

CMO SMOH Weekly Notice for AHS Medical Staff

June 18, 2021

We would like to recognize that our work takes place on historical and contemporary Indigenous lands, including the territories of Treaties 6, 7 & 8, and the homeland of the Métis. We also acknowledge the many Indigenous communities that have been forged in urban centres across Alberta.

This week:

- Highlighted Topic: Continuous Masking
- MD Culture Shift
- Doctor of the Week
- AMA Webinar: Moral Dilemmas - Reflecting on Physicians' Experiences and Approaches
- Alberta to Enter Stage 3 Reopening July 1
- Highlights from the CEO All Staff Update
 - COVID-19 Case Status in Alberta
 - COVID-19 Immunization
 - COVID-19 Testing for Healthcare Workers
 - Verna's Weekly Vlog: Celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Month
- Additional Resources for Physicians

Highlighted Topic

Continuous masking and eye protection

As communicated last week, AHS will continue to keep the continuous masking [Directive](#) in place while providing more flexibility for fully immunized healthcare workers around eye protection. A [memo with FAQs](#) was sent to ZEOCs across the province this week to help ensure understanding, clarity and consistency across all zones.

For more information on continuous masking and the use of eye protection, visit the [PPE webpage](#). [Guidelines for continuous mask and eye protection](#) in Home Care and Congregate Living Settings is also available on [Insite](#).

For other questions regarding these guidelines, please visit our [PPE FAQs](#) or reach out to the PPE Task Force at ppe@ahs.ca.

MD Culture Shift

MD Culture Shift Newsletter: [Issue 04: June 2021](#)

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

June 21 is National Indigenous People's Day

Learn more about the history of segregated hospitals for Indigenous people, the impact, and steps AHS is taking to repair this relationship and move towards reconciliation in this [seven-minute video](#). Other resources can be found on Insite at [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#).

Physician wellness

[Respectful Workplaces: Discover and Discuss Guides](#) have been developed to help facilitate short discussions on topics and existing resources pertaining to Respectful Workplaces and Psychological Health and Safety. We encourage you to explore these with your teams.

In case you missed it

Happy Pride! If you missed the Pride webinar, a recording is [now available](#). Recording of the Asian and Jewish Heritage Month from May is also [now available](#).

Doctor of the Week – Dr. Janni Prins

Doctor of the Week shows the people, faces and stories of the physicians caring for patients across Alberta Health Services. Physicians for this feature are nominated by their colleagues. Contact cmo@ahs.ca to nominate a physician to be featured here.



Dr. Janni Prins, this week's Doctor of the Week, is a family physician in Lacombe. Part of his work includes working in the Emergency Department, supporting in-patients and long-term care, and acting as the Facility Medical Director at the Lacombe Hospital and Care Centre.

Graduating from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, Dr. Prins worked as a family physician and acupuncturist in Cape Town, South Africa, for nine years, before travelling and working in Surrey, England and Bermuda. Before he moved to Alberta and started working in Lacombe in 2006, Dr. Prins worked as a cruise ship physician.

Dr. Prins loves his work, and can never imagine doing anything else. Particularly, in relation to working at the Lacombe Hospital and Care Centre, Dr. Prins says, "We have an incredible team of physicians, nurses and support staff that makes working in healthcare an absolute pleasure. I am proud to work alongside them. Their resilience and adaptability has been shown over and over throughout the COVID-19 pandemic."

In his free time, Dr. Prins can be found spending time with his wife and kids, travelling, running, snowboarding and exploring any creative pursuit.

Thank you, Dr. Prins for your ongoing dedication and care for your patients and colleagues.

Alberta Medical Association Webinar: Moral Dilemmas - Reflecting on Physicians' Experiences and Approaches

For many physicians, the past 15 months of the COVID-19 pandemic have been the most uncertain, constantly changing, stressful and exhausting times of their professional careers. As part of the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) series: [Maintaining and Optimizing your Practice During Times of Rapid Change](#), AMA's [Physician and Family Support Program](#) (PFSP) and [Well Doc Alberta](#) invite you to invest 1.5 CME-accredited hours in yourself and your mental wellbeing. During this webinar, the AMA will:

- Consider the moral dilemmas faced by physicians;
- Discuss the construct of moral distress with a panel of experts; and
- Learn approaches for dealing with moral dilemmas and their consequences at the organizational and personal level.

