COVID-19: The Calgary Zone story

A partnership between primary and acute care is keeping patients safe, easing the burden on hospitals

WHAT:

1. HOME IS WHERE THE CARE IS
   Family doctors and Primary Care Network (PCN) teams, in partnership with public health and community groups, are the first line of defence against COVID-19. Most COVID-19 presumed or confirmed patients don’t require hospital care.
   - COVID-POSITIVE PATIENTS CARED FOR IN COMMUNITY: 96%
   - HOSPITAL CARE: 4%
   - INTENSIVE CARE: 1%

2. OUTBREAK RAPID RESPONSE
   During the Cargill outbreak, a rapid response model was developed to triage, swab, isolate, and trace – ensuring the virus was contained and patients received the right care, at the right time, from the right provider. The model has been adapted and applied to other outbreaks.
   - RURAL-URBAN SOLUTION: Calgary Rural PCN set up a temporary, 3-day drive-through testing site in High River
   - 254 SWABS
   - “High River is a model for what can be done on a larger scale.” - Dr. Adam Vyse

3. CONNECTED, PROTECTED
   A navigation hub, which includes East Calgary Family Care Clinic (East Calgary Health Centre) and PCNs, ensures patients who need care within 4 or 24 hours are connected with the right provider. Access centres or community-based clinics in urban and rural areas support patients if their family doctor isn’t available.
   - 7 PCNs
   - 1 ACCESS POINT
   - 627 REQUIRED CARE WITHIN 4 HOURS
   - 24 REQUIRED CARE WITHIN 24 HOURS

4. DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE
   Patients are connected with their family doctor and team at the earliest opportunity. If they don’t have a doctor, they are supported to find one via a PCN or the albertafindadoctor.ca website.
   - 1 IN 5
   - 388 DOCTORS TAKING NEW PATIENTS
   - +400 NURSES, TEAMS SUPPORTING PATIENTS
   - +3,500 patient interactions

5. THE TEAM BEHIND THE TEAM
   Supporting physicians to care for patients in the Medical Home or community is a critical component of the Calgary Zone’s pandemic response plan.
   - 3,847 ADVICE CALLS
   - +73% AVOIDED ER VISITS
   - PATHWAY DOWNLOADS 3,259

HOW:

- PARTNERS IN HEALTH
  The Calgary Zone’s pandemic response plan is built on a partnership between acute and primary care, AHS and PCNs, as well as community groups. It is unique in Alberta.

- FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS
  Existing structures, including the PCN Committee and task groups -- supported by a dedicated business unit -- were used to build and execute the Zone pandemic plan.

- THE NETWORK THAT CARES
  All seven PCNs in the Calgary Zone worked in partnership to set up COVID-19 access clinics, paths to care, manage PPE ordering and ensure patients received timely care.

- COVID-19 COMMUNICATION & SUPPORT
  Webinars, COVID-19 newsletters and specialistlink.ca tele-advice, pathways and resources were critical elements of a centralized and consistent communication plan.

WHY:

- EASING THE BURDEN ON HOSPITALS
  When COVID-19 patients receive care in the community, it frees up vital space for hospitals to care for the critically ill. This benefits the system and ultimately saves lives.

- THE POWER OF PRIMARY CARE
  Harnessing the power of PCNs and physicians means adding more than 1,700 doctors + 400 health professionals and a robust support structure to the pandemic response plan. Doctors can see patients virtually or in person.

- PUTTING PATIENTS FIRST
  Family doctors know their patients best. For most COVID-19 patients, their family doctor is their ‘most responsible provider.’ Research shows patients who have a continuous relationship with a doctor and team are healthier as they age, live longer and are hospitalized less.

*All statistics relate to the period March 17 to May 26, 2020, as applicable