



Message from
Dr. Verna Yiu &
Dr. Laura McDougall

AHS Update: COVID-19 vaccine rollout for children 5-11 years underway today, maintaining ICU capacity

Please print and share with your teams as needed

Dear staff, physicians and volunteers,

Today's Update

- Vaccine Rollout to Children Five to 11 Begins
- Supports When You Need Them
- COVID-19 Cases in Alberta
- COVID-19 Testing for Healthcare Workers — The Latest Numbers
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- Patching our Quilt: Prairie Mountain HAC Curates Stories from COVID-19
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We would like to recognize that our work takes place on historical and contemporary Indigenous lands, including the territories of Treaties 6, 7 & 8, and the homeland of the Métis. We also acknowledge the many Indigenous communities that have been forged in urban centres across Alberta.

Milestone for Children’s Immunization — Vaccine Rollout to Children Five to 11 Begins

Following Health Canada approval, the first of more than 391,000 newly eligible Albertans aged five to 11, got their shot of hope today.

More than 64,000 appointments have been booked. Doses have been distributed to 120 AHS immunization clinics across the province.

In addition to AHS clinics, vaccines will also be available at a very limited number of pharmacies, where an AHS clinic is not conveniently located.

Appointments must be booked [online](#) or by calling Health Link at 811. Walk-ins are not available at this time. Children who live on a First Nations reserve can access doses through the nursing stations or public health clinics on-reserve.

Alberta Health has recommended that the interval between first and second doses should be at least eight weeks.

It is recommended, but not required, to wait for a period of at least 14 days before and after the administration of the COVID-19 pediatric vaccine and the administration of another vaccine.

We are making this recommendation so we can accurately monitor adverse events following COVID-19 immunization and not incorrectly attribute the event to another vaccine. It is not due to any safety concern; there is no evidence that giving two vaccines within 14 days causes any increased risk to individuals.

Routine school immunizations can be administered regardless of spacing from COVID-19 vaccine due to the fact that both school immunizations and COVID-19 immunizations are important and the 14-day spacing could be a barrier preventing a child from getting vaccines.

If an individual presents at a clinic or another immunizer, individuals should not be turned away from receiving more than one vaccine on the same day or if they are within the 14-day period between the COVID-19 vaccine and another vaccine.

For more information, go visit ahs.ca/vaccinekids.

For a bit of fun, help take down COVID-zilla with a new interactive game at ahs.ca/CovidZilla.





Ty McDonald takes a selfie with his children Julia, 8, and Alexander, 5, after they receive their COVID-19 vaccinations.



Oliver Kausmann, 10, receives a COVID-19 vaccination in Calgary today.

Commitment to Comfort Resources for Children

Several new Commitment to Comfort resources are available to help ease pain and distress that may be experienced during immunization:

- [Comfort care plan for children \(one page\)](#)
- [Positive language guide for parents](#) (for use with children)
- [Comfort positions for children during vaccinations](#)
- [Distraction techniques](#)

[Numbing cream](#) may also be useful for children aged five to 11. Numbing cream may not be right for everyone, but for those who are interested in using it, these products can be

purchased at most pharmacies. Numbing cream needs to be applied at least 30 minutes before the appointment.

For more information, visit: ahs.ca/VaccineComfort.

Supports When You Need Them

Get Support While Caring for Family Members

The pandemic has brought about many life changes, and for some, this may include caregiver responsibilities. Taking on the care of an elderly or sick relative while balancing work can be challenging. Whether you need to find your family member housing, coordinate care from a distance, or are seeking palliative or respite care, you can find support through [Elder and Family Care](#), offered through the [Employee and Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#). When you call the client services centre, you will be asked some questions to ensure you receive personalized support. A caregiving specialist will help you navigate the options and resources available to you.

For immediate, personal support, call the EFAP intake line anytime at 1-877-273-3134. This is a confidential service and available 24/7/365.

Physicians can contact the [AMA Physician and Family Support Program](#), also a confidential 24/7 support line at 1-877-SOS-4MDS for options and support.

There are many ways we can support you through these challenging times no matter your situation. Download the [Resilience app](#) to learn skills to build your mental health, proactively. See the Resilience, [Wellness and Mental Health Resource Guide](#) for a comprehensive list of health and wellness supports. Questions? Contact wellness@ahs.ca.

COVID-19 Status

ICU Capacity Update

AHS continues to do all it can to ensure we have enough ICU capacity to meet patient demand.

