



ACA Frequently Asked Questions

About Acute Care Alberta

1. What is Acute Care Alberta?

- ACA is one of the four provincial health agencies in Alberta. Provincial health agencies are designed to focus on four priority areas: acute care, continuing care, mental health and addiction, and primary care.
- Acute care is foundational to a high-performing health care system, providing critical care to Albertans when and where they need it most.
- By bringing together specialized care providers, ACA will oversee fast, efficient and compassionate health care across the province in emergencies, surgeries or specialized treatments.

2. What is the first task at hand for Acute Care Alberta?

- Acute Care Alberta will begin to develop a governance framework for acute care, and work with stakeholders in the acute care community as it begins its work.
- ACA will implement Alberta Health's strategies, allocate funds and set operational standards for healthcare providers by:
 - Fostering strong partnerships with both government and providers.
 - Ensuring system priorities are aligned from the government through the entire system.
 - Directing resources towards priority areas.
 - Prioritizing results and outcomes to improve performance, and making informed data driven decisions.
- ACA will provide oversight to the acute care system; monitor compliance, address performance issues, and ensure effective use of government funds, serving as a link between the government and service providers by:
 - Adopting an execution-driven mindset and driving change across the system.
 - Providing the public and stakeholders with clear and accessible information about how organizations and programs operate.
 - Holding ACA and the system accountable for fulfilling commitments.
 - Being responsible stewards of public funds.

3. Who is accountable for acute health care in Alberta under the new structure?

- The Ministry of Health sets policy and direction to achieve a sustainable and accountable health system.
- Acute Care Alberta will oversee the governance and coordination of acute care services across Alberta. ACA is accountable to the Ministry of Health.



- This unified health care system will rely on the oversight of Alberta Health in areas such as integration, patient pathways, capital planning, and other areas that affect all of health care service delivery in the province.
- This improved governance will help the Government of Alberta better direct critical resources to the front lines to support workers and improve patient care.

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

- No. Where or how Albertans access acute health care services will not change.
- Albertans will continue to access acute care health services as they always have through hospitals, emergency departments, urgent care centres and ambulances.

5. How will ACA benefit Albertans and service providers?

- Over time, ACA will help improve access to high-quality care for emergencies and ongoing treatments by:
 - reducing wait times for emergency departments, surgeries and ambulances
 - bringing specialized services closer to home
 - improving access to hospital care, especially in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.
- The creation of ACA means providers responsible for acute care will have greater accountability to the province and, above all, to patients. Providers will be required to ensure they are delivering on commitments to improve access to acute care services.
- This work will be done alongside the work of Primary Care Alberta to ensure every Albertan is attached to a primary care provider, which will reduce pressure on acute care services.
- ACA will focus on achieving key outcomes, including:
 - Creating shorter wait times in emergency departments and for surgeries
 - Improving overall surgery times
 - Creating faster EMS response times
 - Creating higher-quality care across the province, and enhanced access to care in rural areas
 - Improving patient flow across our acute care services including hospitals, urgent care centres and ambulatory care
- ACA will achieve this by working directly with acute care service providers — including AHS, Covenant Health, the Lamont Health Care Centre and chartered surgical facilities—hospitals, urgent care centres, and EMS to make every patient's journey through the acute care system efficient and effective.

6. Timeline-wise, when will Albertans will start to see real change in the acute care system?

- It will take time to build capacity in the system.
- Acute Care Alberta became a legal entity as of February 1, 2025, with the goal of improving access to high-quality care for emergencies and ongoing treatments.



- The transformation is ongoing, with efforts to reduce wait times for emergency departments, surgeries and ambulances by bringing specialized services closer to home and by improving access to hospital care, especially in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.
- ACA will be working with Alberta Health and AHS over the coming months to fully establish its operational responsibilities.
- In Year 1, ACA will continue to:
 - Increase access to surgical services and reduce surgical wait times.
 - Reduce wait times for cancer care.
 - Ensure appropriate patient flow across acute care system.
 - Collaborate across health sectors to work to reduce the ALC rate by improving ALC patient flow, hospital length of stay and optimizing acute care bed use.
 - Expand services and capabilities offered in rural areas; support overflow from urban centres through a hub and spoke model.
 - Reduction of EMS response time and increased community presence, including rural health.
- In Year 2, the organization will see continued improvements in the acute health care system in Alberta.

7. How will Acute Care Alberta integrate with other provincial health agencies?

- ACA will collaborate closely with Assisted Living Alberta (once established), Primary Care Alberta, and Recovery Alberta to focus on ensuring smooth coordination between services to strengthen patient care and reduce wait times for health care services across the province.

