

CMO Weekly Update for AHS Medical Staff

This update is intended to provide a summary of the key action items, information and decisions for AHS Medical Staff in relation to clinical policies and practices, and for the COVID-19 pandemic response. It is forwarded to physicians' preferred email inbox. Please review these updates regularly.

This update will be provided every Friday.

Update for September 11, 2020:

As of September 9, a provincial total of 15,304 individuals have been confirmed with COVID-19, of which 1,494 are active. Currently, there are a total of 43 people in hospital, with seven in an intensive care unit. 13,557 Albertans have now recovered.

The average daily number of cases this week is 144, a two per cent increase from the previous week.

A total of 1,072,681 COVID-19 tests have been completed in Alberta since the start of the pandemic.

The following are breakdowns of the cases by zone, as of September 9 (information gathered from alberta.ca):

Calgary Zone:	Edmonton Zone	Central Zone	South Zone	North Zone
Active cases: 594	Active cases: 596	Active cases: 45	Active cases: 37	Active cases: 215
Recovered cases: 7,274	Recovered cases: 3,058	Recovered cases: 577	Recovered cases: 1,712	Recovered cases: 906
In hospital: 13	In hospital: 22	In hospital: 0	In hospital: 0	In hospital: 8
In ICU: 6	In ICU: 1	In ICU: 0	In ICU: 0	In ICU: 0

Since our update last week, there were 11 lives lost in Alberta related to COVID-19, for a total of 253.

Through this difficult time, we offer our sympathies to the families and loved ones of these Albertans as they mourn these losses. We also offer condolences to medical staff who provided care for these Albertans. If you are in need of support, please contact your medical leader, or [Physician & Family Support Program](#) - 1-877-SOS-4MDS (767-4637).

See the latest [COVID-19 update](#) from Alberta Health's Chief Medical Officer of Health. Graphics showing growth in [Alberta cases, regions across the province](#), and [global cases](#) are also available. For information about current outbreaks, please visit alberta.ca.

What you need to know

NEW – Return to School Guidance – As children are returning to school during the COVID-19 pandemic, Medical Staff who are parents may be wondering how a case at school might impact their ability to work.

To determine whether or not you should attend work if your child has been in a classroom with a confirmed case of COVID-19 but your child is well; or if your child is ill and was identified by public health as a close contact of the school case, refer to the [COVID-19 Return to Work Decision Chart](#) to answer questions such as “May I work?” Within this chart, there is an additional accompanying [guide](#) to support your decision making.

In addition, physicians may find it helpful to note this [FAQ](#) from Insite (requires login).

Every day healthcare workers are also reminded to reduce their risks of acquiring COVID-19 in community settings; abide by infection prevention measures at work; and check themselves for symptoms each day using AHS' Fit for Work Questionnaire (login required).

NEW – Text Results Now Available for COVID-19 Tests – Albertans can now receive their COVID-19 test results — either positive or negative — through a text message or an automated phone call.

As of September 10, people can opt-in to have texted or automated call results if they book a COVID-19 test through ahs.ca/covid or are tested on a drop in basis at an AHS assessment centre.

The AHS autodialer system has already delivered negative results to more than 500,000 Albertans since its launch in April.

People who don't choose the text or automated call methods will receive their results by a phone call from an AHS team member.

As part of standard contact tracing process, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will also be contacted by phone by AHS' Public Health team, for further follow-up and support.

AHS expects that the delivery of results through text message and autodialer will decrease the time it takes for Albertans to receive their results, after being swabbed, by a full day. In turn, this will further protect public safety.

“Faster delivery of test results will help Alberta limit the spread of COVID-19”, says Dr. Laura McDougall, AHS Senior Medical Officer of Health. “Individuals who are asymptomatic and test positive can begin self-isolation sooner. Those who are symptomatic should be isolating while they await their test results, but getting their results earlier means they can visit ahs.ca right away for specific next steps to take care of themselves and keep their families healthy.”

Albertans who opt for a text message are advised results are texted any time of the day, seven days a week. Automated phone calls are made between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., seven days a week.

Parents and guardians will also be able to consent to receive automated test results for dependents (aged 17 years and younger). Each test result is delivered by a dedicated call or text. This could mean multiple calls or texts are delivered to a single number provided for a family.

Albertans 14 years of age and older can also access test results online through [MyHealth Records](#), a secure Alberta government service. Albertans need to [sign up for a MyAlberta Digital ID](#) to use this service.

NEW – Alberta Surgical Wait-Times Initiative: Surgical Recovery Plan Announcement – Today, Alberta Health and AHS announced a plan to clear the surgical backlog created during the pandemic, by increasing surgical activity volume to 150 per cent in order to meet the 2023 Alberta Surgical Initiative (ASI) commitment of providing all scheduled surgery within clinically acceptable times. This plan will support surgical activity in both urban and rural communities across the province. For more information, visit [alberta.ca](#).

NEW – Safe Workers, Safe Patients – Sept. 17, 2020 is [World Patient Safety Day](#) — a day to recognize and bring together patients, families, staff and physicians to speak up about worker safety and patient safety. This year’s theme is enhancing the safety of healthcare workers.

We recognize the many contributions you make every day — going above and beyond to keep all Albertans safe. We appreciate your ongoing dedication and hard work during these challenging times. In order for us to continue to serve and deliver high-quality care for patients, we must continue to take care of ourselves both physically and mentally.

