

Becoming the Best: Alberta's 5-Year Health Action Plan

2010 - 2015

Highlights



Government
of Alberta ■





*“Our goal is to create the best-performing,
publicly funded health system in Canada.”*

- Premier Ed Stelmach

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Albertans say the best health system is one that is there for them when they need it. Our health-care professionals are highly trained and dedicated, and they provide superb care. In some cases, however, Albertans are waiting too long for services that can impact their quality of life.

As a government, we've heard the message loud and clear. Albertans want to know they can see a family doctor quickly and avoid long waits in the emergency department... that their elderly loved ones can get the support needed to live independently... that cancer treatment is available within days of being diagnosed. They want the health system to focus on them and their families, and they want to feel satisfied that the health system is providing the best care possible.

Working with our partners, the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services are taking action to respond to your concerns. We've developed *Becoming the Best: Alberta's 5-Year Health Action Plan*, to improve access to health services and shorten wait times. It puts people first by addressing the health needs of patients and families. It will help create the health system Albertans want.

The Government of Alberta has committed to 5 years of predictable and stable funding for Alberta Health Services, the first 5-year health funding commitment in Canada. We have created clear health system measures and targets, so we can track what is working and what isn't. We sought and received advice from a number of groups before finalizing our plan, including: the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta; the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta; the Alberta College of Pharmacists; and the Health

“We’re taking action to ensure patients and their families come first in health care.”

5 years of stable funding

Funding for Alberta Health and Wellness is \$15 billion for 2010-11. Of this amount, \$9 billion is provided to Alberta Health Services (AHS) for planning and delivery of health services to Albertans. The rest pays for drugs, doctors, primary care networks, and supplementary health benefits.

The Alberta government has committed to 5 years of funding increases to AHS starting this year – 6 per cent in each of the first 3 years and 4.5 per cent in years 4 and 5. By 2014-15, AHS will receive funding of \$11.1 billion.

Quality Council of Alberta. Their cooperation and collaboration will be essential to successfully complete the actions in this plan. We also consulted doctors and other experts, and reviewed national and international performance benchmarks, while developing our performance measures.

This booklet describes the five strategies in *Becoming the Best: Alberta's 5-Year Health Action Plan*, along with some of the actions being taken and some of the measures and targets being used to measure success.

The complete 5-year plan and listing of performance measures and targets can be found at www.health.alberta.ca or at www.albertahealthservices.ca. The 5-year action plan will be reviewed and updated annually to include new information and advances in health care.



1 Response time targets represent the experience of 9 out of 10 people.
 2 Measure reflects 16 busiest sites. AHS will report on each site individually.
 3 Measure reflects 15 busiest sites. AHS will report on each site individually.

STRATEGY 1

Improve access and reduce wait times

Becoming the Best will reduce wait times for key services including surgery, cancer therapy, and emergency room treatment.

What is our goal?

Improved quality, safety and access for patients to acute care services will be demonstrated by lower wait times across the province.

Specific targets include:¹

TYPE OF SERVICE	LAST ACTUAL (YEAR)	2011-12	2014-15
Surgery	(2009-10)		
Hip replacement	35 wks.	27 wks.	14 wks.
Knee replacement	49 wks.	35 wks.	14 wks.
Cancer (radiation) treatment			
To see a radiation oncologist	7.1 wks.	4 wks.	2 wks.
To start radiation treatment	5.6 wks.	4 wks.	4 wks.
Emergency room	(2009-10)		
Percentage of patients treated and discharged within four hours ²	63%	75%	90%
Percentage of patients treated and admitted to hospital within eight hours ³	38%	60%	90%

How will we do this?

