

COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS) as of March 19 at 4:30 pm

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COVID-19 – THE DISEASE, SYMPTOMS, IT'S SPREAD, TESTING AND PRECAUTIONS

What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is the official name for the disease causing the novel coronavirus outbreak, which was first identified in Wuhan China and now has spread around the world. The name stands for Coronavirus Disease 2019.

What is a novel coronavirus?

- Novel coronaviruses are new strains of the coronavirus that have not been previously identified in humans. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that include common human coronaviruses that cause the common cold and more serious ones that include SARS, MERS, and most recently, COVID-19.

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms for COVID-19 are similar to those for influenza and other respiratory illnesses. The most common symptoms are fever, tiredness and a dry cough. Most people (around 80%) recover without needing medical treatment.
- Those who are older, and those with other medical problems are more likely to develop serious symptoms, which can include difficulty breathing and pneumonia. There is a risk of death in severe cases.
- Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19.

How does COVID-19 spread?

- COVID-19 is spread by others who have the virus. It is transmitted from person to person through droplets from the nose or mouth, which are spread when a person with the virus coughs or exhales. People then catch COVID-19 when they breathe in these droplets.
- These droplets can also contaminate objects or surfaces. People can then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Studies suggest that the virus only lasts a few hours on a surface, though it may be possible for it to last several days under ideal conditions. There is no evidence currently that suggests COVID-19 can be spread through imported goods.

Can COVID-19 be spread through the air?

- Current evidence indicates COVID-19 is not airborne and only transmitted through respiratory droplets when an individual coughs or exhales (see above).

Can COVID-19 be spread by a person who has no symptoms?

- Because the disease spreads through respiratory droplets, the risk of catching COVID-19 from someone with no symptoms is low. However, for many people, symptoms may be very mild. In these cases, transmission is possible – even if the person is feeling well and only experiencing a mild cough, for example.

What precautions should Albertans take to stay healthy?

To protect yourself and others:

- practice [social distancing](#)
- stay home and away from others if sick or in isolation
- wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow
- avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- avoid travel outside Canada
- [self-isolate](#) for 14 days if you were exposed to COVID-19 or recently returned from travel outside of Canada
- We have updated our travel advice and are recommending against any travel outside of the country.
- Additionally, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to first use the simple online assessment tool (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) developed by Alberta Health Services to help you decide whether you need to call Health Link 811 to be tested for COVID-19. The online assessment tool will guide you to answer questions about your symptoms and take you through steps to help determine whether you need testing.
- We are making these recommendations based on the ongoing developments outside Alberta, both in the actions being taken by other jurisdictions, as well as the increasing spread of cases around the world.
- Anyone who is feeling ill, even if they have not travelled, should stay home.

What is the best way to practise social distancing?

- To protect yourself and others:
 - keep at least 6 feet (the length of a bicycle) from others when going out for groceries, medical trips and other essential needs
 - limit the number of times you leave your home for errands
 - try to shop at less busy times
 - order online to have groceries or other items delivered if possible
 - go for a walk in your neighborhood or park while maintaining distance from others
 - avoid overcrowding in elevators or other enclosed spaces
 - follow Alberta's recommendations on mass gatherings
 - wash or sanitize your hands after touching communal surfaces
- A [fact sheet](#) on social distancing is also now available [online](#).

What other precautions can I take?

For Albertans looking to prepare for COVID-19, Alberta public health officials recommend the following:

