

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 and three-month initiatives.

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

### IMMEDIATE INITIATIVES

#### Governance and Accountability

##### ↗ In Progress

##### **Implement mandatory accreditation for all health authorities, facilities and programs**

A directive to require mandatory accreditation compliance was distributed to all health operators on May 2.

##### ↗ In Progress

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

A department compliance unit has been established. A process to monitor and report on compliance is in development.

##### ↗ In Progress

##### **Monitor compliance with the Continuing Care Health Service Standards**

Alberta Health and Wellness has developed a compliance program for Continuing Care Health Service Standards. A compliance team intends to visit all health regions this year to implement the program, with a target of visiting four health regions over the summer.

#### Health Workforce

##### ↗ In Progress

##### **Address workforce-related issues and support for continuing care**

Many of the other initiatives to improve Alberta's health workforce situation will have an impact on the entire health system, including continuing care. Alberta Health and Wellness is also exploring more targeted options for addressing health workforce issues in this particular area of the health system.

##### ↗ In Progress

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

Alberta Health and Wellness continues to work with Alberta Advanced Education and Technology to create new education seats for physicians, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and other health professionals.

##### ↗ In Progress

##### **Employment and Immigration is opening Health Career Centres in Edmonton and Calgary. These centres will support the efforts of the attraction plan being worked on by Health and Wellness and Employment and Immigration for both internationally educated health care professionals and Albertans wishing to choose a health care career in Alberta.**

Work continues on the goal of opening Health Career Centres in Edmonton and Calgary to assist internationally educated health care professionals and Albertans wishing to choose a health care career in Alberta.

##### ↗ In Progress

##### **Health and Wellness, working with Education and Advanced Education and Technology, will develop a plan to promote health careers for high school students. Career and Technology Studies health care pathways, beginning in 2010, will provide opportunities for high school students to work toward post-secondary certifications in health occupations.**

Alberta Health and Wellness continues to collaborate with Alberta Education and Advanced Education and Technology to provide opportunities for high school students to work toward post-secondary certifications in health occupations.

## Improving Access

### Revised timeline

#### **Implement a virtual campus and rural mentoring for medical students, including support for third-year medical students to complete eight-month rotations in rural Alberta**

Alberta Health and Wellness is working with Alberta Advanced Education on confirming the required education spaces to provide a virtual campus and a rural mentoring strategy for medical students. The number of education spaces for the 2008-2009 academic year will be confirmed before September 2008.

### In Progress

#### **Implement a patient navigator system to help patients with complex health needs navigate the health system and access the right services at the right time**

- Alberta Health and Wellness is establishing the first-ever, system-wide patient navigation system in Canada. The Alberta Patient Navigation System will assist patients with complex needs, who receive services from multiple health professionals and agencies in a variety of service settings.

- By June 30, more than 500 health care providers will have completed education sessions from McMaster University.

- A provincial policy for the Alberta Patient Navigation System is being developed.

### In Progress

#### **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 Pharmacists Association of Alberta to define new clinical practice and reimbursement models for pharmacists.

## 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.**

Details will be provided in each of the three, six and nine-month action items. Please see the three-month section of the status report for updates on recent Healthy and Safe Communities.

### 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**  
On May 15, Minister Ron Liepert announced one provincial governance board will replace Alberta's nine regional health authority boards and the three provincial boards (Alberta Cancer Board, Alberta Mental Health Board, Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission Board). An interim board chair, board members and CEO are working on a transitional governance plan.

#### ↗ In Progress

##### **Perform regular service delivery reviews to increase efficiency and improve capital planning**

A process to conduct a provincial service review is being developed. The review will look at the full range of health services, as well as system capacity, human resources and infrastructure capabilities.

- ✓ **Completed** (transition and implementation underway)  
**Announce a governance and funding model for ground emergency medical services**  
On May 29, Minister Ron Liepert announced ground ambulance services will be transferred from municipalities to the new provincial health authority board effective April 1, 2009.

#### ↗ In Progress

##### **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 effective Jan. 1, 2009. Work continues on a registration system for the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan. More information about registration will be provided to the public this fall.

### Health Workforce

#### ↗ In Progress

##### **Implement a virtual campus and rural mentoring for medical students, including support for third-year medical students to complete eight-month rotations in rural Alberta**

Alberta Health and Wellness is working with Alberta Advanced Education on confirming the required education spaces to provide a virtual campus and a rural mentoring strategy for medical students.