With pressure easing slightly on our ICUs, we are reducing the available surge beds, so we can redeploy staff back to caring for non-COVID patients who need surgeries and procedures completed.

We will ensure we maintain ICU capacity above daily demand to a planned maximum of 380 beds as long as staff and physician availability allows, and will readjust our plans as needed if COVID-19 cases rise again.

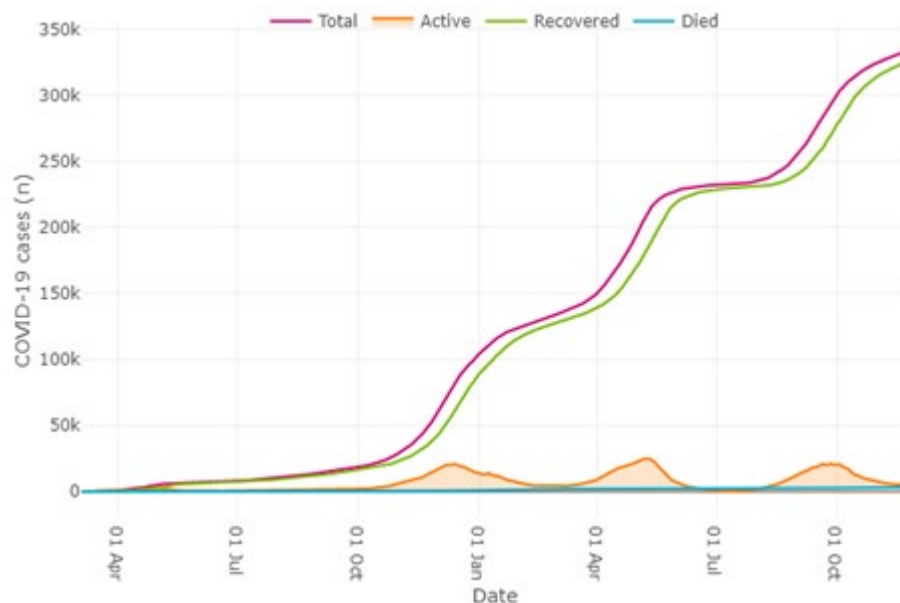
We currently have 252 general adult ICU beds open in Alberta, including 79 additional spaces above our baseline of 173 general adult ICU beds. There are currently 199 patients in ICU.

Provincially, ICU capacity (including additional surge beds) is currently at 79 per cent. Without the additional surge spaces, provincial ICU capacity would be at 115 per cent.

New and Active Cases

For the seven -day period ending on Nov. 24, there was an average of 384 new cases of COVID-19 per day, compared to 368 cases per day the previous week (Nov. 11 to Nov. 17), a 4.4 per cent increase. Only the Central and South zones reported decreases in the number of new cases per day, 3.5 per cent and 6.5 per cent, respectively, compared to the previous week. Edmonton Zone reported the largest increase in the number of new cases per day with 86 new cases, compared to 80 new cases per day the previous week (Nov. 11 to Nov. 17). Over the past week, Calgary Zone reported the highest total number of new cases with 998 (an average of 143 cases per day), compared to 938 new cases the previous week (an average of 134 cases per day).

As of Nov. 24, there are 4,969 active cases in Alberta, a 7.7 per cent decrease compared to Nov. 17. Most zones reported a decrease in active cases; the zone with the largest reported decrease was North Zone, down 20.7 per cent from Nov. 17. For the eighth week in a row, Calgary Zone reported the most active cases with 1,880, and was the only zone that did not report a decrease in cases compared to the last report.

