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Features & Stories

Mobile team brings intensive care to tiniest Albertans

The Southern Alberta Neonatal Transport Service (SANTS) is a specialized team trained to support newborns in their most fragile moments, whether across the province or just down the hall.

These NICU-trained nurses and respiratory therapists travel by ground, air or virtual connection to deliver intensive care to some of Alberta's tiniest patients. Based out of the Foothills Medical Centre NICU, their reach spans all southern Alberta – and sometimes beyond. [Read more.](#)

Medical Affairs News

October 10 is World Mental Health Day – Message from the CMO

October 10 is World Mental Health Day. This year's theme of "Access to services – mental health in catastrophes and emergencies" draws attention to the need for timely and equitable support for anyone affected by crises.

Why it matters for physicians:

- Physicians are often both responders and survivors in disasters, pandemics or large-scale emergencies. We may be deeply impacted by the same crises we are helping others navigate.
- The mental toll of working under pressure – moral distress, vicarious trauma and burnout – can persist long after the immediate event.
- Access to support, without stigma or barriers, is essential for physicians to sustain compassionate care.

Supporting ourselves and each other:

1. **Pause and reflect** – Acknowledge when stress, fatigue or worry are building. Self-compassion and brief recovery practices make a difference.
2. **Check in on peers** – A simple "How are you doing – really?" can open the door for support. Listening matters.
3. **Know the resources** – Confidential supports such as the AMA's [Physician & Family Support Program](#) exist for physicians. Sharing them reduces stigma.

4. **Model openness** — When leaders and colleagues talk about their own mental health, it normalizes seeking help.

World Mental Health Day is also about solidarity: ensuring that patients, families and communities affected by disasters or emergencies have access to mental health services. Physicians have a voice in advocating for systems that integrate mental health alongside physical care in every response.

This World Mental Health Day let's remember that mental health is a human right. For physicians, it is also a professional necessity. By caring for ourselves and supporting each other, we strengthen our capacity to care for those most impacted by crises.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peter Jamieson
Chief Medical Officer and Vice President, Clinical Operations and Quality
Alberta Health Services

Dr. Sharron Spicer
Associate Chief Medical Officer, Physician Experience
Alberta Health Services

How to get your COVID-19, influenza immunizations

Physicians and other healthcare workers can now get their free COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations, either at one of the Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) seasonal immunization clinics, or by booking an appointment at a public health clinic. Here's what you need to know.

Workplace Health & Safety seasonal immunization clinics

You're encouraged to get your influenza and COVID-19 immunizations at a nearby WHS clinic. See the [walk-in clinic schedule](#) for times and locations. If you choose to attend a WHS clinic, please bring your employer-issued ID and Alberta Personal Health Number.

- **Are you 65 years of age or older?** An adjuvanted or high-dose influenza vaccine is recommended. These are available at public health clinics, depending on local availability. You may also choose to receive the standard-dose vaccine at a WHS clinic.

If you have questions about the WHS clinics, visit [Seasonal Immunization for Workers](#) on Insite.

Booking at a public health clinic

If you can't attend a WHS walk-in clinic, you can [book an appointment](#) at a public health clinic. Here's how:

- Book online using Connect Care (using your [Alberta.ca account](#) or as a [guest](#))
- Call Health Link by dialing 811
- Contact your local [public health or community health centre](#)

Starting Oct. 20, you can also get your influenza vaccine at a local pharmacy by booking [here](#). Some pharmacies accept walk-in appointments.

Changes to lab processes for Northwest Territories patients

The Northwest Territories Health & Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) has made changes to their lab processes to better serve their patients.

Effective immediately, lab requisitions from Alberta physicians will be accepted, and collected blood will be sent to Alberta Precision Laboratories for processing. You will receive laboratory results directly through Netcare and Connect Care viewers, like you do for Alberta patients. Please include the patient's primary care provider as a "Cc" to your lab requisitions so they can keep results on their patient file. Results will be flagged as a copy, so NWT providers will expect the ordering provider will act on any results that need attention.

Historically, NTHSSA required all lab work that was drawn in the NWT to be ordered by a NWT provider, and they would receive the results and fax them to the Alberta ordering physician. This change is meant to better serve patients and support more timely care by Alberta physicians.

