

Health Action Plan

Status Report

Sept. 29, 2008

3 6 9

The Alberta government announced a plan on April 16 to take action on a wide range of initiatives aimed at making the province's health care system more efficient and effective. The following is a status report on immediate, three-month and six-month initiatives.

Status indicators: ↗ **In Progress** ✓ **Completed** ⌚ **Revised timeline**

IMMEDIATE INITIATIVES

For more details on immediate initiatives, please refer to the [June 20th Health Action Plan Status Report](http://www.health.alberta.ca) (www.health.alberta.ca)

Governance and Accountability

✓ **Completed**

Implement mandatory accreditation for all health authorities, facilities and programs

Accreditation is now required through a directive and a process to verify accreditation status is underway.

↗ **In Progress**

Monitor and report on compliance with province-wide infection prevention and control standards

Monitoring for compliance began in April. Regional plans to monitor compliance with all the standards are being developed.

↗ **In Progress**

Monitor compliance with the Continuing Care Health Service Standards

Compliance audits of all regions have begun and will be completed by April 1, 2009. A province-wide incident reporting system has been implemented. Revised Continuing Care Health Service Standards have been released.

Health Workforce

↗ **In Progress**

Address workforce-related issues and support for continuing care

Many of the initiatives aimed at improving Alberta's health workforce situation will impact continuing care. Strategies targeted at this particular sector are also being explored.

✓ **Completed**

Work with Advanced Education and Technology to create new education seats for physicians, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and other health professionals

Funding for new education seats for physicians, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses was announced August 27.

✓ **Completed**

Open Health Career Centres in Edmonton and Calgary

Edmonton's Bredin Institute Centre for Skilled and Internationally Trained Professionals in Edmonton and Calgary's Directions for Internationally Educated Health Professionals at Bow Valley College are now open and providing services and support. Recruitment initiatives to attract health care providers to Alberta continue.

↗ **In Progress**

Work with Alberta Education and Advanced Education and Technology to promote health careers for high school students

Alberta Health and Wellness continues to collaborate with Alberta Education and Advanced Education and Technology to promote health careers for high school students. One of the options being explored is a dual certificate pilot for high school students to become health care aides.

Improving Access

↗ In Progress

Implement a virtual campus and rural mentoring for medical students

The University of Calgary and the University of Alberta are developing the proposal for continuation of the Integrated Clinical Clerkship program which provides 8-month rural rotations for medical students which forms the basis for virtual campus and rural mentoring.

↗ In Progress

Implement a patient navigator system

Patient navigators are present in several areas of the health system, including cardiac care and breast cancer care. Work continues to implement patient navigators in other areas and to create an integrated provincial patient navigator system.

🕒 Revised timeline

Continue to expand the role of pharmacists in preventing disease and managing chronic diseases, particularly in rural communities

Alberta Health and Wellness has established a grant with the Alberta Pharmacists Association and is anticipating a report in the fall of 2009 with implementation strategies for the following year.

Healthy and Safe Communities

↗ In Progress

Parliamentary Assistant for Alberta Health and Wellness to lead strategies to promote healthy living, disease prevention and safe communities

Please refer to three-month and six-month updates under Healthy and Safe Communities.

THREE-MONTH ACTION ITEMS

For more details on three-month initiatives please refer to the [June 20th Health Action Plan Status Report](#)

Governance and Accountability

- ✓ **Completed** (transition and implementation underway)
Establish a new health system governance model with a focus on accountability, performance measures and capital planning
A new provincial governance board was announced on May 15.
- ✓ **Completed**
Perform regular service delivery reviews to increase efficiency and improve capital planning
A provincial service review on health services, system and infrastructure capacity and human resources has been completed. A report has been delivered to Alberta Health and Wellness for consideration.
- ✓ **Completed** (transition and implementation underway)
Announce a governance and funding model for ground emergency medical services
A health system-funded ambulance service was announced May 29. Government will assume full responsibility for ambulance services by April 1, 2009.
- ✓ **Completed**
Develop a plan to register all Albertans in the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan to coincide with the plan to eliminate health care premiums
Health care premiums will be eliminated by January 2009. Albertans will continue to be required to register for publicly-funded health care under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan.

Health Workforce

- ↗ **In Progress**
Implement a virtual campus and rural mentoring for medical students
The University of Calgary and the University of Alberta are developing the proposal for continuation of the Integrated Clinical Clerkship program which provides 8-month rural rotations for medical students which forms the basis for virtual campus and rural mentoring.

- ✓ **Completed**
Announce additional seats for respiratory therapists and medical laboratory technologists
Funding for new education seats for physicians, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and other health professionals, including medical laboratory technologists was announced August 27.
- ↗ **In Progress**
Implement actions to recruit more foreign-trained health professionals and work with other provinces on a recruitment strategy for western Canada
The Western Ministers of Health are discussing a recruitment strategy for Western Canada.

