

primary cares

News & updates from the Calgary Zone



Representing PCNs and physicians

Dear colleague,

With announcements about [healthcare restructuring](#) coming seemingly daily, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself as your Physician Lead Executive (PLE) for Calgary and the surrounding areas.

The PLE role represents all PCNs and PCN physicians in the Zone. It is my responsibility to:

- Gather local issues and concerns
- Provide support and a voice for local physician issues
- Develop strategies for physician and patient issues within PCNs
- Recognize and adhere to local autonomy for local physician non-profit corporations.

I officially started work as the Calgary area's PLE last month – succeeding Dr. Ernst Greyvenstein – shortly before the publication of the [Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System \(MAPS\)](#) reports. At the same time those reports were made public, the Government of Alberta also made some announcements about short-term stabilization funding and the formation of a task force to explore potential new funding models for physicians.

While MAPS provides us with a robust and much-needed road map that has the potential to revitalize primary care in Alberta, stabilization of our family medicine clinics remains a necessary prerequisite for any system transformation. During this time of uncertainty, it is vital that your voice is heard. Please reach out if you have questions, comments or concerns via PLE@calgaryareapcns.ca. I would love to hear from you.

Wishing you and your family all the best for the coming holiday season.

Yours sincerely,

Heather LaBorde
Family physician
PLE, Calgary Zone

Specialist Link holiday hours

Specialist Link's tele-advice services will be subject to closures during the holidays.

All 51 tele-advice services will be closed on the three statutory holidays – Monday, December 25, Tuesday, December 26 and Monday, January 1. Tele-advice is always closed on weekends.

In addition, 13 tele-advice services will be closed at selected times from Monday, December 18 to Sunday, January 7, 2024. Normal service will resume on Monday, January 8, 2024.

For a detailed holiday schedule, please download our [opening hours infographic](#) or scroll down for more information.

- **Next week:** Closed Monday, December 18 to Friday, December 22 – COVID/Infectious Disease, with OB Internal Medicine closed on Friday, December 22.
- **Christmas week:** The following services will be closed all week: Anesthesiology, adult ENT, child & adult gynecology, child & adult psychiatry, colorectal surgery, dermatology, endocrine surgery, general surgery, geriatric psychiatry, infectious disease/COVID, OB internal medicine, orthopaedics and pediatric ENT. All other services are open Wednesday, December 27 to Friday, December 29.
- **New Year's week:** Six services are closed all week – anesthesiology, child & adult psychiatry, colorectal surgery, endocrine surgery, general surgery and geriatric psychiatry. In addition, OB internal medicine is closed on Tuesday, January 2 only. All services are closed Monday, January 1.
- **Monday, January 8:** All services resume.

[More details.](#)

Respiratory virus information

The Government of Alberta's [respiratory dashboard](#) shows an increase in respiratory viruses – in particular influenza cases – in the Calgary area.

Nearly all influenza cases are influenza A and modelling suggests this is a peak week for cases in children. Confirmed cases in adults and seniors are expected to peak over the holiday break.

[Appointments can be booked](#) for the influenza vaccine and the updated COVID-19 vaccine. [More information.](#)

EMR survey results

The critical importance of interoperability in the transfer of data or patient information was revealed as a key priority in a [primary care EMR survey](#), but there was no clear support for PCNs taking a role in negotiations or the operation of a single PCN-wide EMR.

The survey, conducted by the PCN Physician Leads' Executive and the Alberta Medical Association's Informatics Advisory Committee in June and July, was completed by 573 physicians. There were no statistically significant results regarding EMRs, but key themes included:

- The smaller EMRs are more effective in the areas of support and data migrations
- There are no clear EMR preferences with respect to EMR functionality
- New and old EMRs must meet Alberta usability and technical requirements, and provide robust support before being deployed in Alberta

Informatics-related feedback supported the importance of interoperability as the number one priority. It was also clear that work needs to be done to improve the value proposition of the Community Information Integration and Central Patient Attachment Registry (CII/CPAR).

[Download the results.](#)

Quick links

Reminder: Point of care testing for HIV, syphilis

Point of care testing for syphilis and HIV antibodies is available at selected clinics. [More information](#). Tools, clinic information and treatment guidelines related to the syphilis outbreak can also be found on the [outbreak web page](#).

Dr. Greyvenstein takes on new role

Former Calgary Zone Physician Lead Executive Dr. Ernst Greyvenstein has taken on a new role as transformation medical director for the AMA's Accelerating Change Transformation Team. [More details](#).

Practice facilitator training

There are limited spaces available for the Calgary cohort of practice facilitator core training, which begins in January 2024. [More details](#).

Surveys, engagement opportunities

IBS interview, workshop

Primary care physicians and health team members with experience managing irritable bowel syndrome are sought for a study that seeks to identify an appropriate model of care that focuses on self-management. Patient focus groups are also being arranged. Please contact adrijana.dsilva@ucalgary.ca for more information. [More details](#).

ADAPT project

The grant-funded Disease-Inclusive Pathway for Transitions in Care (ADAPT) initiative wants to recruit physicians and clinics to take part in a project that includes an interview and co-design session. The time commitment is up to 10 hours. [More details](#).