

primary cares

News & updates from the Calgary Zone



Spinal surgery tele-advice discontinued

The spinal surgery tele-advice hosted by [Specialist Link](#) has been discontinued.

Effective Monday, July 17, the service – launched in 2019 – was closed by the specialist group. The other surgical tele-advice services available via Specialist Link remain open. They are as follows:

- Cardiac surgery
- Colorectal surgery
- Endocrine surgery
- General surgery
- Orthopedic surgery
- Otolaryngology
- Pediatric otolaryngology
- Pediatric urology
- Podiatric surgery
- Surgical oncology
- Upper GI bariatrics
- Urology
- Vascular surgery

Another option for physicians and nurse practitioners seeking non-urgent advice for spinal issues is to submit an [eReferral Advice Request](#). Urgent spinal questions should be directed to RAAPID and 911, as appropriate. Physicians can also reference the Strategic Clinical Network's [low-back assessment clinical pathway](#).

Health mandate letter

The Government of Alberta has published its [health mandate letter](#), which outlines Premier Danielle Smith's expectations for Minister of Health Adriana LaGrange. Highlights include:

- Supporting primary care as the foundation of our healthcare system by assessing alternative models of care and leveraging all health care professionals. This includes continuing the work of the Modernizing Alberta's Primary Healthcare System (MAPS) initiative ... and increasing the number of Albertans attached to a medical home.

- Developing a series of reforms to the healthcare system that enhance local decision-making authority, improve health care services for all Albertans, and create a more collaborative working environment for our health care workers by incentivizing regional innovation and increasing our ability to attract and retain the health care workers we need.
- Working to address rural health challenges such as access to health care professionals.

[Read the letter.](#)

Reminder: Mental health videos, resources

Caring for patients' mental health concerns is the focus of a series of videos and resources available via Specialist Link.

- **Trauma-informed care:** [New video](#) from Dr. Christine Gibson
 - **Cognitive behavioural therapy:** [CBT for pain, day one](#) | [Day two](#)
 - **Dialectical behavioural therapy:** [Part one](#) | [Part two](#) | [Health team](#) | [Medical office assistants](#)
 - **Resource database:** Use the [Access Mental Health resource database](#)
 - **Webinar series:** Twenty-three mini videos are available as part of the Calgary Zone's popular webinars, hosted by Dr. Rick Ward and Dr. Christine Luelo. [Watch the series.](#)
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Quick links

Urea breath test kits unavailable

Due to a supply shortage of urea breath test collection kits (for helicobacter pylori), primary care providers are being asked to postpone requests. Existing appointments will be honoured, if possible. Normal service is expected to resume in August 2023. Availability of the helicobacter pylori stool antigen test is not impacted. [More information.](#)

PCN governance training

On Wednesday, September 13, from 6–8 p.m., the latest PCN governance training session will take place in Calgary. A virtual session is also planned for Thursday, October 5, from 6–8 p.m. [More information.](#)

Virtual care standard of practice

The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta has issued a memo to clarify elements of the virtual care standard of practice. [More information.](#)

Dementia poster

A poster advertising a new dementia advice service – available via Health Link 811 – can be [downloaded here](#). An item referencing the poster, which appeared in an earlier edition of this newsletter, had a broken link.