

CMO SMOH Notice for AHS Medical Staff

March 25, 2022

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.

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[AHS Supports for Ukraine](#)

As the crisis in Ukraine continues, we want Albertans to remain informed about what steps AHS is taking and what resources are available to them. We have developed two new pages on AHS Supports for Ukraine: an [Insite page](#) with resources for physicians and staff and an [AHS website page](#) with resources for Albertans. We encourage you to check the Insite page frequently, as it will be updated with resources as they become available.

We also want to thank everyone for reaching out with offers of [support](#), supplies and volunteering. We anticipate many evacuees arriving in our province will not have English as their first language. We want to ensure we can communicate as effectively as possible and provide first-hand support wherever we can. We are currently seeking staff who speak Ukrainian and or Russian so we can ask these individuals to help if and when necessary. Although we do not know exactly what kind of help we will be looking for, we want to be prepared. If you are fluent in Ukrainian and/or Russian language, please email Ukraine.Inquiries@ahs.ca. All volunteers will be asked to participate in a 30-minute training and/or certification exercise prior to being deployed, if and when needed.

No evacuee who arrives in Alberta will be denied healthcare. We will care for everyone who arrives in our province and we will do everything we can to ensure their care is culturally appropriate and

accessible. Some evacuees have already arrived in Alberta and we are expecting hundreds more over the coming weeks. Should any evacuee require health services from AHS, healthcare facilities and providers are asked not to turn away any requests for care and to respond as needed.

AHS is working with Alberta Health to establish official processes around how we can continue to support those in need. In the meantime, we encourage you to visit the Government of Canada [website](#) that provides information about how you can help during a disaster abroad.

We know the situation in Ukraine is having an emotional impact on many people. We want to remind everyone to practise self-care and to use the [resources and supports](#) in place to help manage grief, stress and anxiety during this difficult time.

If you have questions or concerns, please email Ukraine.Inquiries@ahs.ca

Support for Physicians

Physician Wellness



The [Physician & Family Support Program \(PFSP\)](#) continues to offer services on an individual basis that you can access by calling the assistance line at 1-877-767-4637.

The **PFSP** is also offering **small group support sessions** with a qualified therapist. A group would consist of six to 12 physicians (e.g., from the same team or department). Sessions could be virtual or in-person. Physician leaders interested in this option for their teams should call the PFSP assistance line at 1-877-767-4637 for further discussion.

Some additional resources:

- [Moral Distress](#) (Insite login required), AHS Change the Conversation resource
- [The Long Shadow of Covid](#), Well Doc Alberta
- [The Repair of Moral Injury](#), Cleveringa Dallaire [Critical Conversation Series](#)
- [Covid-19 and Moral Distress](#), Canadian Medical Association
- [Pandemic Wellness Toolkit](#), Canadian Medical Association

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. Please provide the nominee's full name and email address.



This week's Doctor of the Week is Janet Tapper.

Dr. Tapper is a Psychiatrist in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation. She works with people of all ages who have injuries or disabilities to address their medical and rehabilitation needs, and to assist them in identifying opportunities to improve their function and quality of life. Her practice is primarily community-based; she works out of the Elbow River Healing Lodge, the Alex Community Health Centre and the Sheldon Chumir Young Adult Neurorehabilitation Clinic.

"A lot of my work is with underserved communities. Access to good healthcare is limited for many reasons including their health conditions and related disability, where they live, a history of trauma or mental health difficulties, cultural barriers, or other socioeconomic circumstances. I am motivated to help to bridge that inequity in service provision."

Dr. Tapper chose a career in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation as a way to combine her love of science and problem solving with a desire to work with people.

"I love that rehabilitation medicine is inter disciplinary and can be holistic and person-centred."

Outside of work, Dr. Tapper and her family enjoy spending the weekends skiing. She volunteers with the Canadian Adaptive Snowsports Association program, her teenage daughters are in the Freestyle Club and her husband is training their German Shepherd to skijor with a kick sled.

From us and your teams, thank you, Dr. Tapper, for being an inspiration to your colleagues and patients.

Highlights from the CEO All Staff Update

Note: Recognizing some medical staff use an alternate email address instead of an AHS email address, this section is included to ensure all AHS medical staff have all up-to-date organizational information that pertains to the pandemic and AHS medical staff practices.

COVID-19 Case Status in Alberta

ICU Update

As of noon today (March 25), AHS has 220 general adult ICU beds open in Alberta, including 47 additional spaces above our baseline of 173 general adult ICU beds. There are currently 156 patients in ICU. Provincially, ICU capacity (including additional surge beds) is currently at 71 per cent, slightly up from 70 per cent a week ago when there were nine more surge beds. Without the additional surge spaces, provincial ICU capacity would be at 90 per cent, down from 93 per cent a week ago.