Short-term actions

(completed by March 2012)

- » add approximately 360 new hospital beds and perform 3,000 more surgeries this year
- » pilot two medical assessment units in emergency departments to speed in-patient treatment and admission
- » develop a provincial plan for cancer care
- » develop a standard approach to assess, refer and book patients with specialists, to shorten wait times
- » expand HealthLink to provide more advice to patients about their urgent and emergency care options
- » implement a new over-capacity protocol to address crowding pressures and wait-times in Emergency Departments
- » establish a navigation system to help patients find their way around the health care system efficiently and easily

Mid to long-term actions

(completed by March 2015)

- » open new cancer radiation therapy sites in Red Deer and Grande Prairie, providing treatment closer to home
- » expand and/or redevelop numerous health facilities in communities around the province
- » expand HealthLink – the telephone advice service provided by registered nurses – so Albertans get service in one minute or less

HOW WILL ALBERTANS BENEFIT?

Albertans will spend less time waiting in emergency. Nine out of ten patients treated and discharged from emergency will do so within four hours of arriving if they do not require overnight stay. People who need to be admitted to hospital will be admitted within eight hours or less. Patients will get their surgery at the right time, as close to home as possible. Cancer patients will get radiation therapy sooner and closer to home where possible.



STRATEGY 2

Provide more options for continuing care

By 2030 one out of five Albertans will be older than 65. Senior citizens will expect continuing care options that allow them to stay in their communities and homes. We'll be ready.

What is our goal?

All Albertans requiring continuing care will get services that match their needs within 30 days of assessment.

Specific targets include:

ACCESS TO CARE	LAST ACTUAL (YEAR)	2011-12	2014-15
Continuing care	(2009-10)		
Number of people waiting in hospital for continuing care	777	375	250
Number of people waiting in the community for continuing care	1,233	900	750

How will we do this?

Short-term actions

(completed by March 2012)

- » add at least 2,300 continuing-care spaces
- » expand and redesign home care so at least 3,000 more Albertans can receive home-care services, with further expansion planned
- » increase support for family caregivers
- » increase the number of supportive-living beds for those with dementia
- » add additional palliative care services

Mid to long-term actions

(completed by March 2015)

- » add 3,000 more continuing-care spaces, in addition to the 2,300 planned in the short-term – bringing the total to 5,300 continuing care spaces
- » create a 24/7 help-line to support people with dementia, as well as their families and caregivers

HOW WILL ALBERTANS BENEFIT?

Providing more services in the community will free up hospital beds and ease pressure on emergency departments. Most importantly, Albertans will get high-quality, coordinated care in their own homes and communities.

STRATEGY 3

Strengthen primary health care

Primary health care is the care a patient receives from a doctor or a health-care team when first entering the system. In addition to doctors, a variety of health professionals, including nurses, pharmacists, dietitians, counsellors, rehabilitation therapists, and social workers provide primary health care. Right now, over 2.5 million patients receive health services through Primary Care Networks – groups of health professionals working together.



What is our goal?

Albertans have access to primary health care when they need it, where they need it, from the appropriate provider.

- » The target for consultation with an appropriate member of a primary health care team is within two days.

Other targets include:

TYPE OF SERVICE	LAST ACTUAL (YEAR)	2011-12	2014-15
Hospital visits/ admissions	(2009-10)		
Rate of hospital admissions for health problems that could have been managed by appropriate primary health care (per 100,000)	308	297	280
Percentage of emergency visits for health problems that could have been managed by a family doctor	28%	25%	22%
Mental health care	(2008-09)		
Percentage of children getting scheduled mental health treatment within 30 days	78%	90%	92%

How will we do this?

Short-term actions

(completed by March 2012)

- » set up more Primary Care Networks to provide primary health services to 100,000 more Albertans
- » increase the involvement of nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other health-care providers in the delivery of primary health care
 - › better define “who does what” when providing primary health care
 - › expand the role of pharmacists to help manage medications and provide injections
- » add at least 35 new mental health community spaces throughout Alberta and 65 mental health staff to schools and clinics
- » develop a comprehensive provincial strategy for addressing addiction and mental health issues

Mid to long-term actions

(completed by March 2015)

- » through the new online personal health portal, a trusted source of personalized health services, give Albertans access to their personal health record, as well as better health information to help them make good choices about their health care
- » improve care for Albertans with complex, chronic conditions by using innovative patient-centred approaches for self-management and supporting the delivery of integrated, comprehensive care

HOW WILL ALBERTANS BENEFIT?