What you need to know about the updated Family Presence Policy

The [Family Presence: Designated Family/Support Person & Visitor Access Policy](#) has been updated. The policy establishes family presence as a standard of practice across all care services, fostering the ongoing advancement of patient- and family-centred care, including [AHS' Shared Commitments](#).

Those providing care to patients need to be aware of their responsibilities when it comes to supporting family presence.

Key updates include:

- Consolidation of content from the previous *Managing Limits to Designated Family/Support Person and Visitor Access Procedure*;
- Clarification on the process, legal requirements and approvals of access limits, and that at least one designated family/support person is to be accommodated;
- Updated definitions and expanded principles emphasizing key elements of family presence and Shared Commitments;
- Updated content to ensure healthcare providers inform patients, designated family/support person(s) and visitors about expected behaviour; and more.

Visit the [Family Presence Policy Suite](#) webpage for new resources to support you. Questions? Email patient.engagement@ahs.ca.

Access Provincial Enterprise Imaging through Citrix

[Provincial Enterprise Imaging \(PEI\)](#), AHS' new diagnostic imaging software, has now been implemented in all zones, replacing IMPAX.

This linked [guide](#) outlines the ways staff can access diagnostic images through PEI, xero.ahs.ca, and through in Connect Care, including options for staff who haven't received PEI training. Both PEI and Xero Viewer Direct can now be accessed through the Citrix MyApps store. This method may be preferable for staff who previously accessed IMPAX through Citrix.

Questions? Contact ProvincialEnterpriseImaging@ahs.ca.

Upcoming webinars focused on patient- and family-centred care, quality and AHS' Shared Commitments

During Patient-and Family-Centred Care Week (Oct. 20-24), AHS' Engagement & Patient Experience team is hosting two webinars you're invited to attend.

Alberta Quality Dimensions for Health: Defining Quality for an Integrated People-Centred Health System in Alberta

Oct. 20, 2025 | 12-1 p.m. | [Register](#)

Health Quality Alberta has released a renewed, evidence-based definition of quality as seen at the centre of an integrated people-centred health system. This presentation introduces the [updated dimensions of quality](#), discusses

patient advisor involvement in its development and tangible actions you can take away to bring about improvement.

Shared Commitments in Action

Oct. 24, 2025 | 12-1 p.m. | [Register](#)

Hear how teams are embedding AHS' [Shared Commitments](#) — our provincial approach to patient rights and responsibilities — into daily practices, resources and team culture.

Visit [Insite](#) for more information.

Learn how to stay safe with violence prevention training

All staff — including physicians — who interact with patients, families or visitors need training to screen and address unsafe behaviours.

Our three-level [Violence Prevention Education Program](#) develops skills to prevent, respond to and report incidents. You will learn to recognize risks, de-escalate safely and support a safer care environment.

Medical staff who work in high-risk areas and are at risk of physical violence are encouraged to complete the Level 3 NCI™ Training.

Physicians can access all courses through [MyLearningLink](#). Each course qualifies as Section 2 activities for [Continuing Professional Development credits](#).

Visit the [Violence Prevention Education Program](#) and [Training Guide](#) to determine your training level. Questions? Email SafeCare.Together@ahs.ca.

Advance Care Planning monthly tip: Scanning Green Sleeve documents into Connect Care

Did you know that advance care planning/goals of care designation (ACP/GCD) documents should be scanned into Connect Care? Green Sleeves and Connect Care charts should reflect the same up-to-date information.

Check out this month's [tip sheet](#) available on [Insite](#).

Addiction & Mental Health Knowledge Bites lunch & learn

This series is hosted by the Recovery Alberta Provincial Addiction & Mental Health team. Each quarter, a guest speaker presents their latest findings from

a completed evaluation, research or quality improvement project relevant to the field of addiction and mental health and specifically highlights the implications for practice.

The next event is on **Wednesday, Nov. 5, 12:05-12:50 p.m.** Steven Clelland, Jonathan Brown and Michele Dyson will present on Navigating Research at Recovery Alberta: Evolving Supports and Processes. See the [event poster](#) for more information. You can attend this event over MS Teams or by phone. To join, please [RSVP](#) by **Nov. 3**.

To be notified of future events in this series, subscribe to the [Knowledge Bites mailing list](#).

Zone Highlights – North & Central

Virtual Emergency Physician pilot evaluation and expansion to Central Zone.