New Cases

For the seven-day period ending on March 21, there was an average of 524 new cases of COVID-19 per day, compared to 490 cases per day the previous reporting period (March 8 to March 14), a 6.9 per cent increase. The Calgary Zone reported the highest total number of new cases with 1,454 (an average of 208 new cases per day). Three of five zones reported an increase in the number of new cases this reporting period, compared to the previous week as you can see in the table below.

| Zone | New Cases (March 15-21) | New Cases (March 8-14) | Percent Change |
|----------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Calgary | 1,454 | 1,190 | +22.2% |
| Edmonton | 1,120 | 1,043 | +7.4% |

| | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|---------|
| North | 297 | 388 | -23.5% |
| Central | 417 | 488 | -14.5% |
| South | 353 | 317 | +11.4% |
| Unknown | 25 | 6 | +316.7% |
| Total | 3,666 | 3,432 | +6.8% |

Please note: We know these data underestimate the number of people with COVID-19 across the province, and changes in testing eligibility make it difficult to compare cases week over week. Also note Alberta Health has stopped reporting the number of active COVID-19 cases.

Hospitalizations

On March 21, 900 individuals were in non-ICU hospital beds for COVID-19, compared to 955 on March 14, a 5.8 per cent decrease.

Variants of Concern

Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) continues to closely monitor SARS-CoV-2 variants. From March 15-21, an average of 73 per cent of positive samples were strain-typed. Of those, the seven-day rolling average was 61 per cent Omicron BA.2 lineage, 38 per cent Omicron BA.1, and the remaining one per cent are presumptive variants. The BA.2 sub-lineage is now the predominant strain. While viral recombinants between Omicron and Delta have been reported in several cases globally, no recombinant SARS-CoV-2 viruses have been detected in Alberta through our ongoing genomic sequencing.

Other notable COVID-19-related information:

- Data from the last seven days indicate that 39.4 per cent of new admissions to non-ICU spaces are due to COVID-19 infection directly, 32.9 per cent had COVID-19 as a contributing cause and 27.7 per cent are cases where the infection was not determined to be a cause of admission, or where it was not possible to determine. For ICU, the percentage of new admissions due to COVID-19 directly was 45.0 per cent; 25.0 per cent had COVID-19 as a contributing cause and 30.0 per cent were incidental infections or unclear.
- As of March 21, 4,044 individuals have passed away from COVID-19, including 25 since the last report. We extend our condolences to the families of these individuals, and to all who have lost loved ones from any cause during this time.
- As of March 21, 536,166 cases of COVID-19 have been detected in Alberta and 22,149 individuals have been hospitalized, which amounts to 4.1 individuals for every 100 cases.
- From March 15-21, 17,171 COVID-19 tests were completed, a seven-day average of 2,453 tests per day. During this period, the daily positivity ranged from 18.3 per cent to 27.1 per cent.

[COVID-19 Updates and New Information You Need to Know](#)

Reminder about continuous masking, other guidance

Moving in to the upcoming spring break, and as we navigate the next phase of the pandemic, AHS must continue to ensure those seeking, receiving or providing care in all AHS facilities can continue to do so in a safe manner. Patients seeking or receiving care — including those accessing community sites, such as laboratories — are more vulnerable to severe outcomes from COVID-19 than the general population. Masking is an additional safeguard to protect both patients and healthcare workers.

All designated family/support persons and visitors are still required to wear a mask while attending an AHS, APL or Covenant Health facility. In some settings — including APL, ambulatory care or the emergency department — patients will also be asked to mask to ensure their safety, as well as the safety of others around them. Patients admitted to acute care units are asked to mask when they are outside of their rooms.

In addition to masking, all AHS and Covenant sites will continue to require visitors to perform hand hygiene and symptom screening upon entry, and maintain physical distance while onsite.

Reminder about physical distancing

We ask all physicians, staff, volunteers, designated family/support persons and visitors to continue to maintain physical distancing while at an AHS, APL or Covenant site. This includes both patient care areas and common spaces, including the cafeteria, staff rooms, in waiting areas, and when meeting with colleagues.

We encourage physicians and staff to continue to meet virtually whenever possible. If meeting in person at a site is the only option, in addition to maintaining two metres between attendees, we ask that all individuals mask continuously, perform hand hygiene and follow fit for work screening when attending a site.

