
New policy resources:
[ahs.ca/info/Page7124.aspx](ahs.ca/info/Page7124.aspx)
AHS Breastfeeding Strategy

The development of the AHS Breastfeeding Strategy was commissioned by the HCF Steering Committee after approval to move forward with an AHS Breastfeeding Initiative.

A number of key developments informed the development of the strategy:

- Breastfeeding identified as a key priority by AHS and the Government of Alberta
- Literature reviews and review of national and international documents and model strategies, including WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative
- Environmental scan of community and acute care facilities across AHS
- Strategic action planning completed by HCF

The intent of the breastfeeding strategy is to guide decision-making and implementation of evidence-informed approaches to protect, promote and support breastfeeding across AHS.

The strategy is based on the Population Health Promotion Model, which acknowledges the complexity of the interrelated factors that influence breastfeeding decisions and practices, including the role of the health care system.

Breastfeeding in Alberta:

- 91% mothers initiate breastfeeding
- 42% breastfeeding duration of greater than six months
- 26% exclusive breastfeeding for six months
- 16% breastfeeding duration of greater than one year

Reasons mothers discontinue breastfeeding:

- Lack of confidence
- Lack of support
- Feeling isolated and excluded
- Healthcare system culture

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# AHS Breastfeeding Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>Breastfeeding is promoted, protected and supported in Alberta within a patient and family centred care approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>To provide families with support to meet their breastfeeding goals To improve system level support for breastfeeding To improve health care provider knowledge, attitudes and practices To improve breastfeeding rates</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Policy and Leadership
- Strategic Leadership
- Provincial Breastfeeding Policy

## Capacity Building
- Staff Education
- Parent Education
- Peer Support

## Health Marketing
- Social Marketing
- Health Communications

## Evaluation and Monitoring

## Guiding Principles
- Patient and family centred care
- Evidence-informed practice
- Informed-feeding decision
- Health equity

## What’s Next:
- AHS Informed Feeding Decision Definition and Approach
- AHS Provincial Breastfeeding Policy
- Release of AHS 20-hour breastfeeding course’s first set of Working with Breastfeeding Families modules:
  - Promoting a Positive Breastfeeding Experience
  - Informed Feeding Decision
  - Including Partners and Supporters
Safe Infant Sleep

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related injuries and deaths are a public health concern.

Following the implementation of the AHS Safe Infant Sleep (SIS) policy, a comprehensive evaluation was completed that highlighted the need for enhancements to staff education modules. Surveyed health care providers wanted more evidence related to safe sleep recommendations and strategies for addressing common questions and barriers. In collaboration with maternal and child health stakeholders, the SIS module was revised and is planned for release in 2019. A knowledge translation strategy is also being developed.

Reducing risk factors has the greatest potential for reducing SIDS. As there is often no way of determining which infant is ‘vulnerable,’ the goal is to remove as many risk factors as possible.

~ Rachel Moon, Author of American Academy of Pediatrics 2016

Recommendations for a Safe Sleep Environment

- Put your baby on their back to sleep -- every sleep
- Use a crib, cradle or bassinet that is free of clutter
- Don’t share a bed, sofa or any other sleep surface with your baby
- Breastfeed your baby
- Keep your baby warm, not hot
- Share a room with your baby
- Keep spaces smoke-free before and after birth
Safe Infant Sleep

Safe Infant Sleep resources
Resources for parents (a new brochure and bookmark) were enhanced and can be ordered free of charge by health care providers.

Swaddling Video
A swaddling video has been produced for parents and health care providers to learn how to safely swaddle babies to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related injuries and deaths.

To date, the video has been viewed 1,397 times. Find the video at HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca
Well Child Clinic Standardization

The Well Child Clinic Standardization (WCCS) project supports public health nurses’ unique position to impact early childhood development in Alberta.

The standardization of the non-immunization component of WCC visits will soon be implemented across the province. The province-wide rollout also includes the implementation of the new Postpartum Depression Screening Policy Suite.