Virtual Emergency Physician (VEP) launched in North Zone in January 2025 as a six-month pilot project to improve support for emergency department (ED) patients in northern rural communities. Additional sites in northern Alberta were added in August.

Highlights from a six-month evaluation show that:

- 1,153 patients were seen;
- 98 per cent of hours without a physician were covered in a VEP emergency department;
- Most patients reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the care they received from a VEP; and
- Almost two-thirds would recommend a VEP visit to family and friends.

On Oct. 9, Central Zone launched their VEP program in [Coronation](#) and [Two Hills](#) to support physician-related service disruptions. Between Central and North, the program now operates at nine sites:

- Beaverlodge Municipal Hospital,
- Hinton Healthcare Centre,
- Edson Healthcare Centre,
- William J. Cadzow–Lac La Biche Healthcare Centre,
- Barrhead Healthcare Centre,
- Westlock Healthcare Centre,
- Redwater Health Centre,
- Coronation Hospital and Care Centre, and

- Two Hills Health Centre

To engage Virtual Health for support with virtual care projects in your area, contact them [here](#).

Medical Leadership & Development

From risk to resilience: Leading low carbon healthcare in Alberta (Provincial Medical Leadership Educational Series)

Join us for the October Provincial Medical Leadership Educational series, where we'll explore the topic "*From risk to resilience: Leading low carbon healthcare in Alberta*" with Dr. Bhavini Makwana (Gohel) and Harry Vandermeer, executive director of AHS' Office of Sustainability & Energy Management.

In this session, participants will explore how climate change disrupts health systems and plan tangible strategies to engage in decarbonization and resilience efforts within the healthcare system.

There are two sessions to pick from:

- Oct. 22, 4-5:30 p.m. | [Register](#)
- Oct. 23, 7-8:30 a.m. | [Register](#)

For more information about this session, visit [Together4Health](#) (login is required). These sessions are CME accredited and are open to anyone who is interested.

Questions? Email Mercypina.Gutierrez@ahs.ca.

Physician Learning

Register for new sessions of The Working Mind™, a virtual mental health course for physicians and medical leaders

Alberta Health Services' Physician Experience team is offering [The Working Mind™](#), a one-day virtual course from the Mental Health Commission of Canada. This course is offered to medical leaders, physicians and other medical staff across Alberta's Provincial Health Agencies, Provincial Health Corporations and Service Delivery Organizations.

You will learn practical tools to promote mental health across your team, recognize signs of poor mental health in yourself and others and how you can foster a supportive and psychologically safe work environment.

Our October session booked up fast, so we've added three more sessions. Each session is broken into two sections with an optional afternoon module focused on current medical leaders as follows:

- All participants: 8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- Medical leaders: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Register for the date that works best for you:

- Nov. 14, 2025 | [Register](#)
- Feb. 6, 2026 | [Register](#)
- April 10, 2026 | [Register](#)

There are 15 spots available in each session. A waitlist will be created, and you will be notified if there are cancellations or new sessions added.

Questions? Email PhysicianExperienceDWD@ahs.ca.

Note: This course can be used toward a Personal Development Activity for the Physician Practice Improvement Program (PPIP) of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta.

Resources for Physicians

Career opportunities

Practise opportunities across a broad range of specialties are available. All vacant AHS physician practise opportunities are posted on our physician recruitment website, [Doctor Jobs Alberta](#).

Support for physicians

The [Physician & Family Support Program](#) (PFSP) continues to offer CONFIDENTIAL services on an individual basis that you can access by calling the 24-hour assistance line at 1-877-767-4637.

AHS also has [resources](#) aimed at offering support to physicians.

Additional resources for physicians:

- [CPSA's Physician Portal](#)
- [Cumming School of Medicine Continuing Medical Education \(CME\) Resources](#)
- [How to Access AHS Insite and Email](#)
- [IPC Emerging Issues](#)
- [AHS Physician Experience](#)
- [Physician & Family Support Program](#) - 1-877-SOS-4MDS (767-4637)
- [Well Doc Alberta](#)
- [2025 APL Lab Bulletins](#)

AHS recognizes that our work takes place on historical and contemporary Indigenous lands, including the territories of Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 and the homeland of the Otipemisiwak (Oh-teh-pim-swak) Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta and the eight Metis Settlements. We also acknowledge the many Indigenous communities that have been forged in urban centres across Alberta.



Healthy Albertans.
Healthy Communities.
Together.