8. Why are acute, continuing and primary care services being set up as separate entities?

- The creation of Acute Care Alberta, Assisted Living Alberta, and Primary Care Alberta will mean a greater focus and improved visibility for acute, continuing and primary care services. This reflects a strong commitment by the Government of Alberta to these vital areas of service.
- Alberta is refocusing the health care system with the goal of prioritizing patients and empowering front-line professionals. This refocus will result in the creation of dedicated health organizations, which are Acute Care Alberta, Assisted Living Alberta, Primary Care Alberta, and Recovery Alberta.

Surgery

9. How does the standup of ACA impact surgeries across the province?

- There will be no impact to surgery delivery and services for Albertans throughout the transfer.
- Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health, Lamont Health Care Centre and chartered surgical facilities will continue to deliver surgeries and manage operational aspects, including staffing, facilities, and patient care.



- On April 1, 2025, all provincial surgical responsibilities that were previously managed by AHS transfer to ACA and is managed through Surgical Care Alberta as a new provincial program to reduce surgical wait times and ensure Albertans have access to high-quality surgical care.
- This is being done to help address and decrease surgery wait times, increase accountability in delivering surgical services, set standards, monitor results, streamline planning and coordination, and efficiently allocate surgeries across Alberta to meet new targets.
- On April 1, 2025, ACA assumed responsibility of setting surgical standards, targets and policies, determining volumes of surgeries (consistent with existing contracts), monitoring performance, reporting on surgical performance and setting surgical priorities across the province.
- AHS, Covenant Health, Lamont Health Care Centre and chartered surgical facilities will deliver high-quality services in alignment with ACA's policies and standards.
- There is no anticipated change to surgical operations, processes, contracts or agreements, systems or ways of working on April 1, 2025. Any changes thereafter will be communicated with affected staff and stakeholders.
- Existing relationships will continue to be maintained, and work will continue to occur over the coming months to establish new practices or approaches as needed. Acute Care Alberta will work closely to establish ways of working to ensure that all acute care service provider organizations work together for the benefit of patients across Alberta.

10. What is Surgical Care Alberta?

- Surgical Care Alberta is a new provincial program within ACA that serves as a provincial hub for surgical expertise, standardization, and planning.
- SCA combines surgical responsibilities under one program to reduce surgical wait times and ensure Albertans have access to the high-quality surgical care they deserve, when they need it.
- On April 1, 2025, all provincial surgical responsibilities that were previously managed by AHS transferred to SCA. This included setting provincial surgical operational standards, priorities, surgical targets and policy as well as monitoring performance and determining volumes of surgeries (consistent with existing contracts), and capacity across the province to increase access and meet targets.

11. How are responsibilities allocated between Acute Care Alberta and AHS, Covenant Health, Lamont Health Care Centre and chartered surgical facilities?

- The following responsibilities remain with AHS, Covenant Health, Lamont Health Care Centre and chartered surgical facilities:
 - Deliver surgeries according to existing policies, practices and contracts or agreements
- The following responsibilities move to ACA on April 1, 2025:
 - Setting surgical operational standards,
 - Surgical targets and surgical policy
 - Determine volumes of surgeries (consistent with existing contracts)



- Reporting on surgical performance and setting provincial surgical priorities, in collaboration with Alberta Health
- Surgical contracting and commissioning
- After April 1, 2025, AHS, Covenant Health, Lamont Health Care Centre and all chartered surgical facilities will align with the standards, performance requirements, allocation processes and policies set by SCA.
- There is no anticipated change to surgical operations, processes, contracts or agreements, systems or ways of working on April 1, 2025. Any changes thereafter will be communicated with affected staff and stakeholders.

Engagement

12. The refocus initiative has done many engagement sessions with health care professionals – what are the top concerns that have been voiced?

- A second round of in-person public engagement takes place between January and April 2025 to share information and receive feedback about the refocusing work. Details on sessions are posted on alberta.ca/leadtheway.
- Many health professionals attended the first round of public engagement sessions from January through April 2024. Their concerns are included in the public feedback that Alberta's government received.
- A comprehensive [What We Heard report](#) is available at alberta.ca/lead-the-way. The top themes that government heard from Albertans included:
 - access to care
 - ongoing communication and transparency
 - supporting and sustaining the health care workforce
 - unique needs in rural, remote and Indigenous communities
 - local decision-making and empowerment
 - accountability of the health care system
 - system integration and coordination

13. How have those concerns been addressed in the stand up of the provincial health agencies?

- The stand up of the provincial health agencies provides the framework for clear accountabilities in the provision of health care to Albertans. It will take time for these frameworks to be implemented, but their establishment is a major step in the right direction.
- For instance, before the stand up of Primary Care Alberta, there was no direct accountability to ensure Albertans have access to primary care services.
- Primary Care Alberta is now specifically responsible for an unattached patient strategy, essentially creating a path to addressing the access challenges that currently exist.



