

# ALBERTA

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# IMMUNIZATION

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# STRATEGY

## HIGHLIGHTS

**I**mmunization has often been cited as one of the greatest medical success stories in human history. Despite the success of immunization, many vaccine-preventable diseases still exist. They result in increased doctor visits, missed days from work, hospitalization, disability and even premature death.

Alberta has a strong immunization program, but the proportion of Albertans who are adequately immunized continues to be below provincial targets. Low immunization rates result in vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks.

Alberta Health and Wellness has developed a 10-year immunization strategy to increase immunization rates in Alberta. Improving immunization rates will lead to fewer cases of vaccine-preventable diseases. The Alberta Immunization Strategy contains seven evidence-based innovative directions to achieve this goal.



immunize...do it for life

Alberta

The Alberta Immunization Strategy (2007-2017) is based on evidence gathered from a literature review, an environmental scan, interviews with experts, focus groups, a survey of Canadian nurse managers and epidemiologists, a survey of regional health authorities, as well as input from a working group. The strategy addresses immunization challenges, proposes provincial strategies and identifies key partners.

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## THE VISION

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*Effective immunization programs ... protecting the health of Albertans by reducing the risk of vaccine-preventable disease.*

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- **Client-focused responsiveness** – Immunization services are organized to meet the needs of clients using informed, timely and accessible approaches.
- **Provider-focused competency** – Health service providers are knowledgeable and skilled in providing immunization information to all age groups in accordance with Alberta’s immunization program and policies.
- **Evidence-based and sustained immunization interventions** – Immunization interventions are evidence-based and sustained over extended periods of time.
- **Respect for individual rights and decisions** – Individuals are accurately informed and individual rights and decisions are respected in accordance with provincial and federal legislation and policies.
- **Optimal use of enabling technology** – Information systems are developed and integrated across regional and provincial jurisdictions to optimize data collection, sharing and analysis; including point-of-service technology for use by practitioners in the field.
- **Adequately resourced infrastructure** – Necessary human, financial and physical resources are acquired and sustained over the long term.
- **Performance accountability** – Responsibility and accountability for quality delivery of immunization programs are clear and upheld at all levels.

The Alberta Immunization Strategy (2007-2017) will be used by Alberta Health and Wellness in collaboration with other provincial ministries, including: Advanced Education and Technology; Education; Children’s Services; and partners including: regional health authorities (RHAs); the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada Alberta Region; professional associations; and national organizations.

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## GOAL

*To minimize the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases as evidenced by an increase in immunization rates.*

**This goal will be achieved through seven strategic directions:**

### 1. Enhance Accessibility

Improve access to immunization services by implementing specific outreach programs and incentives and addressing clinic operations and resourcing issues. Objectives:

- Reduce immunization delays for all age groups and immunize on schedule; and
- Reduce clinic wait times.

### 2. Improve Enabling Technology

Integrate immunization management information technology systems in Alberta to enhance the reporting, sharing and analysis of data regarding immunization and vaccine-preventable diseases. Timely availability of this information will help providers determine required immunizations, and promote effective immunization programs to control vaccine-preventable diseases. Objectives:

- Better enable client adherence to immunization schedules;
- Improve efficiency in submitting and sharing immunization information; and
- Improve immunization and vaccine-preventable disease surveillance.

### 3. Strengthen Parental Education and Counselling

Provide accurate information on immunization to parents, using targeted initiatives and one-on-one counselling. These initiatives could include in-clinic consultations with clients, targeted education, targeted phone calls and mail, and outreach programs. Objectives:

- Improve parental knowledge about the importance of immunization; and
- Improve parental adherence to Alberta's immunization schedule.

### 4. Strengthen Partnerships

Improve the linkages between public health, other health care providers, primary care networks and others who are in positions of influence to affect immunization behaviour. Objective:

- Improve effectiveness of collaboration and partnerships among organizations that are able to influence immunization rates.

### 5. Strengthen Provider Training and Education

Improve provider training and education to counsel clients and provide open, candid immunization information so that all opportunities to monitor and follow-up on immunization needs are used. Objectives:

- Improve health care provider knowledge and awareness of immunization and Alberta's immunization program;
- Improve health care provider action to identify and refer clients/patients who have inadequate immunization;
- Improve post-secondary education on immunization for health care providers; and
- Enhance opportunities for practical experience and education on immunization.

### 6. Strengthen Public Education and Awareness

Heighten general public awareness of immunization and address the importance of immunization for a healthy population. Initiatives may include targeted advertisements, education campaigns and comprehensive web-based information. Objective:

- Improve public knowledge about the importance of immunization and immunizing on schedule.

### 7. Strengthen Research and Evaluation

Ensure new and existing immunization programs are as effective as possible through support for research and evaluation. Objectives:

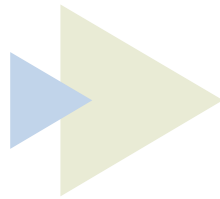
- Increase immunization research to support evidence-based practice; and
- Improve evaluation of immunization programs, including epidemiology, laboratory testing and public perception.

## IMPLEMENTATION

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Implementation will include introducing, developing and evaluating these strategic directions over the next 10 years. Action plans stemming from the seven strategic directions will detail steps for implementation.

Additional copies of this document are available online at [www.health.gov.ab.ca](http://www.health.gov.ab.ca) or by contacting



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