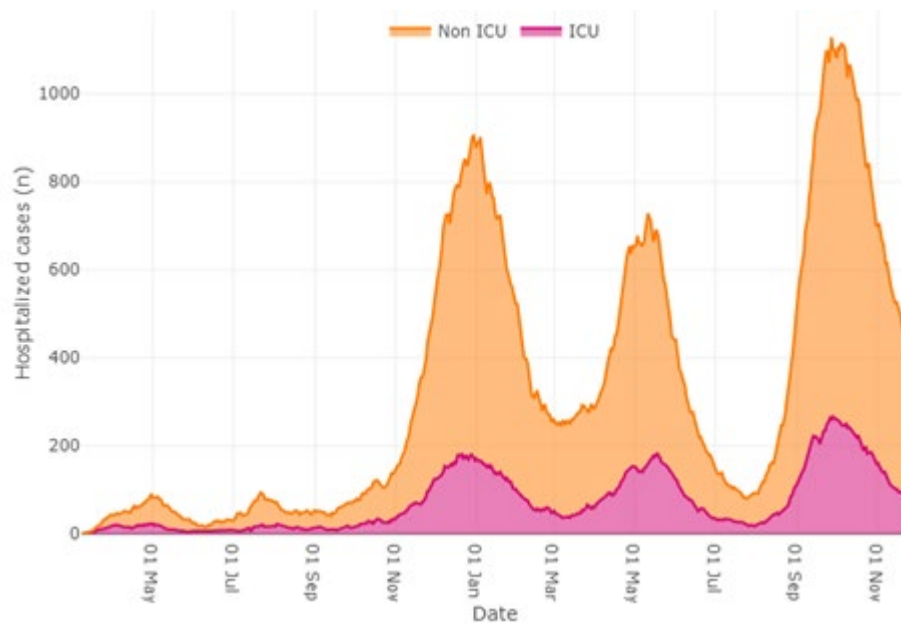


Hospitalizations

A total of 367 individuals were in non-ICU hospital beds for COVID-19 on Nov. 24, compared to 416 individuals in non-ICU hospital beds on Nov. 17, an 11.8 per cent decrease.

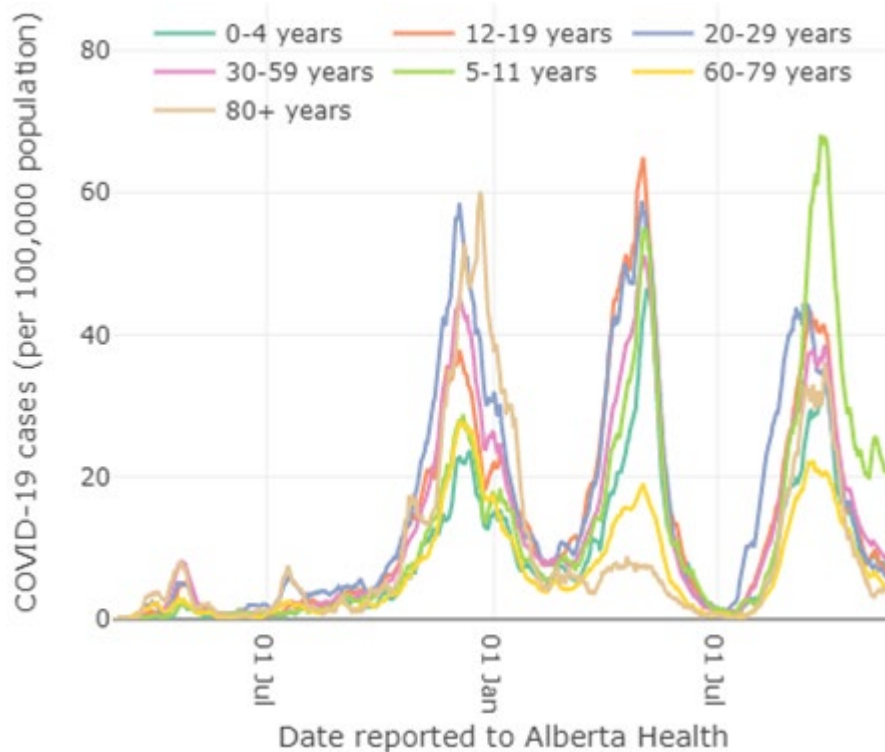
The breakdown of hospitalizations by zone as of Nov. 24 is as follows:

- 150 hospitalizations with 48 of those in ICUs in the Edmonton Zone,
- 101 hospitalizations with 9 of those in ICUs in the Central Zone,
- 96 hospitalizations with 22 of those in ICUs in the Calgary Zone,
- 64 hospitalizations with 8 of those in ICUs in the North Zone, and
- 54 hospitalizations with 11 of those in ICUs in the South Zone.



Cases by Age Group

As of Nov. 21, children aged five to 11 had the highest seven-day rolling average of new daily COVID-19 cases, with 19.57 cases per 100,000 children. Albertans aged 30 to 59 had the second-highest rate with 9.29 cases per 100,000 people. Trends in cases in Alberta by age group are shown below:



As of Nov. 24, 3,232 individuals have passed away from COVID-19, including 23 deaths since the last report. We extend our condolences to the families of these individuals, and to all who have lost loved ones from any cause during this time.