- Stay up to date on the situation and get your information from reliable sources, such as this webpage: www.alberta.ca/COVID19.
- Have enough essential supplies (food, water and medicine) to last for 72 hours, but avoid panic buying — the unnecessary purchasing of large quantities of items.
 - For more information on how to be prepared for emergencies, go to: <https://www.alberta.ca/build-an-emergency-kit.aspx>
- Create a household plan of action. This can include these elements:
 - Talk with the people who need to be included in your plan.
 - Meet with household members, other relatives, and friends to discuss what to do if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in your community and what the needs of each person will be.
 - Plan ways to care for those who might be at greater risk for serious complications. This includes practical steps like ensuring you have sufficient medication and determining what supplies are needed, and if they can be delivered.
 - Talk with your neighbours about emergency planning.
 - Create a list of local organizations that you and your household can contact in the event you need access to information, health care services, support and resources.
 - Create an emergency contact list.
- Practice good personal health habits and plan for home-based actions:
 - Practice everyday preventive actions, like those listed in the prevention section.
 - Choose a room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy. Identify a separate bathroom for the sick person to use, if possible. Plan to clean these rooms, as needed, when someone is sick.
- Plan for potential changes at your workplace.
 - Learn about your employer's emergency operations plan.
 - Ask about what sick-leave policies and telework options are available if needed.

When someone tests positive, isn't the public at risk?

- As soon as a case is identified, our public health measures take immediate action to protect Albertans.
- Once a case is confirmed, AHS immediately conducts a risk assessment of anyone who may have come in close contact with them.
- Anyone who may have come in close contact will be asked to self-isolate at home, away from the public, until 14 days have passed since their last contact with the case, and will be closely monitored by public health officials.
- If they do develop symptoms, health officials will coordinate getting them into care immediately while ensuring that the public and health-care workers are not exposed.
- Anyone who is not contacted, is not at risk and does not need to take any additional measures

We've gotten tips about a case? Is this accurate?

- We cannot comment on any rumour or provide information regarding specific cases, due to patient confidentiality.
- We take patient confidentiality seriously, and so are appropriately balancing it with the public interest.
- Alberta's health professionals are processing a very high volume of COVID-19 test results. We are providing results to people waiting as quickly as possible, however given the high volume, there can be delays. Our target is 48 hours.
- People who have been tested will be contacted directly with their results.
- Anyone who has been tested will have been told to self-isolate until they receive their results, in order to reduce the risk of transmission. It is extremely important that they follow these instructions.
- We are being fully transparent and sharing information with Albertans when it becomes available.
- We are releasing the sex, approximate age, zone and cumulative travel history to ensure that Albertans are informed while still respecting each person's right to privacy when receiving medical care.
- Generally speaking, anytime someone tests positive for COVID-19, health officials take immediate action to protect the health of everyone involved and prevent the virus from spreading.
- This includes isolating the case, assessing all close contacts and asking anyone at risk of being exposed to self-isolate for 14 days.
- I want to stress that, if you have not been contacted directly by AHS, you are not at risk.

Couldn't these individuals have spread it to anyone they met in grocery stores or other public places?

- We take swift action to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Anyone who tested positive or who was in close contact with someone who did is asked to self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- It's important to remember how this virus spreads. Unlike measles, it is not airborne.
- At this time, it appears COVID-19 is transmitted through person-to-person spread by larger droplets, like from a cough or sneeze, or touching contaminated objects or surfaces, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Individuals who passed a confirmed case on the street are not at risk to have contracted the virus.
- We continue to act on the best possible information and alert Albertans as appropriate, including updating our travel advice and recommending against any travel outside of the country.
- Additionally, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms. If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to first use the simple online assessment tool (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) developed by Alberta Health Services to help you decide whether they need to call Health Link 811 to be tested for COVID-19. The online assessment tool will guide the individual to answer questions about their symptoms & take them through steps to help determine whether they need testing.

I'm pregnant – am I at higher risk of complications from COVID-19?

- Current evidence is limited on the risk of COVID-19 to pregnant women.

- Research on other respiratory illnesses indicates pregnant women may be at higher risk of severe illness compared to the general population. However, the limited data available to date on COVID-19 is not showing this same trend.
- Pregnant women should engage in the usual preventive actions to avoid infection, such as frequently washing hands often and avoiding people who are sick.

I'm nursing/I have a baby – how do I self-isolate? Should I stop breastfeeding?

- The main form of COVID-19 infection is through human-to-human transmission via respiratory droplets expelled when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- No evidence to date that the virus is found in the breast milk of women with COVID-19. We recommend mothers with COVID-19 take preventative actions, such as frequently washing commonly touched surfaces, washing hands before touching the baby or wearing a mask to limit the risk of spread.

