

CMO SMOH Notice for AHS Medical Staff

October 15, 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:

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Reminder to Submit your Proof of COVID-19 Immunization

If you haven't submitted your proof of immunization or received your final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, now is the time to do so. It is due **no later than Oct. 16, 2021**.

Have an Alberta Health Care Number (AHCN) (nine digits) as a patient and received your immunization in Alberta?

- Use the [Got My COVID-19 Immunization Form](#) to submit and have your AHCN (nine digits) and your CPSA, ADAC or CPPA registration number ready to enter. Include your employee number too if you're also an AHS or APL employee.

Don't have an AHCN or received your immunization outside Alberta and you haven't reported it to Alberta Health already?

1. Use the [email template](#) and fill out the fields before you submit
2. Ensure your vaccination records include your name, date of birth, vaccine type and date of final dose given
3. If you submit using your AHS email, it will automatically be sent securely to Workplace Health and Safety

If you are not an AHS, Alberta Precision Laboratories or Covenant Health employee and you wish to submit a request for exception under the policy, please review the [exception request form](#) and submit to md.midwife.covidvacc@ahs.ca.

Unless you have been recently told through email, or by a medical leader, that you are not showing as confirmed, there's nothing further you need to do at this time. If you have been told by a medical leader in the last several days or receive a specific email to you asking you to submit your records, please do so as soon as possible with the applicable steps above.

Support for Physicians

If you are struggling and feel you need support, there are resources available through the [Physician & Family Support Program \(PFSP\)](#).



I (Francois) welcome any feedback by email to cmo@ahs.ca, and am always open to a chat.

Common Questions about COVID-19 Immunization

Q: I'm pregnant. Do I still need to receive the COVID-19 immunization?

A: [AHS' Position Statement on Pregnant Healthcare Workers and COVID-19](#), aligns with the latest recommendations from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) and [Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada \(SOGC\)](#). NACI and SOGC recommend that pregnant people get two doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

Get the facts about the COVID-19 vaccines [here](#). There may be situations where a pregnant worker may be medically supported for an accommodation. Should you be medically unable to get the vaccine because of your pregnancy, please refer to the accommodation section.

Q: I have questions about the safety of the vaccine. Where do I find more information?

A: All approved vaccines are tested, safe, effective and help prevent serious illness. There are some helpful resources about vaccine safety on the AHS [webpage](#).

Additional facts can be found here: [Health Canada](#) and [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\): Statements and publications](#).

If you continue to have questions about vaccine safety, please email AHS at AHSVaccineTaskForce@ahs.ca. We will connect with you with an AHS expert who can provide you with accurate and up-to-date information.

MD Culture Shift

MD Culture Shift Newsletter: [October edition](#)

Reminder: Leadership Development

Provincial Medical Affairs is pleased to sponsor the following virtual Physician Leadership Institute (PLI) courses for 2021/2022:

- Coaching for Excellence – Nov. 8-10: 8 a.m.-12 p.m. MST each day
- Leading Change – Dec. 8-9: 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. MST each day.
- Building and Leading Teams – Jan. 19-20, 2022: 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. MST each day.
- Leadership Strategies for Sustainable Physician Engagement – Feb. 17 & 24, 2022 (two Thursdays) - Day 1, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. MST and Day 2, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. MST.
- Talent Management for Exceptional Leadership – TBA

Upcoming Events

- October 27 from 6 to 7 p.m. MST: Equity in Medicine hosts “*I’m not sick, I’m Transgender*” presented by International speaker, Marni Panas, Program Manager of Diversity and Inclusion at AHS. Registration link is [here](#).
- November 24, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. MST: NEW MD Culture Shift Community of Practice (COP). The first session will be focused on an introduction to the portfolio of diversity, wellness and leadership development with an introduction to trauma informed leadership. The additional topics will be determined by you, the leaders (formal and informal) in AHS who have an interest in shifting culture. These topics may include wellness initiatives, anti-racism initiatives, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, sense of belonging, psychological safety, anti-bullying, and metrics of culture. To join, see the Zoom meeting information [here](#). Passcode: 603079

MD Culture Shift Resources

- Access Prevention of Workplace Violence [recorded webinars](#). To register, email: ProvMAProfDevelopment@ahs.ca

Doctor of the Week

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.