Development of an implementation module, as well as plans for communication and evaluation are underway in anticipation of rollout across AHS Public Health.

Postpartum Depression Policy Suite

The Public Health Postpartum Depression (PPD) Screening Policy Suite will support maternal mental health, which has a profound impact on all aspects of a mother’s life and affects her children, partner, and family.

Activities included:

- Policy consultations with various stakeholders within and outside of AHS
- Completion, review and approval of PPD staff education module
- Finalization of data elements for PPD and other WCCS activities aligned with the public health database Meditech to support evaluation and surveillance.

Following endorsement and approval phases, the PPD Policy Suite will be implemented this fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routine Activities</th>
<th>Non-Routine Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Within Patient and Family Centred Care, a routine activity will be <strong>prioritized</strong> based on parent questions/concerns and/or nursing clinical judgment</td>
<td>Within Patient and Family Centred Care, a non-routine activity will <strong>only be addressed</strong> based on parent questions/concerns and/or nursing clinical judgment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding/Nutrition</td>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
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<td>Child Growth (Measurements)</td>
<td>General Development and Behaviour</td>
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<td>Injury Prevention</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
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<td>Family Adjustment</td>
<td>Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postpartum Depression</td>
<td>Oral Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobacco Exposure Reduction</td>
<td>Plagiocephaly/Fontanels/Sutures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe Infant Sleep</td>
<td>Vision</td>
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Evidence-Informed Decision Making Casebook

The National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools collects and shares success stories from across Canada of how research evidence is used to inform public health decisions.


In the article, the team shares their process to determine standardization by completing an environmental scan, conducting literature reviews, developing decision-making criteria, running a ranking exercise, and building consensus. By appearing in the casebook, the project’s lessons learned will help public health leaders across Canada.

Project team members will also lead a national webinar as part of the Success Stories in Evidence-Informed Decision Making series.

The casebook and webinar can be found at nccmt.ca

Healthy Pregnancy Weight Gain

This project was developed to promote healthy pregnancy weight gain among Alberta women. In partnership with the ENRICH research program and the University of Calgary, an online accredited continuing medical education program was launched June 2018.

The program goal is to build knowledge and skills of health care providers to support women to achieve healthy lifestyle behaviours and meet weight gain recommendations during pregnancy. The free module is available at ecme.ucalgary.ca/programs/hpwg.

A successful media campaign to increase public awareness about healthy pregnancy weight gain and direct users to HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca occurred in 2017.
The HCF sustained media campaign is a coordinated approach to buying online advertisements that drive traffic to our websites:

- [HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca](http://HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca)
- [TeachingSexualHealth.ca](http://TeachingSexualHealth.ca)
- [ReadyorNotAlberta.ca](http://ReadyorNotAlberta.ca)

By strategically scheduling and cycling targeted search ads, social media ads, and website banner ads in close collaboration with AHS Community Engagement & Communications, the sustained media campaign has increased website traffic, increased click-through rates, and decreased cost-per-click results for HCF initiatives.

The coordinated approach to advertising has lowered overall costs, optimized staff resources, and increased campaign effectiveness by not oversaturating our target audiences with multiple campaigns at the same time.
Members of the HCF Knowledge Translation & Evaluation team have joined forces with Surveillance & Reporting to create our own HCF dashboard on AHS Tableau.

Using health indicators that describe the health status of the populations targeted by our initiatives, this dashboard will:

- Provide easily accessible, up-to-date data that will allow HCF to monitor the health status of Alberta parents and their children
- Support the continuance or adjustment of current strategies based on health trends
- Assist in prioritizing and planning future health promotion projects and initiatives

The anticipated launch date for the dashboard is summer 2019.
Healthy Children and Families has an AHS webpage [ahs.ca/info/Page13568.aspx](ahs.ca/info/Page13568.aspx) for health care providers and the public. The site provides additional details on HCF initiatives, resources, and ordering information.

For more information contact: maureen.devolin@ahs.ca