

primary cares

News & updates from the Calgary Zone



Last chance to register: Infectious disease webinar

It's your last chance to register for next week's Calgary Zone webinar, which will examine the fall respiratory virus situation in the Calgary area.

On Monday, November 18, from 6–8 p.m., Dr. Jim Kellner will lead a session on influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and COVID-19. In addition, Dr. Christine Luelo will lead her usual *Hot Topics* segment and there will be an update on AHS bariatric clinic process changes.

Dr. Paul Petrasek will lead a discussion about the December launch of three new surgical specialties via the Facilitated Access to Specialist Treatment (FAST) central access program: Plastic surgery, neurosurgery and oral maxillofacial surgery. [Register](#).

Arthur Child oncology referrals

All Tom Baker Cancer Centre and Holy Cross Centre cancer services have now transitioned to the new Arthur J.E. Child Comprehensive Cancer Centre.

Those sending fax referrals should update their records as follows:

- Main switchboard: 587-231-3100
- Toll-free number: 1-844-465-6330
- Referral fax number: 587-231-3580

Please discontinue sending fax referrals to Tom Baker and Holy Cross. [More information](#).

Palliative care: There is a new fax and phone number for adult palliative care referrals for facility living and community (urban): 587-231-3665. Please see the [access pathway](#).

New pathway: Adolescent abnormal uterine bleeding

A new pathway has been unveiled for adolescents under 18 years of age who are suffering from abnormal uterine bleeding (AUB).

The pathway applies to any female who has menarche. It aims to facilitate the prompt management of AUB – bleeding that occurs outside of the normal 24- to 38-day pattern – in the medical home. It includes evidence-based diagnosis, investigations and management, as well as guidelines for when to make a referral or seek non-urgent advice. [Download the pathway](#).

Tele-advice calls: The turnaround time for Specialist Link tele-advice return calls has transitioned from one hour to two hours. This change is part of efforts to ensure consistent and reliable service to primary care teams across the Calgary area.

Specialties set to be added to FAST

The FAST central access and intake program is expanding next month to include three new specialties.

Effective Monday, December 2, referrals for neurosurgery, oral maxillofacial surgery and plastic surgery will go through FAST (fax to 1-833-627-7023). That is in addition to general surgery, gynecology, orthopedic surgery (except for oncology and pediatric orthopaedics, as well as spine surgery), urology and vascular surgery, specialties that are already part of the program. The planned launch of otolaryngology has been delayed until further notice.

- Neurosurgery: [Referral pathway](#)
- Oral maxillofacial surgery: [Referral pathway](#)
- Plastic surgery: [Referral pathway](#)

Orthopedics: Four rapid access clinics have been established in the Calgary area with the aim of reducing wait times for patients referred for orthopedic surgery consultation. Patients may be directed to rapid access clinics to reduce wait times.

Gynecology referrals: Due to long wait times for routine gynecology consultations, referrals submitted via FAST may be sent to clinics in areas surrounding Calgary for faster processing. That could include clinics in High River or Canmore, for example. If your patient is not able to travel to appointments, please include that information in the referral letter or form.

MAPS town hall

A town hall will be held next week to provide an update on the Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System (MAPS) initiative.

The online event will be held on Wednesday, November 20, at 7:30 a.m. [Click here](#) to sign up for the MAPS newsletter to receive information about town halls and other engagement opportunities. Questions about MAPS can be directed to health.MAPS@gov.ab.ca.

Community health centres funding: The Alex Community Health Centre and CUPS Calgary Society are among the community health centres that are set to receive \$30 million in government funding over two years.

Rural funding: Plans have been announced to invest \$12 million over two years into two grants aimed at improving team-based primary health care. The deadline to submit an expression of interest is Friday, November 29. [More information](#).

Correcting primary care provider info

Doctors who have been incorrectly identified as a patient's primary care provider and are receiving information via the Central Patient Attachment Registry (CPAR) can request a correction. To make a change, call 1-877-311-4300 and select option 1 for clinical applications, followed by 1 for Connect Care. Please have your location, contact information and Prac ID available. [More information](#).

Maternal Fetal Medicine report delays: AHS is experiencing intermittent disruptions with reporting results in Connect Care and Netcare for Maternal Fetal Medicine reports. If you are awaiting a Maternal Fetal Medicine report, please contact Calgary Zone Maternal Fetal Medicine by phone 403-944-3247 or fax 403-944-6020.

Virtual chronic pain program

The Alberta Virtual Chronic Pain Program can help support patients living with chronic pain and the primary care providers who care for them.

Launched in April 2024, it can be accessed through clinician referral and self-referral. It includes non-pharmacologic chronic pain care via a multidisciplinary team and help with system navigation. It also offers education on chronic pain management to physicians, nurse practitioners and teams.

- Provider referral: Available via [Alberta Referral Directory](#) and Connect Care
- Patient referral: Call 1-877-719-7707

A [one-pager](#) and [infographic](#) are available. For more details, email tina.hoang@albertahealthservices.ca.

Panel prep webinar

Part three of the Alberta Medical Association Accelerating Change Transformation Team's webinar series on panel preparation kicks off later this month with a focus on accessing, understanding and actioning CPAR reports.

On [Monday, November 25](#), at 5:30 p.m., or [Thursday, November 28](#), at 8 a.m., family physicians, rural generalists and their teams are invited to attend one of the hour-long sessions.

[More information](#).

Quick links

COVID-19 testing

Free test kits for COVID-19 rapid antigen testing are no longer available. Tests for personal use can be purchased at some pharmacies and online. Alberta continues to provide laboratory-based, provincially funded COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction testing for patients at risk of severe outcomes to support their clinical care and for the purpose of outbreak management in high-risk facilities. A COVID-19 PCR test must be ordered by a physician or nurse practitioner.

Reports for second trimester prenatal risk assessment

Paper copies of reports for Second Trimester Prenatal Risk Assessment will no longer be mailed to healthcare providers. The change will eliminate duplicate reporting. [More information.](#)

Choosing Wisely Talks

On Wednesday, November 20, at 10 a.m., Choosing Wisely Talks returns with a discussion about curbing unnecessary antibiotics use for toothaches. [Register.](#) On Wednesday, November 27, also at 10 a.m., the next talk on the series features a talk on changes to the health and behavioural status of long-term care residents and practical strategies for ruling out bladder infections, helping to avoid unnecessary urine testing and antibiotic overprescribing. [Register.](#)

2024 Mackid Symposium: Clinical care

On Thursday, November 28, from 5:30–9:30 p.m., the Department of Family Medicine is hosting the 2024 Mackid Symposium at the Markin MacPhail Centre. This year's symposium has a special focus on *Clinical Care Updates: The Advocacy Agenda*. [Register.](#)

CanREACH in 2025

Two CanReach virtual mini-fellowship sessions are being offered in 2025, starting in January and May. On Friday, January 17 and Saturday, January 18, conferences will be held for the first pediatric primary care program session, followed by 12 one-hour clinical case sessions. The second conference dates are Friday, May 30 and Saturday, May 31. [More information.](#)

Urology referral info

Patients can now view referral information for urology consults entered in the Netcare eReferral system. Referral information will be viewable through the My Personal Records (MPR) application. [More information.](#)

Transitions of care talk

On Thursday, November 21, from noon–1 p.m., the AMA-ACTT team is hosting an AHS-led online session on sharing and celebrating work that supports care continuity. No pre-registration is required. [Join the workshop.](#) Note: Meeting ID: 839 8199 6780, passcode: 833073.