Date: Wednesday, June 23

Time: 7–8:30 p.m.

For more information and to register: [Go here](#)

Alberta to Enter Stage 3 Reopening July 1

Today, the Government of Alberta announced Alberta will be moving to Stage 3 on July 1 for the Open for Summer Plan. We are currently in Stage 2.



For more information, please visit alberta.ca.

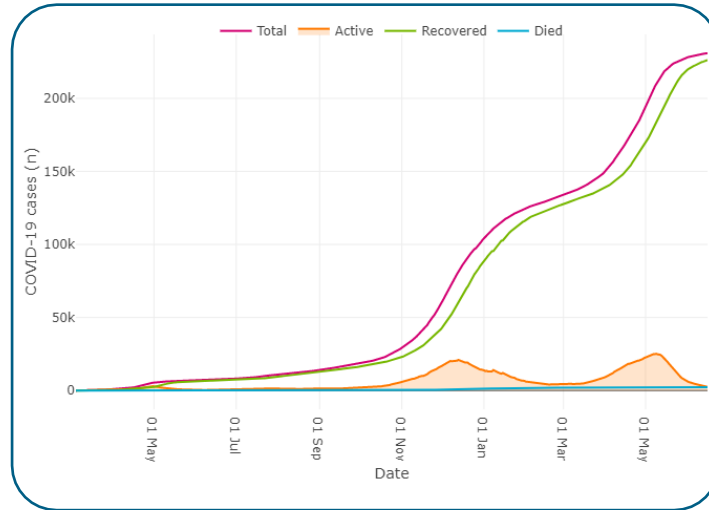
Highlights from the CEO All Staff Update

COVID-19 Case Status in Alberta

This week, COVID-19 rates and cases continue to trend downwards. There was an average of 153 new cases per day for the seven-day period ending on June 16, compared to 225 cases the previous week (June 3 to June 9), a 32.0 per cent decrease. All zones reported a decrease in active cases. For the twenty-third week in a row, the Calgary zone reported the most active cases with 1,078, however, that is still a decrease of 29.2 per cent over the previous week. The details for all zones are outlined in the table below.

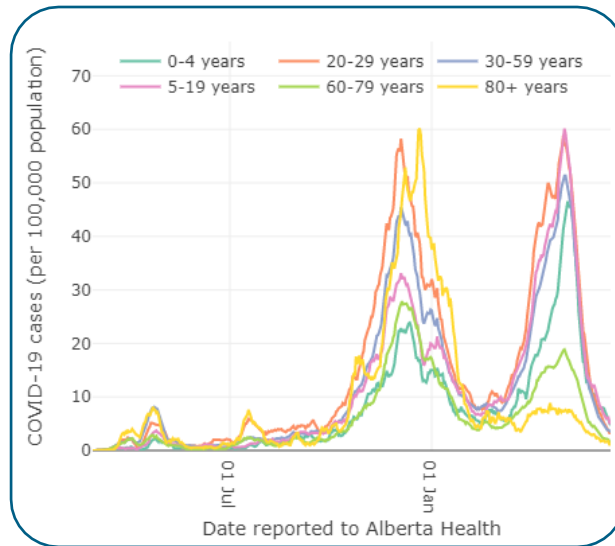
	Active Cases (as of June 16)	Active Cases (as of June 9)	Per cent Change
Calgary	1,078	1,523	-29.2%
Edmonton	535	1,028	-48.0%
North	486	588	-17.3%
Central	284	496	-42.7%
South	88	174	-49.4%
Unknown	0	1	-100%
Total	2,471	3,810	-35.1%

As of June 16, there are 2,471 active cases in Alberta, a 35.1 per cent decrease compared to June 9. For reference, in the first wave in Alberta, April 2020, active cases peaked at 2,932.