Variants of Concern

For variants of concern, the lab is currently utilizing targeted screening of positive samples for strain-typing. From Nov. 16 to Nov. 22, the average percent of positive samples that were strain-typed was 46 per cent. Of those strain-typed, the rolling average was 99.7 per cent Delta variant. The remaining 0.3 per cent were a wild variant. Strain-typing takes a number of days and these numbers may change as lab data becomes available.

Omicron Variant Update

Today the [World Health Organization](#) has designated the B.1.1.529 SARS-CoV-2 variant as a variant of concern, named Omicron.

This variant has a large number of mutations, some of which are concerning. Preliminary evidence suggests an increased risk of reinfection with this variant, as compared to other VOCs. The number of cases of this variant appears to be increasing in almost all provinces in South Africa.

Alberta's genomic surveillance system is capable of detecting the Omicron variant of concern. This variant has not been detected in Canada at this time.

However, in response, and following travel restrictions announced by other countries including Britain, Israel and Singapore, the [Government of Canada](#) has announced travel restrictions for seven countries in southern Africa: South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini and Mozambique.

Starting today, no foreign nationals who have travelled to the above countries in the last 14 days will be permitted to enter Canada.

Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be allowed to return home. Health Canada has additional detail on returning travel testing and quarantine requirements [here](#).

Impact on AHS staff and current guidance

Our Public Health, Surveillance and Lab teams will continue to monitor this evolving situation and provide you with updates, as we know more.

All international travellers, including AHS staff, arriving in Canada must ensure they are aware of, understand, and comply with all federal requirements with regards to COVID-19.

Please note that the current [Fit for Work](#) and [Return to Work](#) guides consider international travel and do not need to be updated, at this point in time.

At this time, our Expanded Testing Algorithms in Acute Care and Ambulatory Care do not need to be changed.

Other notable COVID-19-related information:

- As of Nov. 24, a total of 333,847 cases of COVID-19 have been detected in Alberta and a total of 14,969 individuals have ever been hospitalized, which amounts to 4.5 individuals for every 100 cases. In all, 325,646 Albertans have recovered from COVID-19, meaning they are no longer considered contagious.
- From Nov. 18 to Nov. 24, 55,922 COVID-19 tests were completed, an average of 7,989 tests per day. During this period, the daily positivity ranged from 4.16 per cent to 5.72 per cent. As of Nov. 24, a total of 6,092,407 tests have been conducted and 2,577,475 individuals have ever been tested.
- The R value, also known as the reproduction number, describes the ability of a disease to spread. It tells us the average number of people that someone with COVID-19 will infect. An R value of 1 means an infected person will infect one other person on average. Values below 1 mean transmission is decreasing; above 1, transmission is increasing. The R value is updated every two weeks. From Nov. 1 to Nov. 14 the province-wide R value was 0.92 and the previously reported value was 0.87. The R value was not updated this week.
- Public reporting of outbreaks in schools continues and you can find more information, [here](#).

Current Vaccine Record with QR Code Valid for Travel

A technical issue on government's alberta.ca/CovidRecords, used to access the updated QR code vaccine record for travel resulted in a possible privacy breach on the morning of Nov. 24.

Alberta Health's support desk received 12 reports from Albertans that they got the wrong vaccine record when they entered their information. The information that appeared on the record is the name, date of birth and the COVID-19 vaccination information. The QR code record is not connected to any other health or personal information.

The website was shut down immediately following these reports. An investigation is underway to determine the cause of the technical problem and the number of Albertans affected. It does not appear to be caused by a security breach to the system. The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has been informed about the ongoing investigation into the potential privacy breach.

Albertans can continue to access the previous version of the vaccine record with the QR code at alberta.ca/CovidRecords.

The updated standardized record for travel is not required for travel but recommended once available. Albertans planning to travel need to check the required travel documents with the [Government of Canada](#) and their destination ahead of any interprovincial or international travel.

Accepted Proof of Vaccination for REP

The following are considered valid forms of proof of vaccination accepted by operators participating in the [REP](#):

- [Alberta vaccine record with QR code](#) (paper or digital)
- [Vaccine records from other provinces and territories](#)

- First Nation vaccine records
- Out-of-country vaccine records along with a valid ID, such as a passport
- Canadian Armed Forces vaccine records
- U.S. Military proof of vaccination and ID card

AHS continues to receive a high volume of COVID-19 immunization records submitted through the [online Alberta Immunization Record Self Submission Portal](#), which require further review and verification. Verified submission information will display in your [MyHealth Records](#) account, but it may take two to three weeks. Our teams are doing everything they can to work through these requests as quickly as possible.