COVID-19 testing for healthcare workers — the latest numbers

We continue to update the testing data for healthcare workers. 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. The testing data does not include rapid antigen test results for healthcare workers.

As of March 22:

- 93,725 employees (AHS and APL combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and, of those tested, 23,894 (or 25.49 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 9,943 employees who have tested positive and whose source of infection has been determined, 771 (or 7.75 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure. An additional 14,649 employees who have tested positive are still under investigation as to the source of infection.
- 6,553 physicians (AHS and APL combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and, of those tested, 1,118 (or 17.06 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 408 physicians who have tested positive and whose source of infection has been determined, 27 (or 6.62 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure. An additional 726 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](#).

Join the President's Speaker Series on April 4 – Impact on the Economy

You're invited to join an online discussion on COVID-19's impact on the economy at the [President's Speaker Series](#) on April 4 from noon to 1 p.m.

COVID-19 has caused a significant drain on government and business revenues, and there will likely be lasting implications on public sector finances in Alberta and Canada, and the global economy. Healthcare is not immune to these implications, and we must consider the future impact.

Our keynote speaker is [Pedro Antunes](#), Chief Economist and primary spokesperson at The Conference Board of Canada. In his presentation, Antunes will discuss the lasting impacts of the pandemic on Alberta's healthcare system, both in terms of demand for services and how COVID-19 has affected the province's healthcare workforce.

[Register here](#). Questions? Email PSS@ahs.ca.

COVID-19 Immunization Update

Novavax allocation, eligibility criteria being determined

Following Health Canada's approval of the Novavax Nuvaxovid COVID-19 vaccine last month, Alberta Health continues to work to determine vaccine allocation and eligibility criteria within the province. The vaccine product is expected to become available in Alberta in the coming weeks. To learn more about

the vaccine review process, the vaccines currently approved for use in Canada, and the status of vaccines currently under review, visit [Vaccines and treatments for COVID-19: Progress.](#)

Verna's Weekly Video Message: a Conversation with Jitendra Prasad

One of AHS' greatest strengths is our people. From those working behind the scenes to those on the front lines, everyone contributes toward our goal of providing safe, quality care to all Albertans.

Jitendra Prasad (or JP, as most call him), our Chief Program Officer for Contracting, Procurement and Supply Management is one of those people. The work of JP and his team has led to AHS developing one of the top health supply chain management programs in the world. This has been instrumental during the pandemic, most especially when it comes to procuring the PPE that keeps our people safe.

Unfortunately for us, after more than 35 years in healthcare JP is leaving us for a well-deserved retirement next month. With that in mind, Verna invited him on the vlog to [talk about his career in CPSM and what might lie ahead for the industry.](#)

Beyond COVID-19

MD Culture Shift

Check out our latest edition of our newsletter [MD Culture Shift March 2022](#)

MD Culture Shift Community of Practice (COP):

We are pleased to resume the MD Culture Shift Community of Practice and bring together Alberta physicians interested in advancing wellness and diversity. Our monthly sessions invite physicians to join a community to share ideas and experiences, celebrate successes, and foster learnings through collective knowledge and wisdom. Join us on March 30 to review an article and engage in dialogue about physician wellness – where are we now and where are we going. Shanafelt, TD. [Physician Well-being 2.0: Where Are We and Where Are We Going?](#) 2021. Mayo Clinic Proceedings. 96(10):2682-2693.

Who: AHS physician leaders, wellness and diversity champions, any physician interested in wellness and diversity

When: Weds, March 30 from 8-9 a.m.

Where: Virtual/Zoom [Register for MD Culture Shift COP](#)

Physician Leader Healing Group

A new facilitated peer-support group for physician leaders, the Trauma-informed Leadership Healing Group, will be offered virtually to AHS physician leaders who self-identify as having experienced trauma and diversity struggles within their workplace settings, to support their healing and enhance their effectiveness as leaders.

Objectives for participants:

1. To experience a facilitated space to share experiences of trauma and/or diversity struggles and receive support
2. To gain knowledge and skills that promote personal growth
3. To gain knowledge and skills that can be applied to members of teams

When: Thurs, Apr 14 7–8:30 p.m., recurring every two weeks for six sessions

Registration link: [Physician Healing Group Registration](#). Register early, as there is a maximum of 20 participants allowed.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Co-facilitators:

Dr. Irina Mihaescu, Psychiatrist & Trauma-Informed leadership trainer

Dr. Ghazala Radwi, Hematologist & Trauma-informed leadership trainer

AHS Representative:

Dr. Kim Kelly, Wellness, Diversity and Development Portfolio & Trauma-informed leadership trainer

Trauma-Informed Leadership 3 hour workshops

Trauma-Informed Leadership brings recognition to the collective trauma of the pandemic and other work associated trauma impacting physician well-being. Learn the principles of trauma-informed leadership to enhance your skills as a compassionate leader.

