COVID-19 Daily Update for AHS Medical Staff

This COVID-19 update is intended to provide a daily summary of the key action items, information and decisions for AHS Medical Staff. It is forwarded to physicians’ preferred email inbox per the AIVA list.

Updates for March 18, 2020:

There are 22 new cases over the past 24 hours for a total of 119 confirmed cases in Alberta. Additional statistics and demographics information are available on the Alberta Health website.

Alberta declared a public health emergency on March 17. Mass gatherings are now limited to no more than 50 attendees, and Albertans are advised to limit time in crowds or public spaces. Visit the Alberta Health website for more.

Due to COVID-19, AHS will delay the elimination of clinical stipends until after August 2020, unless a clinician has been notified otherwise. An update was sent to Medical Staff earlier today and additional updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

The Alberta Dental Association and College announced yesterday mandatory suspension of all non-emergency dental treatments and services.

AHS has now taken steps to restrict visitors to hospitals, including only permitting symptom-free visitors, only permitting one visitor at a time and restricting children from visiting AHS facilities.

Albertans with COVID-19 symptoms are advised not to visit a hospital, physician’s office, lab or healthcare facility without first consulting Health Link (811).

What you need to know

Self-Isolation – Clinicians who are self-isolating because they are experiencing symptoms, have recently traveled outside Canada or have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 are advised to stay home and avoid close contact with other people. Please see the Alberta Health website and Health Canada website for additional self-isolation guidance.
Clinical Guidance Resources – are available by visiting the COVID-19 information page for Health Professionals, including recommendations for specific clinical areas and guidance on managing patients with COVID-19.

Proper Use of PPE – Medical Staff are advised to use Contact and Droplet precautions when caring for a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, including a procedure mask, gown, eye protection and gloves. As recommended by WHO and PHAC, N95 respirators are not required unless performing certain procedures that can cause droplets from the nose or mouth to become airborne. It is critical clinicians understand PPE requirements, which are compliant with AHS Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) standards and are being followed by all other provincial health systems.

PPE Supplies – AHS continues to carefully monitor and assess supply levels on a daily basis and are implementing inventory access and control measures at all sites to ensure a sustainable supply across the province. There is no shortage of testing or infection prevention supplies in Alberta, but we must continue with the responsible use of supplies such as N95 respirators and procedure masks for clinical applications and patient treatment purposes only. We ask that staff help us ensure these supplies remain at AHS facilities and available for use in the healthcare system.

Resources for Physicians:

- How to do a Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swab (New England Journal of Medicine)
- Donning and doffing of PPE
- COVID-19 FAQ for Clinicians
- COVID-19 Requisition or Serology and Molecular Testing Requisition
- COVID-19 Screening Criteria
- IPC Emerging Issues
- Physician & Family Support Program - 1-877-SOS-4MDS (767-4637)
- Symptoms and Traveller’s Guidance
- Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) Questions? Contact your Zone’s WHS Business Partnerships Team
- COVID-19 Questions? AHS.ECC@ahs.ca
- If you would like Zone MOH to assist in risk assessment, contact your Zone Medical Officer of Health on call.

New Clinical Policies and Practices

- No updates at this time.

Workplace Health and Safety

- For queries relating to COVID-19 testing please review the Symptoms & Traveller’s Guidance. If testing is indicated then call AHS WHS at 1-855-450-3619.
- WHS Questions, please contact the WHS Business Partnership Team in your zone:
  - Calgary Zone
  - Central Zone
  - Edmonton Zone
  - North Zone
South Zone

Administrative Updates

- No updates at this time.

What's happening in the Zones

Edmonton Zone

- **Training for Providers Supporting COVID-19 Response at a Connect Care Site** – If you anticipate service at a Connect Care site as part of the COVID-19 response, your training needs will be flagged through Medical Affairs. You will receive training instructions via email. If you have questions about whether you will be needed at a Connect Care site, please contact your medical leader or Medical Affairs:
  - Medical Affairs Edmonton Zone - Physician Resources: MedicalAffairs.EdmontonZone-PhysicianResources@albertahealthservices.ca
  - Training-specific questions: CMIO@ahs.ca

- As Connect Care focuses efforts on COVID-19 needs, there are a number of resources available to prescribers using Connect Care. Please monitor these channels, as they are updated regularly.
  - Blogs
    - New Supports for Virtual Meetings and Care
    - Blog Series: COVID-19 and Connect Care
    - Blog Reposting: Managing Stress and Anxiety Related to COVID-19
    - Optimization Clinic: Simplifying Orders
  - Support
    - Haiku and Canto issues post-upgrade
    - After-Visit-Summary printing post-upgrade
  - FAQs
    - How to Bill for COVID-19 Virtual Encounters
    - How is COVID-19 Testing Ordered?
    - Can patients get COVID results in MyAHS Connect?
    - Where are COVID results displayed in Connect Care?
  - Demos
    - Optimization Clinic Recordings
  - Manual
    - COVID-19 CIS Supports

- Please note: Basic training for Wave 2-3 physicians, nurse practitioners and other prescribers is paused and all affected participants have been notified.

Coming soon

Updated guidance will soon be available for Albertans who may require COVID-19 testing, including guidance for AHS Medical Staff and non-AHS physicians. Members of the public are directed to continue to call Health Link 811.

Updated return to work guidance will soon be available for healthcare workers who have tested negative for COVID-19.
Guidance for access to AHS Virtual Care will soon be available for AHS clinicians requesting access to virtual tools to provide patient care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional resources are available on the Alberta Medical Association website.

For more information

- Visit the COVID-19 Healthcare Professional information page on the AHS website for more information or contact AHS.ECC@ahs.ca.
- Additional updates and information is being shared through the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA).
- AHS Medical Staff can also view the daily update from the AHS CEO and Senior Medical Officer of Health (MOH) by accessing their AHS email inbox.