If you are experiencing issues getting your immunization record with a QR code, please visit www.alberta.ca/CovidRecordsHelp.

COVID-19 Immunization Update

Vaccine availability

AstraZeneca - Currently, there is no supply of the AstraZeneca vaccine in the province. Additional supply is expected in the middle of December. Individuals requiring second doses of AstraZeneca should call Health Link to get on a wait list for notification when the vaccine has arrived. More information will be available next week.

Janssen (Johnson and Johnson) - The Janssen vaccine continues to be available for Albertans 18 years of age and older. Only one dose of the Janssen vaccine is needed to be fully immunized. A booster dose of an mRNA vaccine is recommended after six months.

At this time, the Janssen vaccine is only for people who haven't had any doses of the COVID-19 vaccines before. It will not be provided as a second dose or a booster dose.

Due to limited supply, the vaccine will only be administered at AHS clinics in select locations across the province. Call Health Link at 811 to book an appointment.

Third doses continue to be available for eligible populations

Third doses of COVID-19 vaccine continue to be available to eligible populations, including frontline healthcare workers who provide direct patient care, had their first two doses of vaccine less than eight weeks apart, and are at least six months from their second dose. For a full list of all groups that are eligible, visit alberta.ca/vaccine.

The booster dose is not required to be considered fully immunized for the purpose of the AHS' Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy.

Healthcare workers will not be contacted by AHS if/when they are eligible to receive an additional dose. Please book your own appointment if/when you are eligible.

Booking is based on the honour system and appointments can be made through the [online booking tool](#), at participating pharmacies and doctor's office, or by calling Health Link at 811.

COVID-19 vaccines are also available by walk-in at [participating clinics](#) and pharmacies. Individuals who live on a First Nations reserve can access third doses through local public health clinics on-reserve.

Paid leave for healthcare workers for booster doses

Healthcare workers who are eligible to receive an additional dose and who have their vaccine appointment scheduled during a work shift are eligible for up to three consecutive hours of paid leave. This includes all AHS employees who are full-time, part-time or casual. This does not apply to vaccine appointments that occur off work time.

AHS strongly encourages eligible healthcare workers to get their additional dose as soon as they are able. Employees and managers should work together when scheduling COVID-19 vaccination leaves. Employees are required to give their leader as much notice as possible before taking their leave.

The Government of Alberta introduced [job-protected paid leave](#) on Apr. 21 to allow Albertans to access their COVID-19 vaccine. Information on time coding for vaccine appointments can be found on the [Time Management Resources](#) page on Insite.

Things You Need to Know

Verna's Weekly Video Message: Maintaining Bed Capacity

COVID-19 has tested us in many areas, including having enough ICU capacity to meet patient demand.

We only need to go back to late September, when we were at 83 per cent ICU capacity, including surge beds. Normally, there are 173 general adult ICU beds open in Alberta. With COVID-19 and the surge of patients, we added 106 additional beds for a total of 279 general adult ICU beds.

Without those surge beds, we would have been at 177 per cent capacity.

With pressure easing on our ICUs, we are thankfully able to reduce available surge beds so that we can redeploy staff back to caring for non-COVID patients who need surgeries and procedures completed. We will ensure we maintain ICU capacity above daily demand, to a planned maximum of 380 beds, as long as staff and physician availability allows.

This level of planning requires a great deal of foresight, understanding of pandemic pressures, and the ability to be nimble. Joining me (Verna) to [tell us more about the great work that's been done to maintain bed capacity, and how we plan for it](#), are:

