

primary cares

News & updates from the Calgary Zone



Specialist Link, by the numbers

Family physicians in the Calgary area made more than 23,000 tele-advice calls to Specialist Link over the past year and completed more than 30,000 pathway downloads.

The continued popularity of the core services offered via specialistlink.ca, launched in 2014, was a key theme of the latest Specialist Link [annual report](#), which details how the web-based service performed from April 2023 to March 2024.

Hematology (2,048 calls), obstetrics and gynecology and endocrinology were the most-requested tele-advice services, while irritable bowel syndrome (1,364 downloads), chronic diarrhea and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease were the top pathways.

[Download the report.](#)

Reminder: Prac ID update – Physicians who request tele-advice via specialistlink.ca will now see the full name and prac (practice) ID of the specialist within the call request confirmation box. This update aims to help simplify charting and billing procedures.

Service interruption: Endocrine surgery tele-advice, which has been temporarily unavailable, resumes normal service on Monday, May 6. It will be closed again, from Monday, May 20 to Wednesday May 22. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Albertans struggling to find family doctors

Visits to the Alberta Find a Doctor website topped one million for the first time last year, as Albertans struggled to find a primary care provider accepting new patients.

A total of 1,184,948 visits to albertafindadoctor.ca were reported from April 2023 to March 2024, a jump of 28 per cent compared to the previous year. Since the PCN-run website was launched in 2019, it has attracted a total of 3,387,197 visits.

However, the number of doctors taking patients dropped about 20 per cent over the past year to 163 provincially, as of Monday, April 15. In Calgary and the surrounding area, 47 doctors were listed as accepting patients – a decrease of 39 per cent in 12 months. Alberta Find a Doctor's [annual report](#) also shows that 61 nurse practitioners are listed on the website, but only four are taking new patients.

Alberta Find a Doctor is one of the initiatives referenced in the Government of Alberta's two-year Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System (MAPS) [implementation plan](#). It is set to be upgraded and expanded as part of efforts to digitally enable primary health care.

[More information](#).

Crucial conversations webinar

A recording of the Calgary Zone's latest webinar, which focused on obesity and death and dying, can now be [watched online](#).

The virtual event, which took place on Monday, April 22, was viewed live by more than 170 physicians, staff and team members. It featured the following:

- Obesity management, with Dr. David Lau ([skip to 4:03](#))
- Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID), with Dr. Jilian Arnold ([skip to 49:38](#))
- Primary care hot topics, with Dr. Christine Luelo ([skip to 1:34.57](#))

The next webinar in the series, which will focus on fibromyalgia, is scheduled to take place on Monday, June 24, at 6 p.m. [Register](#).

Measles precautions

AHS recommends that staff who are involved in direct patient care ensure they are immune to measles.

You are considered immune if you have:

- Received two doses of measles-containing vaccine (for example, MMR), or
- A documented laboratory-confirmed measles infection, or
- A blood test showing proof of immunity

[AHS staff FAQ](#). [Read the lab update](#).

Measles specimen collection: Please ensure that you are using the Puritan UniTranz-RT UTM. [More information](#).

Indigenous primary health care plan

The Government of Alberta's Indigenous primary health care plan outlines five planned outcomes, with recommendations for each.

They are culturally safe and appropriate care, access, integration, quality and Indigenous Peoples as partners. [Download the plan](#).

MAPS released: The Government of Alberta also unveiled a two-year [implementation plan](#) for [Modernizing Alberta's Health Care System](#) (MAPS).

Gynecology to join FAST June 10

Gynecology will be the latest specialty added to the Facilitated Access to Specialized Treatment (FAST) initiative on Monday, June 10.

General surgery, orthopedic surgery, urology and vascular surgery are already part of the program. [More information](#).

Quick links

PCN Pain Rounds: Activity prescription

On Wednesday, May 15, from 5:30–7 p.m., the latest webinar in the PCN Pain Rounds series will focus on *Activity Prescription: Where to Start when Everything Hurts*. [Register](#).

Insomnia and cardiometabolic health

On Thursday, May 30, from 6–8:30 p.m., Mosaic PCN is hosting a hybrid in-person/virtual education event titled *The Cardiovascular and the Metabolic: Impact of Insomnia*. The in-person portion will take place at the Marriott Calgary Airport, 2008 Airport Road NE. It is open to all PCN members and health team staff. [In-person registration](#). [Online link](#).

Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease webinar

On Wednesday, May 8, at 6:30 p.m., the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine will host a webinar that reviews current dyslipidemia guidelines and explores complex, challenging cases experienced by primary care providers in the context of cardiovascular disease risk reduction. [Register](#).

Physician Learning Plan summit

On Tuesday, June 11, the Physician Learning Plan summit will explore how to leverage a supportive team-based culture using clinical information to drive improvement and be a positive influence as part of the bigger health system evolution. [More information](#).