

May 11, 2023

To: Patients and residents evacuated from Alberta Health Services facilities due to wildfires
cc: Families of the evacuated patients & residents

Due to potential threat of wildfires in the area, Alberta Health Services (AHS) evacuated acute care patients and continuing care residents from Drayton Valley Hospital and Care Centre, Edson Healthcare Centre, Fox Creek Healthcare Centre and High Prairie Health Complex over the last week.

Approximately 300 patients/residents have been safely relocated to health facilities in North, Central, South, Edmonton, and Calgary Zones.

Given the complexity of a number of patients and residents, to ensure safe and timely transport, AHS completed the evacuation in collaboration with our municipal partners. Some residents have gone with their families in other communities not impacted by the wildfire risks. Where possible, staff and physicians have accompanied patients/residents to alternative sites to ensure care continuity.

As evacuation orders for some communities have been lifted, we understand you are all eager to return to your home communities.

The care and safety of our patients and residents remains our top priority. We are currently inspecting our facilities in those communities no longer under evacuation order and are preparing to ensure everything is in place for a seamless and safe return for our patients and residents.

In those communities still under evacuation order or alert, we continue to work with our provincial and municipal partners to determine when it will be safe to return to facilities and resume healthcare services.

It is important to note that the wildfire situation across the province is still very volatile and all plans will adapt to any changes in the wildfires and weather.

Patients, residents, families and the health facilities where they have been relocated will be notified when arrangements are in place for their safe return.

To ensure the comfort and safety of the patients and residents, they will continue to be cared for in the temporary healthcare facilities. It is important to consider the impact of ongoing temporary moves on any vulnerable population.

Our priority is to bring our residents home as quickly and safely as possible, but it will take time depending on the situation in each impacted community and each individual's care needs and modes of transportation.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work toward having everyone returned home safely and with as little stress and disruption as possible.

Families of the evacuees are encouraged to reach out to the facility where they were placed, and to maintain contact with their loved ones. Any patients, residents, or families with questions can also reach out to **Health Link at 811**.

Families of continuing care residents can also call the Continuing Care Access Line toll free at **1-855-371-4122** Monday to Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday/Sunday and Statutory holidays from 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for questions or for more information.

Updates to AHS' response to the wildfires, as well as resources, will continue to be posted to www.ahs.ca/wildfire.

We thank the AHS staff & physicians who assisted in these safe evacuations, and who continue to provide safe and high-quality care to patients & families.

Stacy Greening
Chief Zone Officer, North Zone

Janice Stewart
Chief Zone Officer, Central Zone