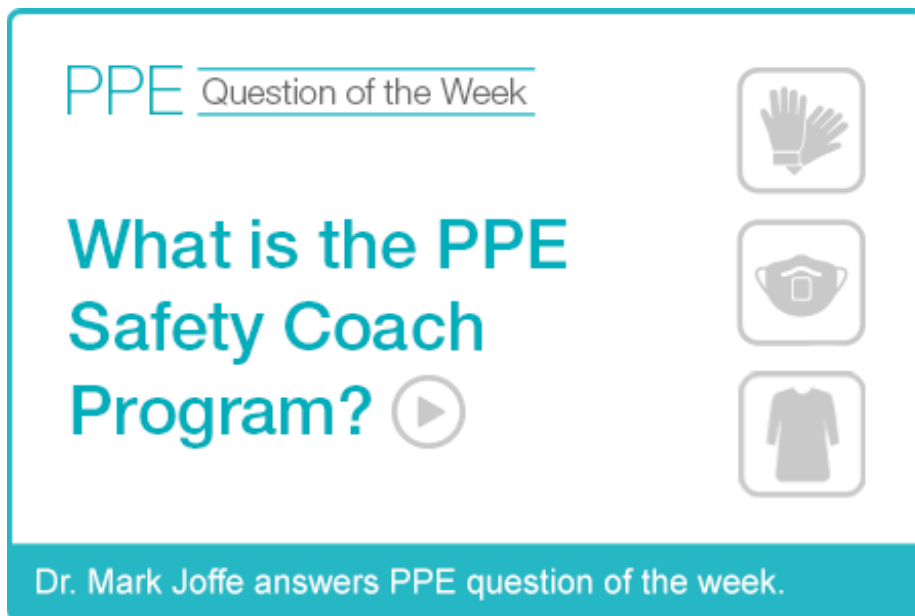
- Emma Folz, Executive Director, Peter Lougheed Centre
- Mishaela Houle, Executive Director, Cardiac Sciences, Edmonton Zone
- John Montpetit, Provincial Director, Referral, Access, Advice, Placement Information & Destination (RAAPID)



PPE Question of the Week – Safety Coaches

To help ensure the safety of our staff and patients, the need for appropriate use of PPE remains critical. To this end, a peer-to-peer coaching program is available provincially to help ensure staff compliance to PPE guidelines, and provide guidance to those with questions about PPE use.

In this week's [PPE question of the week video](#), Dr. Mark Joffe, VP and Medical Director Cancer Care Alberta, Clinical Support Services and Provincial Clinical Excellence, discusses the benefits the PPE Safety Coach program has provided to staff as we approach the one-year anniversary of the program's launch.



Influenza Immunization Update

As of Nov. 20, 922,971 doses of influenza vaccine have been administered, which is approximately 20.9 per cent of the population.

One additional influenza case has been identified this past week, bringing the total to five confirmed cases of influenza, so far this season.

Although the influenza activity we are seeing right now is less than we would see in a typical season, with changes to public health restrictions, more people travelling, and as we head into winter and more activities move indoors, we can expect to see a rise in the number of Albertans with respiratory symptoms and other illnesses, including seasonal influenza.

Now more than ever we need Albertans to get immunized against influenza, to protect themselves, their families and community.

For more information on influenza, visit ahs.ca/influenza. Interactive aggregate data is available online at [Alberta influenza statistics](#).

Influenza immunization information for staff, physicians and volunteers

Staff, physicians and volunteers can choose to be immunized through a site champion at their facility or a roving cart at their site, as well as a pharmacy, doctor's office or public health clinic.

Staff using these options are reminded to submit their [Got My Flu Shot form](#). See [Insite](#) for more on the staff immunization campaign.

An Interview and a Fireside Chat with Dr. Yiu — Lessons Learned During the Pandemic

We are pleased to share an article from the latest edition of Hospital News, which features interviews conducted by the Canadian College of Health Leaders (CCHL) with more than 100 CEO's and senior leaders of Canadian hospitals, provincial and regional health authorities and national health organizations, who provided their perspectives on the pandemic. I (Verna) was honoured to provide AHS's experience over the past 20 months in the article. I was able to share how the pandemic has highlighted the possibilities of innovation, the opportunities to use real-time evidence and the benefits of sharing data and analytics to improve the care we provide. The article is available, [here](#).

All AHS staff and physicians are also invited to join a Fireside Chat, hosted by the CCHL, where I will be the featured speaker, sharing insight into the lessons we have learned from the pandemic and how we are "building back better" as we move forward.

The virtual Fireside Chat is on Dec. 9 at 12 p.m. Eastern Time (10 a.m. MST). The session is offered at no cost for AHS teams. [Register](#) and use the code **ALP21AHS** if you would like to join.

Celebrate Digital Health Week Nov. 29 to Dec. 5

At AHS, digital technologies are used to connect patients and families to providers to deliver high-quality care.

From Nov.29 to Dec. 5, we are celebrating [Digital Health Week](#), an event that brings together patients, healthcare organizations, clinicians, government, and industries to build relationships and show support for digital health.

A dynamic part of digital health is virtual care, which enables patients to access quality care anytime, anywhere. [AHS' Virtual Health Program](#) collaborates with clinical programs and AHS partners to support the delivery of care when the clinician and patient are not in the same location. This decreases unnecessary in-person visits, improves access, and reduces barriers to patient care across Alberta and beyond.

