

Calgary Zone

COVID-19 UPDATES



Panel on primary care with Health Minister Jason Copping

The PCN webinar scheduled for Monday, November 22 has been cancelled. In its place, a [webinar](#) aimed at family physicians across Alberta will be held by the Alberta Medical Association.

On Monday, November 22 from 6:30 – 8 p.m., all primary care physicians are invited to join physician leaders from the Sections of Family and Rural Medicine and the Primary Care Networks for a moderated panel conversation on primary care with Health Minister Jason Copping about his priorities for improving both Alberta's health system overall, as well as primary care.

This 90-minute [webinar](#) will touch on a variety of topics, including the long-term vision for primary care, priority areas for family physicians and PCNs, sustainability of rural care, COVID-19 and more. [Register.](#)

PCN webinar: Pediatric vaccination

Pediatric vaccination and the role primary care can play in addressing hesitancy will be the focus of the next webinar in the PCN COVID-19 and mental health series.

On Monday, December 13, from 6 – 8 p.m., Dr. Rick Ward and Dr. Christine Luelo will be joined by a panel of experts to discuss the rollout of vaccines for five- to 11-year-olds and the critical part family physicians can play.

The online event will also feature an update on Specialist LINK tele-advice — including the top 10 things you didn't know about the service, which links family doctors and specialists in real time. [Register.](#)

Outpatient treatment for patients with COVID-19: sotrovimab

On Tuesday, November 9, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health rolled out the administration of [sotrovimab](#), a new monoclonal antibody treatment for patients with COVID-19 that was recently approved by Health Canada.

Sotrovimab is a new drug that was developed to treat patients with mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19. It is the first treatment to be offered to outpatients in Alberta and is administered by intravenous infusion within five days of symptom onset.

Importantly, Health Canada states that they have “authorized the sale of this COVID-19 drug based on limited clinical testing in humans and/or quality information.”

In phase one of the AHS rollout, treatment will focus on COVID-19 patients who are either:

- Age 55* or older and unvaccinated (defined as a patient who hasn't received any doses of a COVID-19 vaccine) (* Initially, this was 65+, but has been updated.)
- Solid organ transplant patients or stem cell transplant patients, regardless of vaccination status.

[Patients](#) who have tested positive for COVID-19 and whose symptoms began less than four days ago can call 1-844-343-0971 to find out if they qualify to receive sotrovimab.

If physicians are contacted by patients with newly diagnosed COVID-19, and either patient or physician queries eligibility for this treatment, they should direct patients to call 1-844-343-0971 to determine eligibility and not make referrals directly — unless they are overseeing the care of a solid organ or stem cell transplant patient.

[FAQs for Healthcare Providers](#)

Because of this new treatment, we have updated the adult [pathway](#).

Third dose, single-dose vaccines and vaccination record support

New information about third doses for health-care workers, a single-dose vaccine and support for vaccination record difficulties is now available.

Health-care workers who provide direct patient care and received a second dose less than eight weeks after the first are eligible for a third shot. Please refer to the Alberta COVID-19 immunization program update for the [full details and recommendations](#) for all eligible individuals.

Effective Friday, November 12, Albertans 18 years and older can book appointments to receive the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine by calling 811. Due to limited supply, the Janssen vaccine will only be administered at AHS clinics in select locations across the province.

Additionally, as Alberta immunization records without a QR code are [no longer accepted](#) as proof of vaccination by the Restrictions Exemption Program, there is support available for people having trouble with their vaccination records:

- Call toll-free: 1-888-527-1224
- Email: COVID19Record@gov.ab.ca
- Visit the COVID-19 Records Helpdesk [web page](#)

Help is available 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. on weekends.

Request for input: Vaccine Hesitancy Guide

The U of C's School of Public Policy has been developing the [Vaccine Hesitancy Guide](#) — a resource to help primary care clinicians navigate the often-challenging COVID-19 vaccine conversations with hesitant patients.

New CIHR funding will allow the team to continue to adapt the guide's content to the challenging hesitancy landscape and improve usability.

To advance their project, they are looking for support for the following activities:

- 1) Participating in a **45-60 minute phone call** to review types of hesitancy and communications strategies used in clinic, and/or
- 2) Completing a **10-15 minute online survey** about the guide's design, usability, and content.

[Email](#) Nicole Pinto for more information.

Alberta Seniors' Centre Without Walls

Over the past 18+ months, Alberta Seniors' Centre Without Walls (SCWW) has seen an increase in the need for programming for isolated seniors, with almost all seniors' programs and centres closed during the pandemic.

Do you know of any seniors who feel lonely or isolated or like they need someone to talk to?

SCWW offers phone-based seniors' programming to adults aged 55+ across Alberta, for example:

- Discovery and learning sessions
- Health and wellness information
- Conversations
- Just-for-fun programs

SCWW is designed for seniors who may be unable to participate in traditional seniors' programming at an in-person facility. Instead, they participate from the comfort of their own homes. Sessions are free. For more information or to register, individuals can call 780-395-2626 or visit the program's [web page](#).

They are also looking for more volunteers as guest speakers on topics such as physical activity and exercising, chronic disease education, strategies for mental health, special interests, adventures and stories. Please contact scww@espcn.ca.

Quick links

Colorectal cancer screening referrals

In light of endoscopy pressures and growing wait times resulting from COVID-19, please read the [new preferred referral practices](#) for colorectal cancer screening, information about pathways and advice services for GI care, and resources for patients with digestive health concerns.

Long COVID guidance

AHS has a new [guidance document](#), *Rehabilitation & Allied Health Practice Considerations Post COVID-19* that is intended to support clinicians and partners who are working with the Post COVID Conditions (or Long COVID) population.

COVID Corner

Wednesday, December 8, from 7-9 p.m. marks the final COVID Corner of 2021, titled *Keeping COVID Out: Optimizing Patient Care to Reduce Hospitalizations*. [More details](#).

Pediatric Infectious Disease Conference

Registration has opened for the 2022 Pediatric Infectious Disease Conference, held in Banff from Friday, February 18, to Sunday, February 20. [More information](#).