This week’s Doctor of the Week is Dr. Jenn D’Mello, Clinical Operations Lead at the Alberta Children’s Hospital (ACH) Emergency Department. Nominated for her outstanding contributions to her patients and her colleagues, Dr. D’Mello provides compassionate care for children and families at ACH, and has made a huge impact through her dedication throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. D’Mello currently serves in both clinical and administrative roles at the ACH.

Clinically, she has worked as both a Pediatric Emergency Medicine and a Child Maltreatment Physician in Calgary for the past 10 years. While each area has its own unique pace and challenges, the work of supporting the health and safety of children is incredibly rewarding.

“In the Pediatric Emergency Department we get to see such a broad variety of patients and empower parents to better understand their child’s illness or injury,” says D’Mello.

“Working in Child Maltreatment allows me to put my knowledge of normal pediatric injuries to good use in determining when things are not normal. It’s a welcome contrast to the fast-paced Emergency Department. Evaluating a child abuse case is slow and methodical. It also brings working with a multidisciplinary team to a whole new level.”

As part of her administrative role as the Clinical Lead in the ACH Emergency Department, Dr. D’Mello assists the Section Chief with many of the day-to-day challenges that exist in a busy Emergency Department with a large group of nearly 60 physicians.

“I was drawn to this role because I enjoy being able to support my group of outstanding colleagues. It can be busy and challenging, but definitely feels worthwhile - especially when my colleagues let me know they appreciate my efforts with things like this Doctor of the Week nomination.”

In her spare time, Dr. D’Mello appreciates life outdoors with her husband and three children.

“I like to keep my life outside of work full of activity and adventure. My family definitely joins me in that with lots of hiking, camping, running, wake surfing and - hopefully soon to resume - travelling.”

From us and the team at Alberta Children’s Hospital, thank you, Dr. D’Mello, for being an inspiration to your colleagues and patients.

New e-Learning Available: Identifying and Managing Violence in the Workplace

The University of Calgary is now offering a new e-Course to help frontline clinicians respond to workplace violence.

PROactive: Identifying and Managing Violence in the Workplace, is a series of self-paced online learning modules. These sessions will provide an opportunity to offer context-appropriate strategies and tools to support physicians, learners, and leaders in creating a respectful environment. [Learn more here.](#)

Highlights from the CEO All Staff Update

COVID-19 Case Status in Alberta

ICU capacity update

AHS continues to do all it can to ensure we have enough ICU capacity to meet patient demand, including opening additional spaces and redeploying staff and physicians.

As of 2:15 p.m. today (Oct. 15), we have 376 ICU beds open in Alberta, including 203 additional spaces (a 117 per cent increase over our baseline of 173).

There are currently 287 patients in ICU, the vast majority of whom are COVID-19 positive. While the number of patients in ICU fluctuates constantly, the number of patients in ICU has decreased by 1.3 per cent over the past seven days.

Provincially, ICU capacity (including additional surge beds) is currently at 76 per cent. Without the additional surge spaces, provincial ICU capacity would be at 163 per cent.

The following are numbers of ICU beds we currently have in each zone:

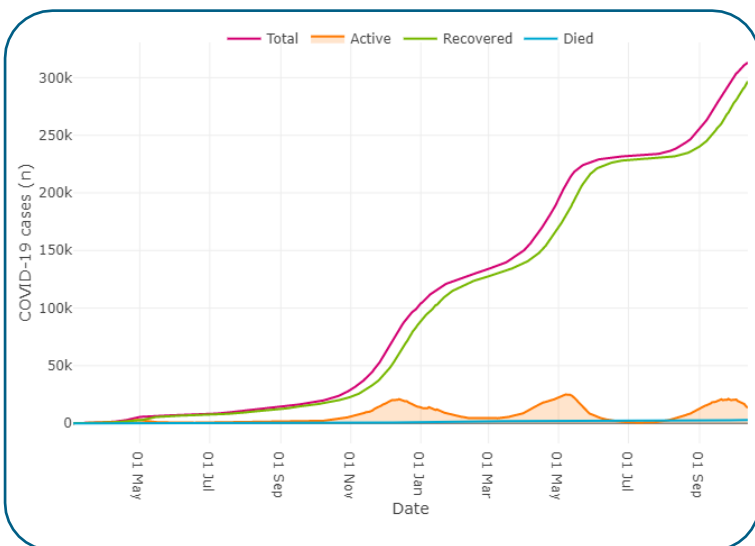
- Calgary Zone: 138 ICU beds, including 72 additional spaces. Calgary Zone ICU is operating at 78 per cent of current capacity.
- Edmonton Zone: 159 ICU beds, including 87 additional spaces. Edmonton Zone is operating at 77 per cent of current capacity.
- Central Zone: 24 ICU beds, including 12 additional spaces. Central Zone ICU is operating at 54 per cent of current capacity.
- South Zone: 36 ICU beds, including 19 additional ICU spaces. South Zone ICU is currently operating at 72 per cent capacity.
- North Zone: 19 ICU spaces (split between Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray), including 13 additional ICU spaces. North Zone is currently operating at 95 per cent capacity.

As of October 13, 2,930 individuals have passed away from COVID-19, including 116 deaths over the past week. We extend our condolences to the families of these individuals, and to all who are grieving today.

New and active cases

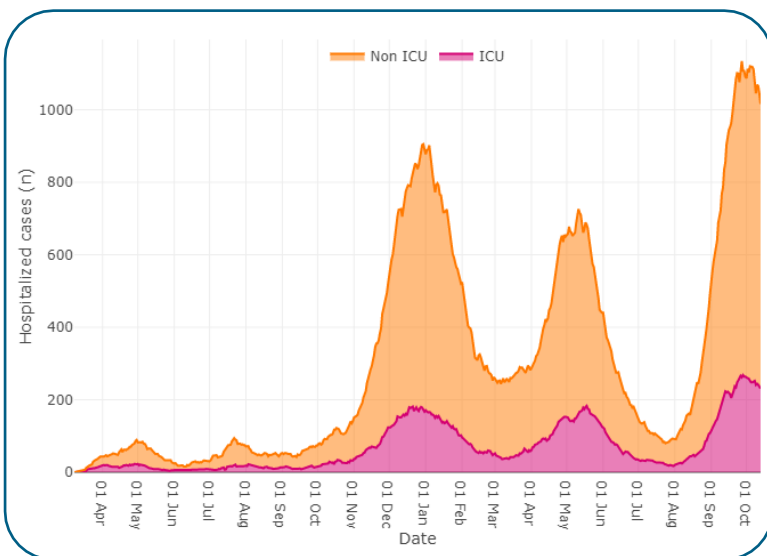
There are currently 12,978 active cases of COVID-19 in Alberta, a 27.3 per cent decrease compared to Oct. 8 when there were 17,839 active cases.

For the seven-day period ending Oct. 6, there was an average of 890 new daily cases of COVID-19, compared to 1,275 for the previous week (Sept 30 – Oct 6), a 29.9 per cent decrease. This week, all zones reported decreases in the number of new cases per day, ranging from a 23.6 per cent decrease in the Edmonton Zone to a 35.8 per cent decrease in the Central Zone. Over the past week, the Calgary Zone reported the highest total number of new cases with 1,584 (an average of 226 cases per day), compared to 2,237 new cases the previous week (an average of 320 cases per day).