Join the Virtual Health Lunch and Learn

In honour of Digital Health Week, we invite you to learn more about the AHS Virtual Health Program and how they can support the delivery of care. Join us for *AHS Virtual Health: Quality Virtual Care – Anytime, Anywhere*.

- **Date:** Tuesday, Nov. 30
- **Time:** Noon to 1 p.m.
- [Sign up for this Zoom session here.](#)

Be Well - Be Kind

Join Upcoming Webinar to Help You Manage and Resolve Conflict

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people in many ways including burnout, fatigue, dependent care concerns and more. This additional stress can affect the way we present ourselves at work and treat one another, sometimes without even realizing it.

That's why it is important to empower ourselves to recognize our own behaviours and find better ways to address conflict when it does arise.

On Dec. 9 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. you are invited to join an upcoming webinar that will discuss:

- Personal stories of effectively managing and resolving conflict.
- How conflict resolution is a key prevention strategy against bullying and harassment.
- The importance of healthy conflict in building trust and supporting a respectful workplace.
- Supportive AHS tools and resources.

Learn more and [register](#).

Patching our Quilt: Prairie Mountain HAC Curates Stories from COVID-19

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, people quickly changed the way they work and interact with others. We cooked our favourite dishes. We got outside and hiked, walked and rode our bikes. We sewed and learned new crafting skills. And, we joined online meetings for work and for fun, as a way to keep up with friends and family around the globe.

We coped, showing how resilient Albertans can be during a difficult time.

As a way of celebrating those successes, the Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council invited their communities to virtually share their stories of resiliency throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. [Our Stories of Resilience – Patching Our Quilt](#) invited people to upload, contribute and share their successes during the pandemic. Contributions to the “patches” fell under eight categories: Learning through Change; Pets and Resiliency; Cooking through COVID-19; Connecting to the Outdoors; Documenting the Pandemic; Resilience through Difficult Situations; Neighbours Helping Neighbours; and A Year of Living Differently.

Patching Our Quilt refers to the idea that, when these diverse stories are patched together, they create one strong, warm, and comforting story of strength during difficult times.

“There is so much doom and gloom in the world,” says Lori Bayne, Prairie Mountain Health Advisory Council vice chair. “We wanted something that was uplifting: the sharing of people’s resilience, their stories, their experiences. We thought, ‘why don’t we find a way to capture that?’”

While the project has concluded, you can still be inspired by the ideas shared through the [Patching Our Quilt](#) project, and [share how you are taking care of your health and wellness](#).

New Campaign Highlights Critical Role of Our Lab Staff

Like a goalie standing on his or her head, or the defenceman who blocks a shot at a critical moment in the game, our medical lab professionals are the ‘unsung heroes of the pandemic,’ according to Canadian hockey legend, Dr. Hayley Wickenheiser.

We couldn’t agree more, and we thank Dr. Wickenheiser for stepping up as the spokesperson for a new campaign highlighting the critical role Canada’s lab teams play across the healthcare system. The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science’s new [Indigo Labcoat of Honour](#) campaign features the five-time Olympian sharing her thoughts about how important the lab system is to patient care, especially during the pandemic.

Check out this [excellent video](#) and watch for other messages as the campaign unfolds across Canada in the coming weeks. The team at Alberta Precision Laboratories will be sharing the campaign on their [Twitter feed \(@AHS APL\)](#), and we encourage you to follow them and show your support for our dedicated lab staff.

Foundation-funded Initiatives Help Staff and Physicians with Mental Well-being

For the past year and a half, we have been in awe of the support our foundation partners and their donors have shown our patients and healthcare teams.

Throughout the pandemic, the University Hospital Foundation and the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation have funded several initiatives to support the mental well-being of staff and physicians. Recently, the foundations partnered to fund care carts at the University of Alberta Hospital and the Stollery Children’s Hospital. Over the past several weeks, the site’s ReVitalize Wellness Committee have surprised staff and physicians by setting up care carts and handing out safely packaged treats to enjoy.

The University Hospital Foundation has also provided funding to create time out kits at the University of Alberta Hospital. The kits have been provided to the critical care teams,

emergency department and COVID-19 medicine wards and will be expanded to other units. Managers can provide these kits to any staff member or physician that is experiencing an exceptionally challenging day. Each kit contains pre-packaged drinks and snacks, personal care items, and information on supports that are available. In addition to funding this initiative, the foundation helped create 1,000 of the time out kits, and contributed gift cards and donated items for staff draws. Additionally, the Stollery Children’s Hospital Foundation has provided donated items throughout the pandemic to recognize pediatric staff and physicians including appreciation baskets and gift vouchers.