Your own safety starts with you. Here are a few resources to support you in maintaining your physical and psychological health:

- [Physician and Family Support Program](#) (PFSP) by the Alberta Medical Association. The support line at 1-877-SOS-4MDS (767-4637) is available 24-7.
- The Canadian Psychological Association offers a [free psychologist](#) for frontline workers.
- AHS Physician Wellness, Diversity and Leadership page, www.ahs.ca/mdwellness: physicians can find wellness zoom rooms, and tips and guides to cope with stress.
- [Mental Wellness Moments](#)
- And on Insite:
 - [Resilience, Wellness and Mental Health Resource Guide](#)
 - Insite’s [Health and Wellness](#) reference page

We also encourage you to invest in your safety by always reporting safety risks, [violence or harassment](#) in [MySafetyNet](#) and the [Reporting and Learning System for Patient Safety](#) as appropriate.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication in keeping each other, our patients, families and community safe. For more information, see [Celebrating Health](#) on Insite.

COVID-19 testing for healthcare workers — the latest numbers

UPDATE – We continue to update the testing data for healthcare workers in the [AHS Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Testing dashboard](#). These statistics provide the total number of AHS, Covenant Health and Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) employees and physicians tested, including a breakdown of the number of positive tests and those who have been confirmed to have been exposed in the workplace.

As of Sept. 9:

- 46,672 employees (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19, and of those tested, 453 (or 0.97 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 453 employees who have tested positive, 72 (or 15.9 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with 115 of the 453 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).
- 3,065 physicians (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and of those tested, 38 (or 1.24 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 38 physicians who have tested positive, three (or 7.9 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with four of the 38 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).

For more information, see the AHS Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Testing [infographic](#) and [dashboard](#).

Physician Wellness

Note: The weekly physician wellness Zoom rooms are temporarily on hold as we develop new sessions and reimagine time, frequency and format for future offerings. More information will be shared soon.

Please submit feedback and suggestions to MDWellness@ahs.ca.

NEW – Anti-racism workshops – Dr. Kim Kelly, lead of the Equity in Medicine national team, is hosting two workshops on anti-racism with social justice educator and dynamic speaker, Dr. Farha Shariff. These workshops are geared towards medical professionals but are open to anyone interested. Register for these sessions, offered Thursday, Oct. 1 and Thursday, Oct. 8 at 6 p.m. MST [here](#).

NEW – Verna’s Weekly Video Message: Supporting a Psychologically Safe Workplace – As an organization, we’ve taken huge strides to protect our physical health and safety by identifying, reporting and acting on hazards, as well as investing in equipment to reduce the physical risks of our everyday work.

But as the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear, we must also be aware of psychological safety and proactively care for our people’s emotional well-being. We all face additional pressures and stresses in dealing with this public health crisis, and it can affect our overall health.

This week’s vlog from Verna highlights the work of our Psychological Health and Safety Steering Committee and their efforts to support a psychologically safe workplace that protects the mental health of our people. Joining Verna to discuss are:

- Dr. Mircea Fagarasanu, senior program director, Workplace Health and Safety
- Mona Sikal, executive director, Employee Relations
- Dr. Debrah Wirtzfeld, associate chief medical officer, Physician Health, Diversity & Wellness.

Mircea, Mona and Debra share what makes a psychologically safe workplace, the work of the steering committee and the supports in place for staff and physicians.

Watch their conversation [here](#).

Beyond the Pandemic

REMINDER – University of Calgary Diversity Survey – Researchers at the University of Calgary are studying the diversity and the experiences of harassment and discrimination of the physician workforce in Alberta.

They are conducting a survey to measure who is working in Alberta as a physician and how these physicians experience their workplace. By completing this survey, you will ensure that you and your experiences are counted.

The survey takes between 10 and 15 minutes to complete and asks questions about your identity. Your responses are anonymous and are only viewed by researchers at the University of Calgary.

This study has received ethics approval from the University of Calgary REB, REB20-1183.

Take the survey [here](#).

Do you have COVID-19 questions or information you would like to see covered in an upcoming edition of the COVID-19 CMO update? Let us know at CMO@ahs.ca.

Resources for Physicians:

- [AHS Virtual Health](#)
- [COVID-19 FAQ for Clinicians](#)
- [COVID-19 Testing and Self-Isolation Criteria](#)
- [CPSA's physician portal](#)
- [Cumming School of Medicine Continuing Medical Education \(CME\) Resources](#)
- [Donning and Doffing of PPE](#)
- [How to Access AHS Insite and Email](#)
- [How to do a Nasopharyngeal \(NP\) Swab](#) (New England Journal of Medicine)
- [IPC Emerging Issues](#)
- [Online Healthcare Worker Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Physician & Family Support Program](#) - 1-877-SOS-4MDS (767-4637)
- [Spectrum](#) – A mobile app customized to deliver local antimicrobial stewardship guidelines, resistance data, dosing information, and AHS COVID-19 related content.
- [Physician Wellness Educational Resources: Well Doc Alberta](#)
- COVID-19 Questions? Contact your local Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC):
 - ZEOC.South@ahs.ca
 - ZEOC.Calgary@ahs.ca
 - ZEOC.Central@ahs.ca
 - ZEOC.Edmonton@ahs.ca
 - PCH.ZEOCNorth@ahs.ca
- If you would like Zone MOH to assist in risk assessment, contact your [Zone Medical Officer of Health](#) on call

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 are 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 (SMOH) by accessing their AHS email inbox.

Sincerely,

Dr. Francois Belanger

Chief Medical Officer

Dr. Laura McDougall

Senior Medical Officer of Health