With more people treated by family doctors or primary health care teams, hospital visits and admissions will be reduced. Children and youth will have better access to mental health services. Albertans will have better coordinated health-care services.



STRATEGY 4

Be healthy, stay healthy

As Alberta's population grows and ages, the number of people with chronic diseases will increase. That means more demand for hospital beds, continuing care, and other services – unless we step up our efforts to support Albertans to be healthy.

What is our goal?

Albertans will live longer and enjoy a high quality of life.

Specific targets related to immunization include:

TYPE OF IMMUNIZATION	LAST ACTUAL (YEAR)	2011-12	2014-15
Seasonal influenza			
Children age 6 to 23 months	(2008-09) 43%	75%	75%
Adults 65 and older	(2009-10) 55%	75%	75%
Childhood immunization	(2008-09)		
Diphtheria/tetanus/acellular pertussis, polio, Hib	80%	97%	97%
Measles, mumps, rubella	91%	98%	98%

How will we do this?

Short-term actions

(completed by March 2012)

- » add more screening for colorectal, breast and cervical cancers
- » increase access to immunization for children under two years of age
- » increase access to influenza immunization for all Albertans

Mid to long-term actions

(completed by March 2015)

- » introduce new programs that promote healthy eating and active living to families, schools and communities
- » implement programs and policies that promote healthier birth outcomes, breastfeeding, and child and maternal health for low-income women and families

HOW WILL ALBERTANS BENEFIT?

Cancer and other deadly diseases will be detected earlier. Gaps in health status will be reduced. More Albertans will be immunized, resulting in fewer cases of communicable diseases.

STRATEGY 5

Build one health system

It takes all of us – Albertans, government, health-care providers, and stakeholders – to build the best publicly funded health care system in the country. We can all provide input into its design, evaluate its quality, and take responsibility for our own health. In doing so, we can help ensure that the system meets the needs of Albertans, both today and in the future.

⁴ The Health Quality Council of Alberta, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health and Wellness are working together to gather information on patient experience with care. Further information is available at www.hqca.ca, www.albertahealthservices.ca, or at www.health.alberta.ca.

What is our goal?

Our goal is to achieve a patient-focused system – one in which Albertans are satisfied with the quality of the health-care services they receive.

A specific target is:

PATIENT EXPERIENCE	LAST ACTUAL (YEAR)	2011-12	2014-15
Patient satisfaction	(2009-10)		
Percentage of patients satisfied or very satisfied with health care services personally received in Alberta within the past year ⁴	61%	66%	71%



How will we do this?

Short-term actions

(completed by March 2012)

- » hire at least 70 per cent of registered nurses graduated in Alberta each year
- » expand the electronic health record system to give health-care providers better access to up-to-date information
- » develop a province-wide system for tracking and controlling outbreaks of contagious diseases

Mid to long-term actions

(completed by March 2015)

- » improve patient safety by improving standards and developing province-wide systems for tracking and controlling outbreaks of diseases
- » roll out an electronic referral system that gives doctors a listing of available specialists as well as the ability to book referrals online

HOW WILL ALBERTANS BENEFIT?

All medical information will be housed in one electronic record. This will give health-care providers immediate access to updated patient information, ensuring Albertans the best care possible.

Albertans will benefit from an engaged and high-performing workforce, new and better health technologies, increased patient safety, and less duplication of services.

CONCLUSION

Here's what Albertans can expect in 5 years

Albertans can expect a stronger, more integrated province-wide health system. The health system will deliver improved access to health information, treatment and care services, and other supports. The system will also focus on early detection and prevention of illness – helping people stay healthy.

We will continue to work with our partners and with Albertans to build the best publicly funded health system in Canada. *Becoming the Best* puts people first. It will help Albertans get the health care they need – when they need it.



