

Central Zone
Healthcare Plan

Strategy Overview



Healthy Albertans.
Healthy Communities.
Together.



Central Zone Healthcare Plan

A plan for us

Alberta Health Services (AHS) recognizes every community in Alberta is unique. That's why health plans are being developed in all five zones of AHS that will apply local solutions to local issues.

The Central Zone Healthcare Plan was developed based on extensive consultations with hundreds of central Albertans. It captures the current state of healthcare in the Central Zone, explains why change is needed and projects what healthcare should look like in the Central Zone over the next 15 years.

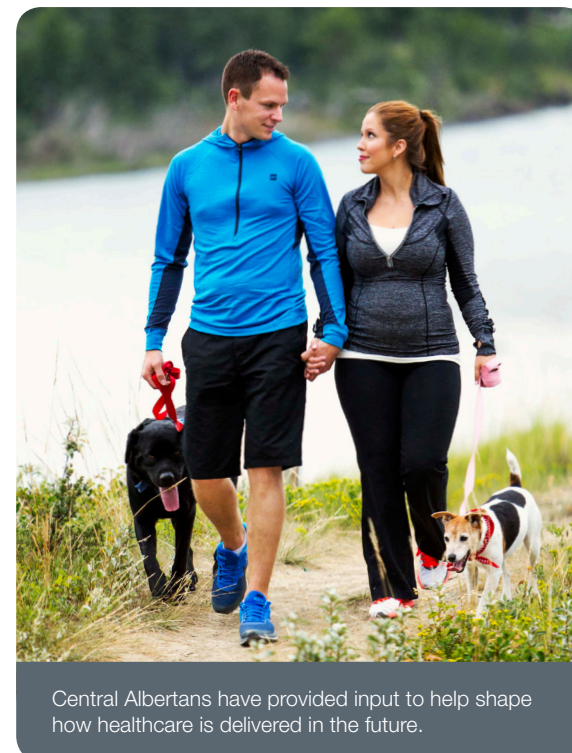
The plan contains made-in-central-Alberta strategies to transform care in our communities in order to achieve the four provincewide goals of the AHS 2017-2020 Health Plan and Business Plan.

Those goals are to:

- Improve patients' and families' experiences.
- Improve patient and population health outcomes.
- Improve the safety and experience of our people.
- Improve financial health and value for money.

The Central Zone Healthcare Plan is intended to provide a blueprint for AHS leaders, community stakeholders and central Albertans to visualize a desired future state — one in which they play a key role.

The report summarizes what's in the Central Zone Healthcare Plan, and work that needs to be completed in communities of all sizes throughout the zone.



Central Albertans have provided input to help shape how healthcare is delivered in the future.

The Case for Change

Alberta Health Services, like all healthcare systems across Canada, has an opportunity to make transformational change that will positively impact health outcomes for all Albertans.

In Alberta, there are several overarching drivers of change.

- A growing and aging population.
- Complex and emerging health issues.
- Geographic variation in healthcare resources.
- Increased costs (factors include growing demand, infrastructure, and prescription drugs).

We see these drivers of change in the Central Zone.

Over the next 10 years, the Central Zone population is expected to grow by 24 per cent, of which 17 per cent will be over 65 years of age.

Chronic disease rates in the Central Zone are higher than the provincial average for most chronic conditions. Diabetes is the fourth most common reason for hospital admissions in Central Zone and diabetes rates are on the rise, as are rates for chronic lung conditions and high blood pressure. Mental health and behavioural disorders are among the top five reasons for emergency department visits and the second most common diagnosis for hospital admission in Central Zone.

While four of five central Albertans report having a family physician, many individuals are still visiting emergency departments for issues that could be better managed in a doctor's office. In fact, Central Zone has the second-highest rate of emergency department visits, and second-lowest rate of primary care visits, in the province.

Although Central Zone has the highest number of hospital and continuing care beds per capita, distribution of those beds is not matched to population demand. Some facilities have unused capacity; others are consistently overcapacity. In 2016/17, Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre's average medical/surgical occupancy was 102 per cent, with mental health units averaging 116 per cent. In contrast, the average occupancy in rural hospitals was 69 per cent, with occupancy rates ranging from 38 per cent to 97 per cent.

Growing demand is placing increasing pressures on some Central Zone hospital inpatient units and emergency departments.

Strategies and initiatives

The Central Zone Healthcare Plan outlines five overarching strategies and 11 zone-specific priority initiatives identified following extensive consultations with stakeholders, including central Albertans. It is designed to meet the zone's current and future healthcare demands. Please note this is just the start. More initiatives will be developed with local communities, physicians, staff and other stakeholders to advance the five strategies.

Strategy #1: Primary Care — The Health Home

Give central Albertans easy access to an integrated network of healthcare professionals in their community not just when they're ill or injured but when they want to maintain or improve their overall health and wellness.