14. How can I stay up to date with refocusing news?

- Engaging with health care professionals, patients and all Albertans is vital to refocus the health care system. The input, experiences and feedback Alberta's government gathers will help create a more effective and efficient health care system.
- A second round of in-person public engagement is underway to share information and receive feedback about the refocusing work. Details on sessions are posted on alberta.ca/leadtheway.
- Those interested in keeping up to date on the health system refocusing work and new engagement opportunities can also sign up for an e-newsletter at alberta.ca/health-care-refocusing-newsletter.
- Questions about refocusing the health care system can be submitted directly to Alberta Health online here: [Refocusing health care in Alberta | Alberta Online Engagement](https://alberta.ca/refocusing-health-care-in-alberta)

Refocusing the Health System

15. How will the system work together?

- As the health care system establishes provincial health agencies, tools are being put in place to make sure the system works collaboratively.
- An Integration Council was established to ensure all ministries, provincial health agencies and service delivery providers work together to deliver better health outcomes for Albertans. The council looks at system-wide strategic goals, finds efficiencies, and removes barriers to system coordination.
- The Government of Alberta, AHS and all provincial agencies, continue to work together throughout refocusing to establish ways of working and ensure a unified approach to care.

16. What is the status of the refocusing health care initiative?

- Since announcing plans to refocus Alberta's health care system in November 2023, significant progress has been made in several key areas.
- Under Alberta's refocused health care system, four fully integrated provincial health agencies are being created to oversee the priority sectors of acute care, continuing care, mental health and addiction, and primary care.
- Three of the provincial health agencies, Acute Care Alberta, Primary Care Alberta, and Recovery Alberta, have been established with input from more than 30,000 health care professionals and Albertans.
 - **Acute Care Alberta** is the provincial health agency responsible for acute care. It became a legal entity on February 1, 2025, and began operations on April 1, 2025. It 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.



Acute Care Alberta

- Lower emergency medical services response time.
- Higher-quality care across the province and enhanced access to care in rural areas.
- The Acute Care Provincial Health Agency Executive Transition Team has been established to support standing up Acute Care Alberta.
- You can learn more by visiting [acutecarealberta.ca](https://www.acutecarealberta.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 became a legal entity on 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.
 - Accelerate transformation of care in home and community care settings.
 - Ensure seniors, people with disabilities and other vulnerable Albertans are supported with comprehensive, wraparound services that meet both their medical and non-medical needs.
- **Primary Care Alberta** is the provincial health agency responsible for overseeing the coordination and delivery of primary health care services across the province. It is a legal entity under the leadership of CEO Kim Simmonds as of November 18, 2024 and operational as of February 1, 2025, and will work to implement its mandates, develop operational plans and set vision and mission. It is accountable to the Ministry of Health. Goals include:
 - Increasing Albertans' attachment to a care provider team through new models of care
 - Increasing after-hours services
 - Improving access to virtual and digital health services
 - Improving access to primary care delivery in underserved communities, specifically rural and remote areas
 - You can learn more by visiting [primarycarealberta.ca](https://www.primarycarealberta.ca)
- **Recovery Alberta** is the provincial health agency responsible for recovery-oriented mental health and addiction services and correctional health services. It is operational as of September 1, 2024. It is accountable to the Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction. Services are available through this provincial health agency. You can learn more by visiting [recoveryalberta.ca](https://www.recoveryalberta.ca). Recovery Alberta will focus 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.
- **The Centre of Recovery Excellence, CoRE** began operations in June 2024 and is leading recovery excellence by informing best practices, conducting program evaluation and analyzing data to support the development of objective and practical policy. CoRE's mission is to empower recovery through data and analysis with a focus on:
 - Research and evaluation
 - Data and analytics
 - Expert advice
 - Guidance and leadership collaboration
 - The department of Mental Health and Addiction and Recovery Alberta will work closely with CoRE to advance the mental health and addiction system in Alberta.
 - You can learn more by visiting recoveryexcellence.org