



ALBERTA

*Deputy Premier
Minister of Health
MLA, Edmonton - Glenora*

Ministers' Message to Staff – Update on Fort McMurray Wildfire

It's hard to believe that 10 days have passed since the massive wildfire raged through Fort McMurray, displacing more than 80,000 people.

There have been many stories of courage and selflessness that have emerged from this disaster. Many of these involved staff from Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services, who have gone well beyond their job descriptions to ensure the health and safety of Albertans affected by the wildfires.

Given the pressures of recent days, much has been accomplished in a short amount of time – thanks to the tireless efforts of staff working on the front lines and behind the scenes. Some examples:

- Safely evacuating and relocating 105 patients from the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre, including nine newborns and four ICU patients.
- Connecting family and loved ones with about 80 acute care patients and continuing care clients.
- Providing front-line health care teams at evacuation/reception centres across the province.
- Making sure displaced dialysis and cancer patients continue to receive treatment.
- Ensuring evacuees who don't have their health care cards receive the care they need and will be reimbursed for any health services they have paid for.
- Developing a mental health plan to help Fort McMurray residents affected by the wildfires.
- Reviewing options to provide payments to physicians whose practices were affected.
- Ensuring health care staffing is maintained and exploring options to supplement staff with out-of-province front-line workers, if necessary.
- Preparing for re-entry by developing health care criteria, including air quality and water issues, and by ensuring we have enough staff for the re-entry process.

Alberta has a wealth of incredible expertise among our health care workers, and we will continue to make the best use of this wonderful resource in the days and weeks ahead. It will be a long haul, however, and looking down the road, we may need to accept some of the many offers of help we've received from other jurisdictions.

We thank all of you who have worked so hard over the last 10 days. We also recognize everyone who continues to offer help. We ask for your patience as we determine exactly what needs to be done and the best way to do it.

Once again, thank you.

Sarah Hoffman
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health

Brandy Payne
Associate Minister of Health