#### ↗ In Progress

##### **Announce additional seats for respiratory therapists and medical laboratory technologists**

Alberta Health and Wellness is working with Alberta Advanced Education on confirming the required education spaces for respiratory therapists and medical laboratory technologists.

#### ↗ In Progress

##### **Implement actions that will improve Alberta's ability to recruit more foreign-trained health professionals as well as work with other provinces on a recruitment strategy for western Canada**

- The College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta is now offering qualified internationally-educated nurses a restricted temporary practice permit which will allow them to work as a graduate nurse in Alberta while they complete competency assessments and additional education before writing the national nursing examination.

- As of June 17, 31 applicants are eligible for the permit.

- The College of Licensed Practical Nurses has developed a conditional register for internationally-educated nurses to practice under supervision while they complete additional training. Approximately 60 nurses are now working in the Capital Health region under this conditional register.

- In 2008-2009, the International Medical Graduate Program will offer up to 50 residency positions for international medical graduates in 21 specialty areas. This is up from 48 positions in 13 specialty areas in 2007-2008.

### Improving Access

#### ↗ In Progress

##### **Improve co-ordination of cancer services with other acute and community care services, and improve access to cancer services including looking at ways to provide chemotherapy at home**

- Advanced chemotherapy is now being offered through nine out of 11 community care centres under the direction of the Alberta Cancer Board. Camrose Community Cancer Centre is the most recent community centre to offer advanced chemotherapy, beginning April 2008.

- Radiation therapy services, which are centralized in Calgary and Edmonton, will be expanded to Lethbridge, Red Deer and Grande Prairie. Construction on the Lethbridge cancer radiation therapy centre will be announced this summer.

## ➤ In Progress

### **Set targets to improve access to primary health care**

A policy framework for primary health care is in development. The focus will be on providing innovative solutions to providing primary health care services, particularly in rural and remote communities and in “boom communities.” An implementation plan will be developed this September based on consultation with stakeholders.

## ➤ In Progress

### **Expand facility space and community care services for seniors**

- On Jan. 29, the province announced \$300 million dollars for 600 new and 200 replacement long-term care beds. Alberta Health and Wellness is working closely with Alberta Seniors and Community Supports to develop other strategies to expand facility space and community care services.

- The Alberta government announced May 28 that it had instructed the new Alberta Health Services Board to make an allocation out of its 2008-2009 budgets to increase funding to long-term care facilities by six per cent this year, or approximately \$55 million. The increase is part of what has already been budgeted to the regions this fiscal year.

## 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**

The policy applies to all health goods and services where it can be demonstrated that common procurement will produce net benefits for the health system. The initial focus will be on capital equipment, drugs and medical and surgical supplies. On June 12, Alberta Health and Wellness issued a request for proposal to attract additional expertise for the development and implementation of the province-wide strategy.

## Healthy and Safe Communities

## ➤ In Progress

### **Support good nutrition and being active by releasing new nutrition guidelines for children and youth and launching a new phase of the Create A Movement campaign ([www.createamovement.ca](http://www.createamovement.ca))**

On June 3, Alberta Health and Wellness released nutrition guidelines for children and youth. The guidelines are the first of their kind, as they are specifically designed to support daycares, schools and recreation facility operators in planning nutritious foods for the children and youth they serve. A new phase of the Create A Movement public awareness campaign will be launched this fall.

## ➤ In Progress

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

- An action plan has been developed and is being implemented to address blood-borne pathogens and sexually transmitted infections.

- On June 12, Alberta Health and Wellness announced that all girls entering Grade 5 will be eligible to receive a vaccine that will prevent Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which causes 70 per cent of cervical cancers.

## ➤ In Progress

### **Expand addiction and mental health services**

Twenty additional addiction treatment beds will be opened by the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission in September. The additional beds will be located in Calgary and Edmonton and will help address the addiction treatment needs of women and aboriginal clients.

## ➤ In Progress

### **Expand cancer screening and awareness programs**

The Tour for the Cure, an interactive educational exhibit, is touring the province over the summer to inform Albertans about breast cancer, including risk reduction and early detection. Strategies are being implemented to expand and improve cancer screening for prostate cancer and breast cancer.

## ➤ In Progress

### **Launch the Children’s Mental Health Plan**

The Alberta Health and Wellness Parliamentary Assistant will be consulting with key stakeholders on the plan prior to its release in July.

## Next status report

The next Health Action Plan status report is scheduled for release on or before Sept. 15, 2008.