

Primary Care Alberta

Frequently Asked Questions

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About Primary Care Alberta

1. What is Primary Care Alberta (PCA)?

- PCA is the new provincial health agency responsible for primary care across the province. It is a made-in-Alberta solution to ensure Albertans can access the primary health services they rely on every day, throughout every stage of life, in every corner of the province.
- PCA is one of four provincial health agencies being established in Alberta to focus on four priority areas: primary care, acute care, continuing care, and mental health and addiction. *See page 5 for more information on the four agencies.*
- Establishing an agency solely focused on primary care aims to create a more responsive and unified health care system that prioritizes patients, empowers front-line health care professionals and gives Albertans improved access to key primary care services.
- Primary care is an essential part of the health system. By improving access to primary care and providing services closer to home, PCA supports healthy Albertans and healthy communities. Improved access to primary care builds individual and community health, helping to ensure that emergency and acute care is available when people need it most.

2. Who is accountable for primary health care in Alberta under the new structure?

- The Government of Alberta's Ministry of Health sets policy and direction to achieve a sustainable, accountable health system.
- PCA is accountable to the Ministry of Health. PCA will work with government and the other health agencies (Recovery Alberta, Acute Care Alberta and Assisted Living Alberta) to ensure the integrated and efficient use of resources.
- PCA oversees the coordination of primary health care services across the province, and through some clinics and programs, directly delivers primary health services.



- To better direct critical resources to the front lines to support workers and improve patient care, Alberta Health will oversee areas such as integration, patient pathways, capital planning, and others that affect all health care service delivery in the province.

3. What is Primary Care Alberta's mandate?

- Primary Care Alberta will work with stakeholders in the primary care community to:
 1. Improve access to timely and appropriate primary care services by ensuring Albertans are attached to a primary care provider.
 2. Enhance the transition for Albertans between primary care and other health services sectors, and health neighbourhoods.
 3. Deliver evidence-based quality primary care services through following best practices and making effective use of resources.
 4. Empower Albertans by providing comprehensive patient navigation services that facilitate access to essential information and resources.
 5. Improve access to culturally safe and patient-centred primary health care services free of racism for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit People in Alberta.
- In reflection of this mandate PCA will work to implement supports to reduce administrative burdens in clinics, support the implementation of Regional Primary Care Networks (RPCNs), and help establish a system where primary care specialists, midwives and other providers are supported to care for and serve Albertans.
- PCA will continue to broaden the services and supports provided to Albertans through Health Link 811 and further develop patient and family navigation tools to ensure Albertans can find the right care, when and where they need it.

4. Will this change the way Albertans access primary care services?

- Not in the short-term. Where or how Albertans access primary health care services will not change. Patients will still go to a family doctor, walk-in clinic or other primary care provider for checkups and help with general health concerns.
- In the long-term, access to care and patient navigation will improve. As part of its mandate, Primary Care Alberta will explore opportunities to increase Albertans' access to primary healthcare providers - including through the expansion of virtual care.

5. How will PCA benefit Albertans and care providers?

- Primary Care Alberta will coordinate all - and deliver some - primary health care services across the province. Over time, the agency will improve access to primary care services, enabling providers to focus on health care delivery in a modern, responsive, and unified health system.
- PCA has been tasked with increasing the number of Albertans attached to a primary care provider who will provide them and their families with high-quality services that support their health needs through every stage of life.



- Primary Care Alberta will focus on achieving key outcomes, including:
 - Ensuring every Albertan who wants to be attached, is attached to a primary care provider team
 - Supporting an integrated team of health professionals to provide comprehensive primary care, that has appropriate access to patient health information
 - Providing timely access to high-quality primary care services, including after-hours, specifically in rural and remote areas in Alberta
 - Improving access to virtual and digital health services
- Additional PCA priorities include:
 - Enabling care models to improve patient experience and health outcomes.
 - Developing models that reduce the burden of chronic disease on patients and the health care system.
 - Enabling physicians to lead their peers through change through engagement and leadership opportunities.
 - Providing tools to primary care providers, such as enhancing the current [Find a Doctor](#) website and e-Referral, to streamline processes for both providers and patients.

6. When will Albertans start to see real change in their primary care?

- It will take time to build capacity in the system. Primary Care Alberta became a legal entity November 18, 2024, and became operational February 1, 2025.
- Change has already started with the implementation of the MAPS recommendations such as:
 - Improving supports for vulnerable Albertans by investing \$30 million into four community health centres
 - Creating a task force with the Alberta Medical Association to provide recommendations on a new payment model for family doctors
 - Establishing the PCN Nurse Practitioner Support Program
 - Standing up an agency dedicated to primary health services (Primary Care Alberta)
- Transformation is ongoing, with efforts underway to improve access to primary care delivery in underserved communities, specifically rural and remote areas.