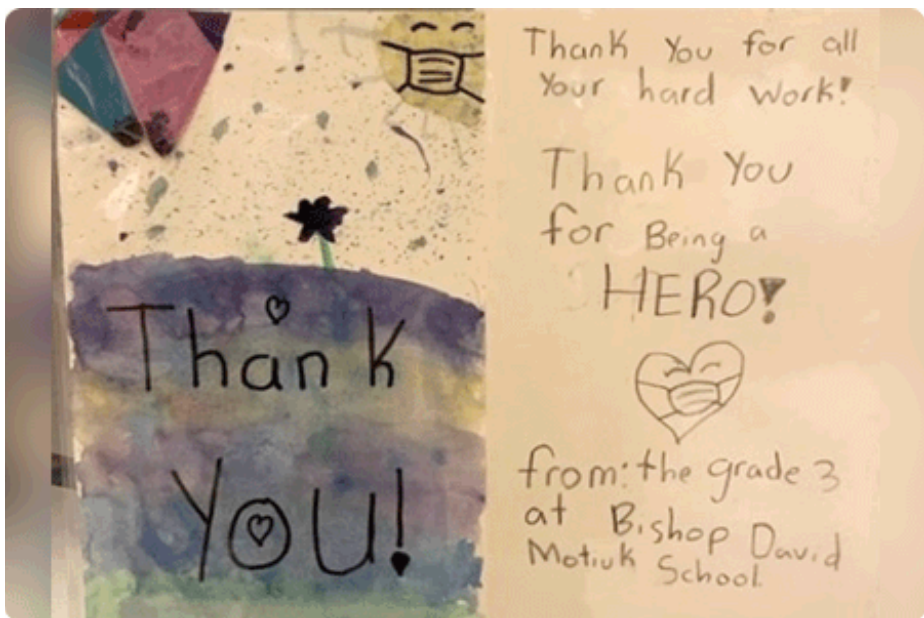
These are only a few examples of contributions these foundations have made toward Alberta’s COVID-19 response. Since the pandemic began, the two foundations have raised over \$850,000 in funds for urgent COVID-19 related needs. We extend our deepest thanks to these foundations, and to all of our foundation partners, for their continued support.



Gratitude from Albertans

Albertans notice what you are doing every day to provide safe, quality care across the province. Messages of gratitude keep coming in to let us know how appreciated you are. To see these encouraging submissions, please visit our [Sharing the Love webpage](#).

Meanwhile, staff and physicians at the University of Alberta Hospital, Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute, and Kaye Edmonton Clinic were treated to some heartwarming messages from Edmonton school kids recently. Students created handmade cards for healthcare workers, expressing their gratitude for the hard work and dedication to patients and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The well wishes and thank you notes have delighted the teams, as well as patients and families who can view the laminated cards on display on walkway windows. Staff have commented, “Some of the poems were so cute and funny – they made us laugh so hard we cried” and “they look so good, it’s so nice to have them up as a reminder of why we are here.” We’re grateful to the students for the beautiful gesture.



Wrapping Up—Simple Math

Very complicated analysis happens every day to track the spread of COVID-19, monitor its effects on populations and survey vaccine effectiveness and reactions. These are just a few of the very complex facts and figures being examined in our province and around the world to help manage this pandemic. However, ultimately changing the course of this disease can be reduced to some very simple math: an increase in people vaccinated equals a decrease in the spread of COVID-19. Thank you to our staff and physicians, who have surpassed 96 and 99 per cent vaccination rates respectively, ahead of the Nov. 30 staff immunization policy deadline. We are so proud of all of you for your efforts to protect yourselves, each other and our patients. In addition to this, we are so grateful that the COVID-19 vaccine is now available to elementary-aged children in Alberta, as of today. We know this group has experienced some

of the highest infection rates in wave four, along with increases in hospitalizations, serious outcomes and even deaths in those under 18 across Canada. Providing immunizations to this portion of our population is a huge step forward in this pandemic. These milestones are cause for celebration and maybe even a tiny sigh of relief, as we move forward to protect children and our province. Thanks for all you've done this week to care for Albertans. We are optimistic there are better times ahead!

With enduring gratitude and appreciation,

Dr. Verna Yiu

AHS President & CEO

Dr. Laura McDougall

Senior Medical Officer of Health

