

COVID-19 UPDATES

Friday, May 8

Relaunch webinar

On **Monday, May 11 at noon**, leaders from AH, AHS, CPSA and AMA host a 75-minute webinar on key updates about the Alberta COVID-19 phased **relaunch plan** and answer **questions**.

The Alberta COVID 19 Relaunch Plan – What We Know Today – Information Session for Alberta Community Physicians, featuring Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Dr. Scott McLeod, Dr. Ted Braun, Dr. Francois Belanger, Dr. Paul Boucher, Dr. Brad Bahler and Dr. Janet Craig.

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Use the information to develop processes within your community practice
- Use the [CPSA COVID-19: Reopening Practice](#) document as a guide to determine which clinical care services are reasonable to resume
- Implement AH guidance to ensure the safety of patients and staff
- Understand how AH is resuming non-urgent scheduled procedures and other services.

This one-credit-per-hour Group Learning program has been certified by the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Alberta Chapter for *up to 1.25* Mainpro+ credits.

[Register today.](#)

Tracing app

The [ABTraceTogether](#) app is our best chance, in combination with robust COVID-19 testing, to get back to a more normal life until a vaccine is available.

The app does a virtual “handshake” with other active apps in its vicinity (within two metres, for a cumulative 15 minutes) and keeps this information (encrypted) stored on your phone for 21 days. If you test positive you can “push” this data to the contact tracers at AHS; they can crack the code and call your contacts.

There are some known glitches for the Apple version, with updates expected in two weeks.

We will need 40 – 70 percent of Albertans to use the app for it to make the biggest impact. Physicians can be a big driver for uptake – are you up for the challenge?

Workplace guidance

Effective Tuesday, May 4, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health released an [order](#) with high-level guidelines on **relaunching medical practices**.

Workplace Guidance for Community Health Care Settings outlines the **criteria** for policies and procedures to address the pandemic response, including:

- Communications to staff
- Workplace considerations, such as sick leave and adapting waiting rooms
- Daily screening of staff and patients
- Symptomatic staff or patients, including exceptions
- Staff and patients diagnosed with COVID-19
- Prevention (cleaning, PPE, physical distancing and gathering requirements)

Please review the order to ensure you are following the **latest government guidelines** as you relaunch your practice. It is applicable for the duration of the pandemic.

AHS's return-to-work [guide](#) for community physicians also includes information relating to clinic relaunches.

Resuming surgeries

On Monday, May 4, AHS [resumed non-urgent scheduled day surgeries](#) for cataracts, gynecological, general day surgery, nose surgery, reconstructive plastic surgery, vascular and urology.

AHS is contacting patients on waitlists to reschedule procedures, prioritizing the **most urgent** and those **waiting the longest**.

Decisions on which surgeries will proceed are made at the zone level based on the local pandemic response.

Staff and physicians redeployed from surgical services are returning to their areas of work where possible.

Quick links

Testing capacity

A \$4.5-million [investment](#) in new virus detecting technology will increase COVID-19 testing from 7,000 to 16,000 tests per day in Alberta.

Aerosol-generating procedures

An online [tool](#) can support decision-making on PPE requirements for aerosol-generating medical procedures.

Mindful practice

On **Thursdays at 7 p.m.**, Dr. Diana Meakins, University of Alberta Hospital Psychodynamic Psychiatry Service, and colleagues host one-hour drop-in classes on Mindful Practice and Discussion. [Register](#).

Research summary

Dynamed concisely summarized clinical research to [answer](#) physicians' 10 most frequently asked questions on COVID-19 relating to topics such as reinfection, transmission and medications.