Dealing with Change

7. Where can I find help dealing with all of the change before us?

- Primary Care Alberta recognizes that our leaders, staff and providers are undergoing a period of significant change.
- While this change is exciting for some, change is also disruptive and challenging.
- If you are struggling to deal with the changes before us, please access the supports available to you through:
 - [Employee & Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) 1-877-273-3134
 - Physician supports
 - [Alberta Medical Association](#)
 - [Canadian Medical Protective Association – physician wellness supports](#)
 - Midwife supports: [Alberta Association of Midwives](#)



8. What are some steps I can take to address hearsay in the workplace in a respectful way?

- Addressing hearsay and other inappropriate conversations can be a challenge, especially during times of significant change.
- In the workplace, hearsay can create awkward interactions and mistrust, decreased productivity, lower morale, and can cause reputational damage and psychological harm.
- Hearsay can give a false sense of connection. We may engage in spreading unverified information to feel included or part of a community.
- Take a moment to recognize when it is happening.
 - Notice the emotion you're feeling and take time before responding.
 - Recognize we may feel the urge to engage in hearsay – resist the temptation.
- In a respectful manner, stop the cycle of hearsay by:
 - Making the decision the story ends with you.
 - Demonstrating through your words and actions that spreading unverified information is not ok.
 - Setting boundaries – let them know you will not engage in the spreading hearsay.
- For more assistance, refer to the links in the question above.

Physicians and Clinics

9. How do primary care health programs, services, physicians and staff fit into PCA?

- Clinics which were previously operated by AHS have been brought into PCA.
- As needed, Primary Care Alberta will establish cooperation agreements with other PHAs and organizations within the health system (i.e. AHS, Covenant Health) to ensure that staff can be shared between sectors and that operations can be maintained.

10. How will PCA work with community-based primary care providers moving forward?

- Primary Care Alberta will not assume ownership or management of existing independent family practices, set compensation for primary care practitioners, or direct physicians on how they organize clinics or provide care.
- Primary Care Alberta will help streamline process and coordinate services so providers can focus on caring for Albertans.
- Primary Care Alberta is committed to ongoing conversations and sharing the latest information, as appropriate, with community-based primary care providers. This includes looking into more consistent and formal ways to work together and ensure all those providing primary health care services to Albertans have the most up to date information moving forward.
- Services and supports provided by PCNs now, and Regional Primary Health Care Networks (RPHCNs) in the future, remain at the heart of how we will ensure Albertans receive the care and supports they need from a primary health care system.
- Alberta Health is creating the governance model and policies which will define the relationship between PCA and Regional Primary Health Care Networks PCA will work with RPHCNs to implement the policies as smoothly as possible.



Health Corridors

11. How do the new health corridors impact Primary Care Alberta?

- Seven integrated health corridors are being established to support seamless patient journeys: North-West, North-East, Edmonton, Central, Calgary, South-West, and South-East. These corridors will replace the previous health zones for planning purposes.
- This change will help Alberta Health gain a better regional understanding of the health system, determine current gaps, inform investments, and ensure decisions reflect the changing needs of Albertans.
- Primary Care Alberta was established to improve primary care access and will assess the needs of patients on a corridor-by-corridor basis.
- Alignment with the new corridors will be an important consideration in the design and implementation of RPHCNs. This work is being led by Alberta Health in consultation with PCNs and other primary care leaders.
- More information can be found here: [Regional health corridors | Alberta.ca](#).



New Healthcare Agencies

Under Alberta's refocused health care system, four fully integrated provincial health agencies have been created to oversee the priority sectors of primary care, acute care, continuing care, and mental health and addiction.

The Government of Alberta has hosted two rounds of province-wide engagement sessions, the first from January to April of 2024 and the second occurring between January and mid-April of 2025, as part of the refocus initiative. More information is available at [Refocusing health care in Alberta](#).

Primary Care Alberta is the provincial health agency responsible for delivering and overseeing the coordination and delivery of primary health care services across the province. PCA is accountable to the Ministry of Health.

- Learn more by visiting PrimaryCareAlberta.ca.

Acute Care Alberta is the provincial health agency responsible for acute care. It became a legal entity on February 1, 2025, and will begin operating in spring 2025. Acute Care Alberta is accountable to the Ministry of Health. It will work closely with acute care providers to speed up access to quality-care and achieve key outcomes including:

- Shorter wait times for emergency departments and surgeries.
- Lower emergency medical services response time.
- Higher-quality care across the province and enhanced access to care in rural areas.
- Learn more by visiting AcuteCareAlberta.ca.

Recovery Alberta is the provincial health agency responsible for recovery-oriented mental health and addiction services and correctional health services. It became operational as of September 1, 2024. Recovery Alberta is accountable to the Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction. Services are available through this provincial health agency. Recovery Alberta is focused on:

- Ensuring every Albertan struggling with the disease of addiction and/or mental health challenges is supported in their pursuit of recovery.
- Providing Albertans with access to a full continuum of recovery-oriented supports that help them improve overall well-being and sustain recovery.
- Improving mental health and addiction care for Albertans by further expanding access to treatment and recovery supports across Alberta.
- Learn more by visiting RecoveryAlberta.ca.

Assisted Living Alberta is the provincial health agency responsible for overseeing a comprehensive system of care and wraparound services, including medical and non-medical supports, home care, community care and social services. It will become a legal entity April 1, 2025, and will be operational in fall 2025. It is accountable to the Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services. Goals include:

- Fair, timely, and consistent access.
- More beds in the places where Albertans need them most.



- Better long-term care for patients through improved access to other health and social service supports.
- Accelerated transformation of care in home and community care settings.
- Support for seniors, people with disabilities and other vulnerable Albertans with comprehensive, wraparound services that meet both their medical and non-medical needs.