Hospitalizations

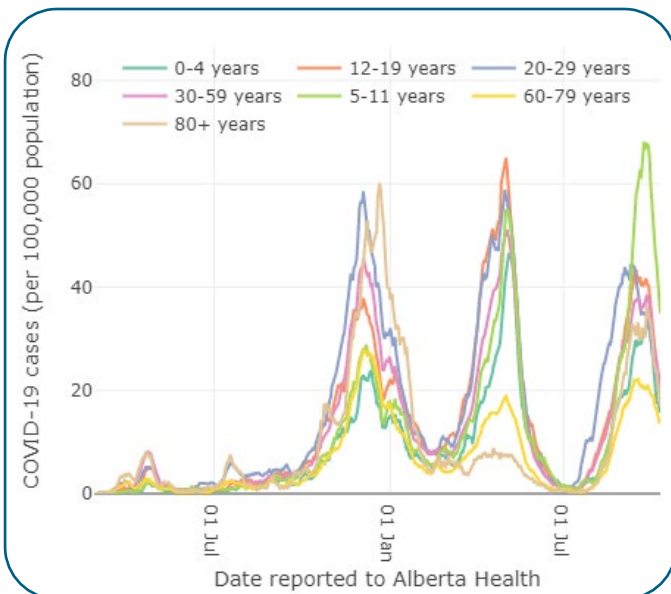
A total of 785 individuals were in non-ICU hospital beds for COVID-19 on Oct. 13, compared to 870 individuals in non-ICU hospital beds on Oct. 6, a 9.8 per cent decrease.



Cases by age group

As of Oct.10, children ages five to 11 – who are currently ineligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine – had the highest seven-day rolling average of new daily COVID-19 cases, with 34.86 cases per 100,000 children. Albertans ages 30 to 59 had the second-highest rate with 21 cases per 100,000 people.

All age groups reported a decreased rate of COVID-19 cases compared to the previous report. Trends in cases in Alberta by age group can be seen in the figure below.



Variants of concern

The lab is still utilizing targeted screening of positive samples for strain-typing. From Oct. 5 to Oct. 11, the average percent of positive samples that were strain-typed was 52 per cent. Of those strain-typed, the rolling average was 99.8 per cent Delta variant. The remaining 0.2 per cent were a wild variant. Strain-typing takes a number of days and these numbers may change as lab data becomes available.

Other notable COVID-19-related information:

As of Oct. 13:

- A total of 313,201 cases of COVID-19 have been detected in Alberta and a total of 13,705 individuals have ever been hospitalized, which amounts to 4.4 individuals for every 100 cases. In all, 296,848 Albertans have recovered from COVID-19.
- A total of 5,704,121 tests have been conducted and 2,476,074 individuals have ever been tested. From Oct. 7 to Oct. 13, 76,808 COVID-19 tests were completed, an average of 10,973 tests per day. During this period, the daily positivity ranged from 7.47 per cent to 9.14 per cent.
- [Public reporting](#) of COVID-19 cases in schools continues, which includes the name of each school with at least two COVID-19 cases.

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 R value is updated every two weeks. From Sept. 27 to Oct. 3, the provincewide R value was 0.92 and the previously reported value was 1.04. There was no update for this week.

App to Scan COVID-19 Vaccine QR Codes Now Available

On [Oct. 12](#), the Government of Alberta launched the free AB Covid Records Verifier app for businesses and organizations to use to confirm their patrons' immunization status. The app is available for download on Apple and Android devices.

Albertans can get their enhanced vaccine record with a QR code online at alberta.ca/CovidRecords without creating an account. They will need to enter their personal health number, date of birth and month and year they received one of their COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Albertans can also request a printed proof of immunization with a QR code from a local registry agent office or by calling 811. Other forms of proof of immunization will continue to be accepted until Nov. 15, including paper records from vaccine providers or a screenshot, or a printed record from alberta.ca/CovidRecords or MyHealthRecords.

Reminder: Additional COVID-19 Vaccine Doses Available for Eligible Populations

Last week, eligibility for third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine was expanded to include Albertans age 75 and older (born in 1946 or before) and First Nations, Inuit and Métis people age 65 and older (born in 1956 or before). Third doses can be administered starting six months after the second dose.

Third doses continue to be available for seniors living in congregate care, for immunocompromised individuals 12 years of age and older with specific conditions, and for travellers going to jurisdictions where Covishield/AstraZeneca or mixed doses are not recognized.

Appointments can be booked [online](#) at AHS clinics, participating pharmacies and physician clinics, or by calling Health Link at 811. COVID-19 vaccines are also available by walk-in at [participating clinics](#) and pharmacies. Individuals aged 65 and older who live on a First Nations reserve can access third doses through local public health clinics on-reserve.

Those deemed ineligible due to age, or six months have not yet passed since receiving their second dose, are asked to re-book when eligible. For more information, go to alberta.ca/vaccine.