Upcoming offerings:

- May 5, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- May 11, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

To register, email: jodi.ploquin@ahs.ca

Equity in Medicine Conference

Equity in Medicine's [second annual virtual conference](#) is now open for registration! Grow your EDI (equity, diversity & inclusion) competencies and learn more about the multiple actions necessary to advance EDI in our healthcare environments. Open to physicians, non-physicians, medical students and residents with access to the recording for six months. CME accreditation in-progress.

Doing Health Differently: Registration Opens for 2022 CMA Health Summit Series

Join the Canadian Medical Association at the 2022 CMA Health Summit Series to discuss how to do healthcare differently in Canada during COVID-19 and beyond. Visit their [website](#) for more information.

Reminder: Call to Submit Abstracts for the Preventing Overdiagnosis Conference

The Preventing Overdiagnosis conference, an international partnership between The British Medical Journal (BMJ) and the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine at the University of Oxford (UK), The Dartmouth institute (US), and Wisser Healthcare (Australia), is being hosted by the University of Calgary on **June 9-12**.

They are [accepting abstracts and session proposals](#) covering the following themes:

- Equity & Equality: disparities, marginalized populations, and conflicts of interest driving inequity
- Sustainability and lessons learned from COVID-19: repurposing healthcare during a pandemic
- Medicalizing citizens: challenges associated with screening, disease thresholds, industry influences, the role of media
- The role of specialists in generating Overdiagnosis and their efforts to mitigate it
- Clinical Practice: Other dimensions of Overdiagnosis, overtesting and attendant harms of too much medicine

[Call for Abstracts](#) closes March 31.

Note: As BMJ is a founding partner, abstracts are published in the [BMJ Evidence Based Medicine](#).

They are also offering the [Lisa M Schwartz Scholarship](#) for people at early stages of their careers providing awardees with funding toward travel and accommodation and the opportunity to present at the conference. Submissions (made through the [abstracts portal](#)) should address an issue of relevance to Dr Schwartz's work, values, and her career as champion in the communication of risk.

Registration open – Early Bird Closes April 30.

Eleventh Annual Family Physicians and Cancer Care: Strengthening Linkages Workshop

The Annual Family Physicians and Cancer Care: Strengthening Linkages Workshop will be held virtually on April 23.

The workshop brings together family physicians, health professionals and oncology specialists to discuss cancer-related topics. The purpose of the workshop is to provide family physicians and health professionals the opportunity to build linkages between oncology and primary care communities of practice. It is our goal to improve the integration of care by promoting knowledge exchange and relationship building.

All physicians in Alberta are welcome. Registration is required prior to April 18.

More information can be found on the website: [Strengthening Linkages Workshop](#).

Survey for Knowledge, Experience and Attitudes towards Pharmacogenomics among Healthcare Professionals in Alberta Hospitals

You are invited to participate in a [web-based survey](#) regarding your knowledge, experience, and attitudes towards pharmacogenomics (genotype-guided prescribing). The survey will take approximately 15 minutes.

Cumming School of Medicine Appoints New Dean

Dr. Todd Anderson has been appointed dean, Cumming School of Medicine (CSM) for a renewable term of five years, effective July 1, 2022.

Currently, Dr. Anderson is a full professor of medicine in the department of cardiac sciences and the vice-dean for the Cumming School of Medicine. As an academic clinician with more than 25 years of practice, he brings a valuable patient-centred perspective and a deep understanding of important relationships between CSM, AHS and Alberta Health.

He will strive to ensure CSM generates knowledge with impact, that it creates innovative educational opportunities that are class-leading, informs optimal care delivery with AHS to provide the best care in the country, is socially accountable to the communities served, is an engine for a diversified economy, is proud of its diversity, equity and inclusion and wellness culture, and is a place where people want to work with a sense of belonging.

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](#)
- [MD News Digest](#)
- [Online Healthcare Worker Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Physician & Family Support Program](#) - 1-877-SOS-4MDS (767-4637)

- [Physician Wellness Educational Resources: Well Doc Alberta](#)
- [Sotrovimab Easy Reference Guide](#)
- [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 know a physician or team who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic, that you would like to see covered in an upcoming edition?

Let us know at CMO@ahs.ca.

Dr. Rollie Nichol on behalf of Dr. Francois Belanger
Associate Chief Medical Officer