Central Albertans will have a “Medical Home,” a “Health Home,” and a “Health Neighbourhood.” A **Medical Home** is a family physician practice where that individual feels most comfortable discussing personal and/or family health concerns. The patient's family physician can work collaboratively with a team of health professionals that could include nurses, pharmacists, nutritionists and others. A **Health Home** brings together a range of health, social and community services beyond an individual's Medical Home. The Health Home is part of the broader **Health Neighbourhood** which encompasses social groups, recreation centres, green space, etc.

To achieve this goal, AHS will work with the Ministry of Health, primary care networks, and community-based services to improve integration. AHS will build on existing partnerships with all 12 Primary Care Networks in Central Zone. AHS' Connect Care project, which involves the development of a shared provincial clinical information system, is an integral part of this strategy as it will make health information available to the individual Albertan and his/her entire healthcare team.

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Strategy #2: Enhancing Care in the Community

Move some services out of our busy hospitals and into community settings when it's safe and appropriate to do so. Support people in their residences or in their community so they can enjoy the highest quality of life possible. By linking primary care, home care, outpatient services and other community health organizations, Albertans get comprehensive, appropriate care without requiring hospital admission.

There are five initiatives within this strategy:

1. Enhanced home care

- Raise the minimum monthly hours of home care from 3.6 to 6.24 per client, and support and supplement home care teams with other AHS healthcare professionals, such as community paramedics, nurse practitioners and social workers.

- Partner with primary care, housing authorities and addiction and mental health agencies to ensure seamless care integration.

2. Restorative care

- Convert some existing beds to support rehabilitation, giving patients every opportunity to regain their strength and abilities and return to their home following discharge from hospital.

3. Addiction and Mental Health Supports for Children, Youth and Families

- Improve collaboration between hospital, community and primary healthcare so Albertans with addiction and mental health needs get the care they need without having to navigate a complex maze of services to get the care they require.

4. Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)

- Increase the number of ACT teams within Central Zone. ACT teams typically support adults who have severe and persistent mental illness and are unable to use traditional mental health services.

5. Interprofessional outreach — community paramedics

- Have specially trained paramedics visit patient homes to perform diagnostics and interventions that would normally be delivered in a hospital.

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Strategy #3: Intersectoral Integration and Collaboration

Promote collaboration between the health system and different sectors of government and community to build a sustainable, healthy Alberta.

There are two initiatives within this strategy:

1. Alberta Healthy Communities Approach

- Strengthen community capacity to engage citizens, politicians and other stakeholders, giving them a voice and responsibility for the long-term health and well-being of their communities. This is a long-term initiative; impacts on health outcomes can take as long as 15 to 20 years to be fully realized.

2. Corridors of Care

- Expand Corridors of Care to other service areas. Corridors of Care are networks of sites, programs and providers that deliver different levels of care for a specific service area; for instance, cancer care or maternity care.

Strategy #4: People-Centred Care

Empower and enable Albertans to be at the centre of their healthcare team, improving their own health and wellness.

There is one initiative within this strategy:

1. Virtual Health Services: E-Mental Health

- Provide access to a broader population by making mental health services and information available through home Internet and related technologies.

Strategy #5: Acute Care Sustainability

Ensure hospitals are using their financial and human resources in an effective and sustainable way that strengthens the overall health system.

There are two initiatives within this strategy:

1. Redesigning acute and continuing care services

- Adjust continuing care and acute care bed allocations and bed types to ensure a bed is available when and where it's needed and that services attached to that bed or facility are aligned with the individual's needs.

2. Innovative spaces for living

- Build collaborative relationships with community housing providers and other partners to help Albertans with complex physical, behavioural and mental health needs secure housing so they don't end up having to live in hospitals or other institutions.

Conclusion

Alberta Health Services (AHS) must continue to evolve to deliver healthcare services in a sustainable way with the patient outcomes and patient experiences that Albertans expect and deserve.

The Central Zone Healthcare plan lays the foundation for change to reduce the demand and need for acute care growth and improve satisfaction and outcomes for patients and for staff and caregivers.

We are pleased to embark on this journey in partnership with central Albertans. Input and commitment from the people we serve is critical to effective health system transformation. AHS is grateful to the central Albertans who shared their time and thoughts with us during our in-person engagement sessions or through online feedback. Their contributions played a vital role in shaping this plan, and they'll continue to play an

important role as the plan is implemented.

Likewise, transformational change cannot be achieved by AHS alone. We are reaching out to our many partners — including government ministries, unions, academic institutions, community agencies, patients and their families — to refine, implement and monitor the strategies and priorities identified in the Central Zone Healthcare Plan.

Ultimately, we will emerge as a high-performing, sustainable healthcare system where:

- Care is provided in the right place.
- Hospital beds are available when needed.
- Team-based care is delivered closer to home.
- We are all focused on wellness and illness prevention and not just illness.

We are confident that, together, we will realize our shared vision for healthcare in the Central Zone and throughout our province: Healthy Albertans. Healthy Communities. Together.



Primary Care Networks are an important partner in supporting the zone healthcare initiatives. They bring local physicians and other healthcare professionals together to provide comprehensive patient care to Albertans.

For more information, please contact
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