GET FULLY PROTECTED.
You need both **INFLUENZA** and **COVID-19 VACCINES**.
Don't have your COVID-19 vaccine?
It's safe to get it together with your influenza vaccine.

ahs.ca/vaccine | call 811

Alberta Government | Alberta Health Services

Influenza Immunization Appointments Available Starting Monday

Alberta's public influenza immunization campaign begins Monday, October 18, offering influenza vaccine, free of charge, to all Albertans six months of age and older.

More than 19 months into the pandemic response, we need to keep working together to protect each other, our loved ones and our communities by rolling up our sleeves again this year to get immunized against influenza. By keeping the number of influenza cases and outbreaks low, we can help protect at-risk Albertans and reduce the pressure on our healthcare system.

Like last year, AHS is working with community pharmacists and physicians to offer influenza immunization to all Albertans.

AHS public health clinics are offering immunization to those under five years of age and their immediate families or household members. Appointments are required at AHS clinics. Albertans five years of age and older can get immunized at participating pharmacies and doctor's offices.

Online booking for appointments at AHS clinics and participating pharmacies is available through the province's centralized vaccine booking tool at bookvaccine.alberta.ca. If appointments are not available online in your area, we encourage Albertans to contact their local pharmacy or doctor's office directly.

Appointments start October 18.

Individuals who do not have a provincial health care number, who live in a community where there are no other immunizing healthcare providers aside from AHS, or who need help booking one or multiple appointments for children and family members, can call Health Link at 811 to book an appointment.

This year, Albertans eligible for their COVID-19 vaccine, will be able to get it at the same time as their influenza vaccine at participating pharmacies, doctor's offices and AHS clinics.

For more information on immunization options and booking, for both COVID-19 and influenza go to ahs.ca/vaccine.

Medical staff, physicians and volunteers can also choose to be immunized through a site champion at their facility, a roving cart at their site or a Workplace Health and Safety drop-in clinic. See [Insite](#) for more on the staff immunization campaign.

Influenza is serious and immunization works. Book your flu shot today.

[Verna's Weekly Video Message: Spotlight on Respiratory Therapists](#)

We often hear about the role our doctors and nurses play in caring for COVID-19 patients. One group you might not hear as much about, but is just as vital, is our team of more than 1,400 skilled respiratory therapists from across the province.

Our respiratory therapists work in operating rooms as anesthesia assistants; perform pulmonary function testing; and work in home care, acute care, health promotion, and diagnostic imaging. They are critical parts of the care team, monitoring and caring for patients with breathing problems, which often goes hand-in-hand with a COVID diagnosis.

They help manage airways in patients, maintain life support equipment such as ventilators, insert and maintain artificial airways, teach patients how to use breathing devices, and so much more.

Joining Verna [to tell us more about their role](#) are:

- Roberta Dubois, Practice Director, Provincial Respiratory Therapy, Health Professions Strategy & Practice
- Nancy Van Der Velden, Registered Respiratory Therapist, Peter Lougheed Hospital
- Karrie Whalen, Interim Professional Practice Lead and Registered Respiratory Therapist at the University of Alberta Hospital and Royal Alexandra Hospital

Beyond COVID-19

[Virtual Take Our Kids to Work Day Event on Nov. 3](#)

Take Our Kids to Work Day is an annual program created by [Learning Partnership](#) that traditionally gives Grade 9 students a one-day opportunity to observe their parent or an approved AHS employee, or physician with privileges, host in the workplace.

This year, AHS will be hosting a virtual career exploration event on Wednesday, Nov. 3, to keep students, patients and staff safe. The event will feature speakers from across AHS to help students understand the range of professions needed to deliver healthcare to Albertans.

The online event will also have the added benefit of bringing students and staff together provincially, offering students an opportunity to hear different perspectives on healthcare from other parts of the province.

The event will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with a break for lunch. Students can [register](#) online by Nov. 2. More information can be found on [Insite](#).

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.
- Additional updates and information are being shared through the [College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta \(CPSA\)](#).

This update 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.

Dr. Francois Belanger

Chief Medical Officer and Vice President, Quality

Dr. Laura McDougall
Senior Medical Officer of Health

