

Pillar 5

Evolve



As Albertans' needs continue to rapidly evolve, it's essential that the way the health workforce is deployed also evolves. This will ensure the best possible care is delivered and that providers are enabled to work at their maximum potential in all parts of the province.

Pillar Objectives

5.1

Support and enable innovative, sustainable models of care

5.2

Implement tools and processes to better leverage contingent workers

5.3

Leverage digital tools to increase access to care



Actions to Date

Investments in team-based primary care: As part of the recent agreement with the AMA, Alberta Health is investing \$40 million over two years to provide incremental supports to Primary Care Networks.

Pharmacist-led primary care clinics: In 2022, an Alberta university partnered with a large retail chain to launch a pharmacist walk-in clinic pilot project in Lethbridge that leverages the skills and capacity of community pharmacy teams to improve access to primary care.

New anesthesia models of care: To help address shortages of anesthesiologists in some communities, AHS implemented a new team-based Anesthesia Care Team model.

Care hubs to support team-based care: AHS developed and implemented Care Hubs, which leverage team-based care and innovative clinical processes to support safe patient care and allow for flexibility in staffing to meet patient population needs.

Piloted nurse practitioner locum pool: AHS piloted a locum pool of nurse practitioners across the province as a flexible solution to fill service gaps.

Centralized scheduling for integrated planning: To support connected and integrated workforce planning, AHS is continuing roll-out of a centralized provincial staff scheduling system that offers greater staffing visibility and more flexible scheduling.

New allied health career opportunities: AHS developed a new strategy to support engaging, optimizing and retaining allied health professionals. The strategy highlights opportunities to engage allied health in new career pathways that address changing population health needs as well as supporting retention and workforce flexibility.

Contingent workforce expansion: AHS has taken action to expand its use of contingent workers, including engagement of casual staff that have been inactive for 6-12 months and exploring new opportunities to use regularized relief in local emergency department, intensive care unit, and operating room settings. AHS also continues to collaborate with the Alberta Medical Association to deliver the AMA's physician locum services program.



Future Actions

New approaches to rural and remote care delivery: To help address critical primary care gaps, particularly in rural and remote areas, Alberta Health has developed a proposed funding framework to enable nurse practitioners to work independently in a community practice.

Continued modernization of primary care services: To address primary care access challenges, there is a need for a strategic roadmap that outlines innovative primary care solutions. The Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System initiative's panels of strategic advisors, international experts, and Indigenous leaders will deliver recommendations in spring 2023.

New approaches to surgical staffing: To address a growing surgical backlog and increasing numbers of Albertans waiting beyond clinically-recommended wait times, Alberta established the Alberta Surgical Initiative (ASI). A critical element of achieving the ASI goals will be to utilize the health workforce as effectively as possible.

Additional support for intensive care unit and emergency department staffing needs: AHS will evaluate and implement opportunities to improve staffing by using new staffing models, training programs, and deploying dedicated allied health professional and nurse practitioners to emergency departments.

Expanded support for physician and acute care services: In order to address pressures in the short- and medium-term, AHS will implement new strategies to provide support to physicians, including expanding the use of physician assistants and clinical assistants.

Regulatory support for flexible continuing care staffing models: The Alberta government passed a new, streamlined *Continuing Care Act*. The accompanying continuing care regulations, currently under development, will support and enable more flexible and innovative staffing models in the continuing care sector.

Improved emergency medical services coverage and efficiency: To reduce the burden on critical emergency medical services' workers, Alberta is undertaking a number of operational redesign initiatives to better utilize cross-trained firefighters.

Virtual care billing codes: As part of the new Alberta Medical Association agreement, Alberta Health and the AMA have committed to a review of virtual care billing codes with the goal of increasing the availability of virtual care services for Albertans and more effectively leveraging the in-demand physician workforce.

Improved regulatory support for team-based care: Care delivery is becoming more and more complex. To develop and implement models of care that can sustainably respond to this complexity, it will be important to put in place regulatory approaches that remove barriers to team-based care and support clinical workers in delivering their full scopes of practice. The government will implement amendments to the *Health Professions Act* that will create improved governance and accountability.