Alberta Referral Directory (ARD)
Frequently Asked Questions

Alberta Health Services (AHS) recently redesigned the Alberta Referral Directory (ARD) website to make it easier for healthcare providers to find the referral information they are looking for. We have changed how the search results are listed and revised the healthcare service profile design. We also added a new type of profile created specifically for central access services and another type of profile for their dependent departments. Please see the FAQs below for more information and feel free to reach out to us at ard@ahs.ca if you have additional questions or require assistance.

NEW: Central Access and Dependent Profile Design FAQ

Q. Why did you introduce the new central access and dependent profile designs? AHS uses central access service models to manage referrals for several healthcare services across the province. The new ARD profile designs will help better reflect central access referral processes, making it clearer for providers as to how and where to send referrals.

Q. How are central access profiles different from regular healthcare service profiles? Central access profiles are blue (rather than green), contain central access referral process information and do not display any location information. They will, however, contain links to their dependent department profiles so providers can obtain relevant information specific to that service e.g., directions and parking maps. Dependent profiles will be linked to central access profiles in a phased approach.

Q. How are dependent profiles different from central access profiles and regular healthcare service profiles? Dependent profiles contain minimal referral information and will be linked to their applicable ARD central access profiles, as per the department build displayed in the AHS Connect Care Sequencing Portal. Managers will be contacted before their profiles are linked to the new central access profiles.

NEW: Updated Search Results FAQ

Q. Why do the search results look different? We redesigned how the search result listings display to make it easier for healthcare providers to quickly find what they are looking for. We underlined the hyperlink to the profiles, removed the phone and fax from the listing and added a service description. We also added the following labels that are displayed with their applicable profiles: Healthcare Service, Healthcare Service with Multiple Locations, Central Access Service and Specialist.

Q. How will central access profiles and dependent profiles appear in the search results? Central access profiles are labelled as Central Access Healthcare Service. Any linked dependent profiles will appear within the same listing. Dependent profiles will only appear with their affiliated central access listing.

Q. Why did you change how healthcare services (with multiple locations) search results appear? Certain healthcare services such as laboratories have multiple locations. The ARD was designed to return one search listing for each location. We received feedback that it was difficult for users to find the service they were searching for because there were too many locations listed in the results. To address these concerns, all services with multiple locations now appear within one listing. Please note that you cannot open the healthcare services (with multiple locations) by clicking the service name. You need to click on your desired service location within the listing.

Q. Why did you change how the specialist search results appear? Specialists will often link their profiles to the healthcare service profiles where they practice. When users previously searched for a specialist, the ARD would return multiple listings for the same specialist – one for each location they were linked to. We received feedback that it was confusing for users to find the correct specialist profile. To address these concerns, only one specialist profile listing will appear in the search results.

NEW: Updated Healthcare Service and Specialist Profile Design FAQ

Q. What changes did you make to the healthcare service and specialist profiles? We increased the size of the font, moved up Eligibility, Additional Service Details, and Communication Process and moved Referral Forms to the right. We created a patient information section at the bottom of the page that can be printed or emailed to patients. We added two new fields called Patient Appointment Instructions and Patient Resources which will be populated with information as managers update their profiles. We did not make any major changes to specialist profiles except for changing how the linked healthcare services appear.

ARD Background Information FAQ

Q. What is the ARD? The ARD is Alberta Health Services' official information source for referral-based healthcare services. The directory is comprised of service and specialist demographics, referral guidelines, referral forms and detailed instructions to facilitate referral acceptance. The directory eliminates the need to search, update and publish documents in multiple places throughout the province.

Q. Why use the ARD? Having updated referral information in one source increases the likelihood of sending and receiving appropriate referrals with the required information and/or investigations needed for triaging. The ARD can help to reduce workload burden, save time, reduce operating costs, and improve patient satisfaction and safety.

Q. Can the public view ARD content? Yes. The ARD is accessible at albertareferraldirectory.ca.

Q. How do I find the referral information I am looking for? Click on the Healthcare Service filter to search for a healthcare service profile or click the Specialist filter to search for a specialist profile. Try the filters on the left to refine your search. If you need help, there is a link to ARD search tips at the bottom of the webpage or email ard@ahs.ca.

Q. What information do specialist profiles contain? The information listed in specialist profiles originates from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) and the Alberta Health Provider Registry. Currently, the ARD only includes specialists that are licensed through CPSA. Profiles are updated by specialists and/or their delegates to include:

- Areas of specialty
- Interests
- Site services performed at
- Associated services
- Contact information, languages spoken and notes

Q. What information do healthcare service profiles contain? AHS services that accept referrals are listed in the ARD and originate from InformAlberta. Service Editors update their profiles to include:

- Referral guidelines that include reasons for referral, required investigations and information
- Referral processes and forms
- Approximate routine wait times and eligibility requirements
- Service communication turnaround targets
- Patient maps, directions, parking information, hours of operation and missed appointment guidelines

Q. Can private and community services be listed in the ARD? Any healthcare service that provides a physical, mental, or emotional healthcare option for Albertans (and meets ARD profile criteria) can be listed by completing a service profile request form at ahs.ca/ard.

Q. How do the ARD and Connect Care work together? Connect Care and the ARD are partnering to ensure healthcare providers can easily access the ARD referral information when sending referrals in Connect Care. The goal is for providers to have the right decision support resources at their fingertips.

Q. Can you send a referral from the ARD? No. The ARD provides all the information required to make a complete and appropriate referral, but you cannot submit a referral from the ARD.

Q. Can patients self-refer using the referral forms in the ARD? While a small number of the healthcare services in the ARD indicate that self-referrals from patients are accepted, the majority will require a healthcare professional to initiate the referral. If a healthcare service does not indicate self-referrals are accepted, patients should contact their family physician or call Health Link at 811 for assistance.

Q. How accurate are the wait times in the ARD? The wait times listed are estimates for routine appointments. They are not guaranteed and may change without warning. Urgent and emergent wait times are not included in the ARD.

Q. How do I register for a service editor account?
- Go to albertareferraldirectory.ca
- Click Edit
- Click on Service Editor and then Register
- An ARD administrator will verify your information and will send you a temporary password to complete your account set-up.
- Login with your temporary password to access your account
- Create a new password
- Search, select your profile, click Edit Referral Information, if **Individual** Referral Process is highlighted, start editing!
- If it has a Common Referral Process, please email ard@ahs.ca before you start editing

Q. How do I register for a specialist account?
- Visit albertareferraldirectory.ca
- Click Edit
- Click Specialist and then Register
- Enter the required information including your CPSA number
- A temporary password will immediately be emailed to you and will expire within a week from time of receipt

- Login with your temporary password to access your account
- Create a new password
- Start editing!

Q. How can I get assistance?

- Contact us toll free at 1-855-889-8899, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. or email us at: ard@ahs.ca.
- Invite the ARD to your next meeting for a demonstration
- The ARD Service Editor Guide and Specialist User Guide are available for AHS staff on Insite by searching ARD