Improving Access

- ✓ **Completed**
Improve co-ordination and access to cancer services in acute and community settings including looking at ways to provide chemotherapy at home
On June 25 Alberta Health and Wellness announced \$33.7 million and held the sod-turning ceremony for the Lethbridge Cancer Radiation Therapy Centre, which forms part of the Cancer Radiation Therapy Corridor.
- ↗ **In Progress**
Set targets to improve access to primary health care
Alberta Health and Wellness is working on finalizing a Provincial Primary Healthcare Policy Framework and a Primary Care Network Evaluation.
- ↗ **In Progress**
Expand facility space and community care services for seniors
On September 19 work began on Garrison Green, a 200-bed long-term care centre. This is one project supported by \$600 million to increase long-term care beds announced on January 29, 2008. Facility space and community care will also be addressed in the continuing care strategy that is being developed.

Sustainability

↗ In Progress

Establish a bulk-buy policy for equipment, drugs and supplies to be implemented province-wide and develop a strategy for all western provinces

Alberta Health and Wellness is working with the Alberta Health Services Board to develop a procurement strategy and implementation plan by the spring of 2009.

Healthy and Safe Communities

↗ In Progress

Release new nutrition guidelines for children and youth and launch a new phase of the Create a Movement campaign www.createamovement.ca

Nutrition guidelines for children and youth were released on June 3. A new phase of Create a Movement will be launched on September 30.

✓ Completed

Support infection prevention and control by implementing a blood-borne pathogen strategy

The Blood Borne Pathogens and Sexually Transmitted Infections Action Plan was released in June and a province-wide HPV vaccine program is underway.

✓ Completed

Expand cancer screening and awareness programs

The Tour for the Cure, an interactive educational exhibit to expand awareness of cancer prevention and screening was launched in May and has just completed its tour of the province.

✓ Completed

Launch the Children's Mental Health Plan

A three-year, \$50 million action plan was announced August 29 to increase access to children's mental health services and address the mental health needs of children and youth at risk.

SIX-MONTH ACTION ITEMS

Governance and Accountability

↗ In Progress

Report on the implementation progress of the new provincial governance model.

On July 8, the interim board and chair announced a restructuring plan and appointments to executive positions. Permanent board members are expected to be appointed by November.

Health Workforce

🕒 Revised timeline

Develop a policy and initiate action to introduce and support the role of physician assistants in the health care system.

The department is working with stakeholders to develop policies and regulations around physician assistants and anticipates having more details to announce in December.

Improving Access

🕒 Revised timeline

Implement a new Alberta pharmaceutical strategy to address the cost of pharmaceuticals and support the effective use of drugs. This will include collaboration with other government ministries.

MLA Jonathan Denis completed broad stakeholder consultations with patient, pharmacist, physician and industry groups and submitted his report in mid-September. Alberta Health and Wellness is reviewing the recommendations from the report.

↗ In Progress

Develop a new continuing care services strategy to address the needs of an aging population and provide more options for home care and community care.

Alberta Health and Wellness is developing a new strategy in collaboration with Alberta Seniors and Community Supports.

↗ In Progress

Develop home telehealth pilot projects to help patients manage their chronic diseases.

Pilot projects for home telehealth are to begin this fall. A pilot project for home chemotherapy is being implemented with the support of home telehealth.

↗ In Progress

Announce the plan to develop a provincial patient portal to allow Albertans to access their health information online.

Alberta Health and Wellness will be developing a patient portal and is currently finalizing a design and implementation strategy.

🕒 Revised timeline

Develop a provincial health services strategy to increase capacity to admit emergency department and elective surgery patients to existing beds, improve access to primary care and improve overall health system efficiency.

The development of access strategies for health services will be informed by the results of the health services reviews which have recently been completed. Further study and analysis is required.

↗ In Progress

Pursue co-ordinated access to services in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

Discussions between the three provinces are on-going.

Healthy and Safe Communities

↗ In Progress

Expand beds for addictions treatment and mental health services.

Twenty beds have been opened in Edmonton (Poundmakers Lodge) and Calgary (Aventa). By next spring an additional 20 addiction beds will be open in two contracted programs (one at Shundra Creek near Nordegg and the other dependent on the call for submissions).

↗ In Progress

Support nutrition and physical activities by implementing the Healthy Kids Alberta strategy.

As part of Healthy Kids Alberta! Alberta Health and Wellness is working on a plan to improve health outcomes for babies and mothers.

✓ **Completed**

Implement public posting of restaurant inspections.

Restaurant inspections have been posted online since July.

↗ **In Progress**

Proclaim the Mental Health Amendment Act and consult on regulations to ensure those requiring treatment receive it.

Regulations have been developed to support the Mental Health Amendment Act. Stakeholder consultation on the regulations has been completed and is currently being reviewed. Proclamation of the new legislation is anticipated in April 2009.

↗ **In Progress**

Work with Alberta industries to address the stigma of mental health illness in the workplace.

An action plan is being developed to address stigma related to mental health issues and addictions in the workplace.

Next status report

The next Health Action Plan status report is scheduled for release in December 2008.