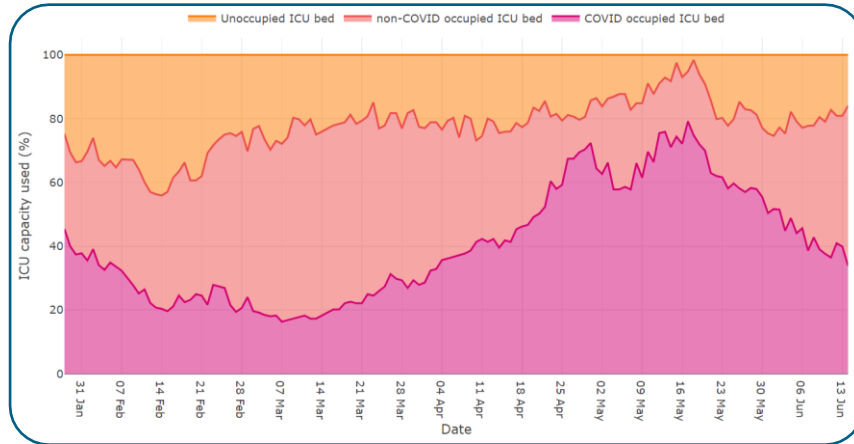
Cases by age group

On June 16, the age group with the highest seven-day rolling average of cases was school-aged children, ages 5-19, with 5.00 cases per 100,000 people. Those aged 80 years and older continue to have the lowest seven-day rolling average of cases at 1.14 per 100,000 people. A visual representation of these trends in cases in Alberta by age group is provided below.

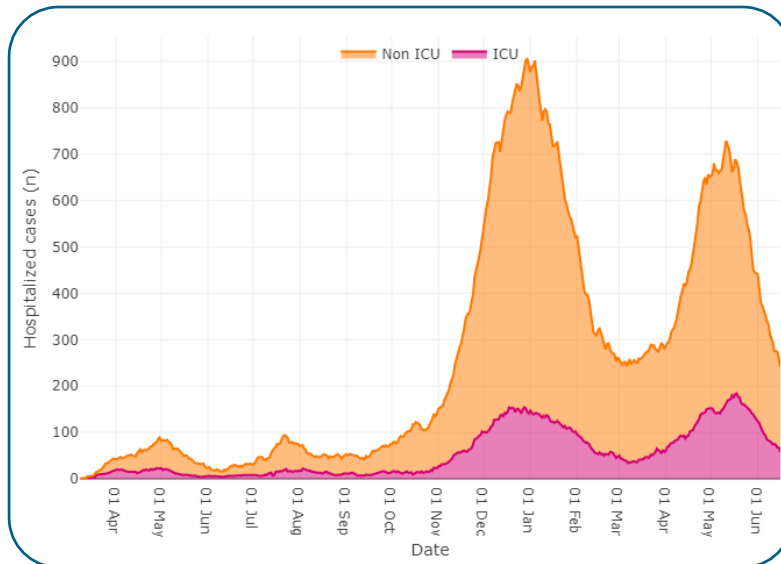


Hospitalizations and ICUs

On June 16, 58 individuals were in ICUs compared to 82 individuals in ICUs on June 9, a 29.3 per cent decrease. The most recent reporting on June 14 indicates our ICU usage is at 84.1 per cent, with 33.8 per cent of ICU beds being occupied by a COVID-19 patient. The figure below shows ICU capacity in Alberta.



A total of 184 individuals were in non-ICU hospital beds on June 16 compared to 231 individuals in non-ICU hospital beds on June 9, a 20.3 per cent decrease.



The table below shows hospitalization and ICU numbers by zone on June 16.

	Hospitalizations	ICUs
Calgary	116	28
Edmonton	61	19
Central	24	4
North	29	6
South	12	1

Variants of concern

For variants of concern, the lab is back to screening samples of all positive cases for variants and as a result the proportion of active cases that are variants is reportable once again. With the return to screening all positive cases, we may see the numbers below increase over the coming weeks. On June 16, the proportion of active cases which are known variants of concern was 72.7 per cent: 59.5 per cent of total samples successfully screened were the B.1.1.7 (UK) varian.

