

COVID-19 UPDATES

Return to work, clinic guidelines

Alberta Health Services has updated its daily [fit for work screening recommendations](#) for primary care physicians and staff, as well as its [return to work](#) guidance. Highlights include the following:

- Staff should not attend work while experiencing influenza-like-illness
- To minimize exposure, screening is recommended prior to entering the workplace
- A [sample questionnaire](#) is provided in the guidance
- It is recommended that clinics screen staff daily
- It is suggested that in-person care is limited to essential visits only
- When testing is not available, all respiratory illness should be presumed to be COVID-19 and isolation guidelines should be followed

Please note that the [Omicron guidance document](#) has been updated to include links to the [fit for work](#) and [return to work](#) documents. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta has also updated its [guidance for family physicians](#).

Pathways updated

The [adult](#) and [pediatric](#) primary care [COVID-19 pathways](#) have been updated to include links to the patient [red-amber-green tool](#) and the latest resources for physicians. Not fully vaccinated has been added to the high-risk column in the risk stratification chart.

Virtual code tips, webinar

The Alberta Medical Association has published a [billing tip](#) relate to the announcement on virtual codes.

In addition, a webinar titled *Virtual Fee Code Update: Navigating the Updated Virtual Fee Codes* is planned for Wednesday, January 26, from noon to 1 p.m. Speakers include Dr. Brad Bahler and Dr. Heidi Fell. [Register](#).

Fourth doses for immunocompromised

Immunocompromised Albertans aged 18 and over are now eligible for a fourth dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Fourth doses for those who had a third dose at least five months ago can be [booked online](#) or by calling 811. Fourth doses have not yet been approved for 12- to 17-year-olds.

The change in eligibility aligns with recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI) and the Alberta Advisory Committee on Immunization (AACI).

More information about eligibility for immunocompromising conditions can be [found here](#).

Omicron data, measures

As hospitalization rates reach an all-time high in Alberta, several initiatives were announced Thursday, January 20 to increase capacity in both acute and primary care.

There were 1,131 Albertans in hospital with COVID-19 on Wednesday, January 19, while ICU admissions remain relatively stable. In addition to AHS announcing plans to free up bed space, PCNs across Alberta – including all seven in the Calgary Zone – have unveiled plans to support patients and member physicians to manage cases in medical homes and primary care.

With access to PCR tests limited, [wastewater data](#) offers an insight into current case trends. It shows COVID-19 levels in the Calgary Zone may have peaked.

Quick links

COVID Corner

On Wednesday, January 26, from 7–9 p.m., COVID Corner returns with a webinar titled *Bringing Clarity to Omicron Challenges*. [Register here](#). A reminder that recordings and slides from the AMA's Omicron series are [available here](#).

PCN Pain Rounds: Post-COVID pain

On Wednesday, February 9, from 5:30–6:45 p.m., the latest PCN Pain Rounds talk features Dr. Chester Ho on *Post-COVID Pain*. [More details](#).

Patient self-care guide

A reminder that a new [patient self-care guide](#) is available online. In addition, the AMA's red-amber-green [navigation tool](#) is a helpful resource for patients.

Eating disorders webinar

On Wednesday, February 9, from 7–9 p.m., the University of Calgary is hosting *Pearls for Practice: Empowering a Community-Based Approach for Eating Disorders in Youth*. [More details](#).