COVID-19 Variant	Proportion of Active Cases (June 16)
B.1.1.7 (UK) Variant	59.5%

B.1.351 (South African) Variant	0.2%
B.1.617 (India) Variant*	9.0%
P.1 (Brazilian) Variant	3.9%
Overall	72.7%

*Note: The B.1.617 variant can be sequenced as B.1.617.1, a variant of interest, and B.1.617.2, a variant of concern. Determining the complete sequence takes additional processing time.

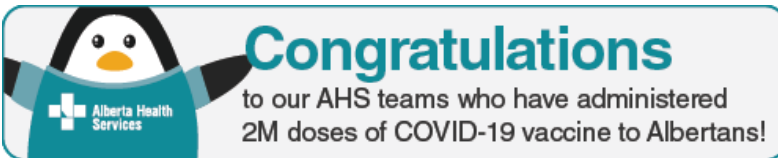
Other notable COVID-19-related information:

As of June 16:

- A total of 231,008 cases of COVID-19 have been detected in Alberta and a total of 9,574 individuals have been hospitalized, which amounts to 4.1 individuals for every 100 cases. In all, 226,257 Albertans have recovered from COVID-19.
- 2,280 Albertans have passed away from COVID-19 including 18 individuals between June 10 to June 16. We extend our condolences to the families of these individuals, and to all who have lost loved ones from any cause during this time.
- A total of 4.62 million tests have been conducted and 2.16 million individuals have ever been tested. From June 10 to June 16, 38,509 COVID-19 tests were completed, an average of 5,501 tests per day. During this period, the daily positivity ranged from 2.16 per cent to 3.86 per cent.
- For the winter school term, AHS has confirmed 9,521 individuals with COVID-19 were present at schools while infectious or acquired the disease in the school setting. A total of 1,388 out of 2,415 schools (57.5 per cent) in the province have reported an individual has attended their school while infectious or had in-school transmission.

The R value, also known as the reproduction number, describes the ability of a disease to spread. It tells us the average number of people that someone with COVID-19 will infect. An R value of 1 means an infected person will infect one other person on average. Values below 1 mean transmission is decreasing; above 1, transmission is increasing. The provincewide R value from June 7 to June 13 was 0.76 whereas R value the previous week was 0.74.

COVID-19 Immunization Updates



More Albertans included in second dose rollout

Today (June 18), Alberta’s COVID-19 immunization rollout expanded to include Albertans who have had a first dose of vaccine 28 days ago or longer. Everyone will need the date of their first immunization and type of vaccine they received when booking their second dose appointment.

For those who received Pfizer or Moderna (mRNA)

Those who had their first dose of vaccine with either Pfizer or Moderna (mRNA) can book through the [AHS online booking tool](#), through [participating pharmacies](#) or by calling 811. Anyone who booked their first appointment with either Pfizer or Moderna (both are mRNA vaccines) can book their second dose with the same product, or the alternative mRNA product.

For those who received AstraZeneca

Those who had a first dose with the AstraZeneca vaccine can call Health Link at 811 to book an appointment for a second dose of AstraZeneca, or an mRNA vaccine. Second dose appointments for those who received AstraZeneca can no longer be made through pharmacies or the online booking tool.

While a second dose of AstraZeneca can be provided as early as 28 days after the first dose, we encourage Albertans to wait a minimum of eight weeks between doses to ensure best effectiveness with this vaccine product.

Two doses of any of the COVID-19 vaccines available in Alberta is considered a complete, safe and protective vaccine series.

For all Albertans who have not yet received a first dose and were born in 2009 or earlier, we encourage you to book your first dose as soon as possible.

Thank you to all who have been immunized and continue to follow public health guidelines as we continue to roll out first and second doses, provincewide.

Online Immunization Record Submission for Out-of-country and Out-of-province Immunizations

Starting today, AHS is offering a fast and easy way for Albertan's to add to their health records any out-of-province and out-of-country COVID-19 immunizations they've received.

Individuals who have received any COVID-19 immunizations outside of the province, or outside of the country are now able to submit that information to be added to their health records through a new, secure, web-based portal, available at ahs.ca/vaccineregistry.

People can submit out-of-province or out-of-country immunization records on behalf of themselves or their child/youth under 18 years of age.

Submitted records will be reviewed by AHS, and verified submission information will be available within two to three weeks on the person's [MyHealthRecords](#) account. If someone is unable to access the online portal, a copy of the immunization record can also be brought to an AHS Public Health Clinic.

Only doses of vaccines considered acceptable by Alberta Health and given at appropriate spacing intervals will be entered as valid in a person's record.

Individuals with questions about vaccine products and COVID-19 immunization can visit our [vaccine FAQ](#), or call Health Link 811.

Submitting out-of-province and out-of-country immunization records ensures Albertan's health records are fully up-to-date. It also provides an accurate record of who has been immunized.

If you have already submitted your out-of-province or out-of-country COVID-19 immunization records to an AHS Public Health Clinic you do not need to upload them through the portal.

Individuals who have received only one dose outside of Alberta are also asked to bring a written record of their first dose when they are eligible to receive their second dose.

First dose appointments continue to be available, and anyone who has not booked one is asked to do so as soon as possible by visiting ahs.ca/covidvaccine.

COVID-19 Testing for Healthcare Workers

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 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 June 15:

- 78,190 employees (AHS and APL combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and, of those tested, 5,868 (or 7.50 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 4,405 employees who have tested positive and whose source of infection has been determined, 579 (or 13.1 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure. An additional 1,463 employees who have tested positive are still under investigation as to the source of infection.
- 5,371 physicians (AHS and APL combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and, of those tested, 240 (or 4.47 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 187 physicians who have tested positive and whose source of infection has been determined, 19 (or 10.2 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure. An additional 53 physicians who have tested positive are still under investigation as to the source of infection.

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

Verna's Weekly Vlog: Celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Month

At AHS, everything we do is driven by patients and families, and ensuring they receive the best possible health care experiences.

Part of that involves understanding the unique cultural needs and perspectives of everyone we serve, including the more than 220,000 Indigenous people in this province.

Throughout National Indigenous Peoples Month, we are celebrating the strength and resilience of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people by highlighting some great work taking place throughout the organization.

One silver lining of the pandemic has been the development of some great partnerships between Indigenous communities and organizations, and AHS that we hope to continue to foster into the future. While we know we have a lot of work to do, we have seen what is possible when we work together.

With Verna to [discuss what they have learned and experienced](#) while working with Indigenous peoples and communities throughout pandemic are:

- Dr. Esther Tailfeathers, Senior Medical Director, Indigenous Wellness Core
- Dr. Alika Lafontaine, an anesthesiologist from Grande Prairie who is the newly appointed and first Indigenous President of the Canadian Medical Association.

Monday, June 21, is National Indigenous Peoples Day. We encourage you to join our [virtual events](#) to celebrate and honour Indigenous peoples in Canada. Visit [Together4Health](#) to learn how you can participate.

Additional Resources for Physicians:

- [Acute Care Outbreak Prevention & Management Task Force](#)
- [AHS Immunization Information](#)
- [AHS Virtual Health](#)
- [COVID-19 FAQ for Clinicians](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources for Community Physicians](#)
- [COVID-19 Testing and Self-Isolation Criteria](#)
- [CPSA's Physician Portal](#)
- [Cumming School of Medicine Continuing Medical Education \(CME\) Resources](#)
- [Government of Alberta Vaccination Updates](#)
- [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)
- [Physician Wellness Educational Resources: Well Doc Alberta](#)
- [Spectrum](#): A mobile app customized to deliver local antimicrobial stewardship guidelines, resistance data, dosing information, and AHS COVID-19 related content.
- 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

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 \(CPSA\)](#).

This update, provided every Friday, 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.

Do you have COVID-19 questions, information, or a physician or team who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic, that you would like to see covered in an upcoming edition of the COVID-19 CMO update? Let us know at CMO@ahs.ca.

Sincerely,

Dr. Francois Belanger

Chief Medical Officer and VP, Quality

Dr. Laura McDougall

Senior Medical Officer of Health