People are saying there are reports that people have 'recovered' and asking questions about these cases – are they still contagious? When were they deemed to be recovered?

- Any cases of COVID-19 are considered to have recovered after their symptoms end, followed by two successive negative test results 24 hours apart. People with mild symptoms who do not need to be admitted to a hospital are deemed not contagious anymore 10 days after the onset of their first symptom if they have improved and do not have a fever.

Is the virus transmitted through animals? Is it transmitted through water?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a list of questions and answers about COVID-19, how it spreads and how it is affecting people worldwide. It is available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>.
- Visit alberta.ca/COVID19 for the latest information on the situation in Alberta.

TESTING

Who are you testing?

- We are currently testing anyone who has symptoms and:
 - travelled from anywhere outside of Canada, or
 - had close contact with a person with symptoms/confirmed COVID-19 who had travelled outside of Canada in the 14 days before their illness.
- Any individual in a community setting who is swabbed for respiratory illness is also being tested for COVID-19.
 - This applies to all hospital, emergency, urgent care and long-term care facilities.
- We are also conducting testing of samples from the existing influenza surveillance network as well as other returning travellers or those in close contact with them.
- Alberta Health Services has also developed a simple online assessment tool (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to help individuals decide whether they need to call Health Link 811 to be tested for COVID-19.

The online assessment tool will guide individuals to answer questions about their symptoms and take them through steps to help determine whether they need testing.

Is Alberta's current testing capacity enough?

- We have dramatically expanded testing in Alberta and will be increasing capacity further in the coming days.
- This includes opening assessment centres, where needed, increasing the number of nurses at Health Link 811 and procuring additional lab equipment.
- Alberta Health Services has also developed a simple online assessment tool (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to help individuals decide whether they need to call Health Link 811 to be tested for COVID-19. The online assessment tool will guide individuals to answer questions about their symptoms and take them through steps to help determine whether they need testing.
- We are confident that we will be able to meet Albertans' testing needs.

Where is the testing being done?

- Testing for the novel coronavirus was originally done both in Alberta and at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.
- We originally announced presumptive cases of COVID-19 and sent samples to the National Microbiology Laboratory to confirm the result. This is best practice for a province's initial confirmations.
- As of March 9, positive samples tested by Alberta laboratories no longer require further confirmation from the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

Where are the assessment centres located?

- We do not share the exact locations as we do not want to confuse public who may believe that they can walk-in.
- Again, these are not walk-in clinics. Those individuals who are referred to these clinics are provided with location specifics.
- General locations and their relative traffic so far:
 - We now have three assessment centres open in Edmonton – North, South and West.
 - Edmonton's North Assessment Centre has seen 1,955 patients since opening on March 7th.
 - Edmonton's South Assessment Centre has seen 677 patients since opening on March 14th.
 - Edmonton's West Fast-track Assessment Centre has seen 122 patients since opening on March 15.
 - Calgary's West (RRDTC) indoor Assessment Centre has seen 2,916 patients since opening March 7.
 - Calgary's West Fast-track Assessment Centre has seen 957 patients since opening March 10.
 - Calgary's South Calgary Fast-track Assessment Centre opened on March 17.

- An additional Drive-Thru Assessment Centre in Calgary's NE quadrant is planned to open the weekend of March 22/23.
- Fast-track Assessment Centres in Airdrie and the Bow Valley are also under consideration.
- Red Deer's Fast Track Assessment Centre has seen 582 patients since opening March 14.
- Camrose's Fast Track Assessment Centre has seen 164 patients since opening March 14.
- In South Zone and North Zones we are doing assessment in community either through public health centres or home visits.

What are the Fast-track centres and how do they operate?

- These sites are safe, and do not present any safety risk whatsoever to the general public. Our public health staff are fully trained in infection prevention and control protocols.
- These sites enable people who have been referred by Health Link for testing to simply drive to one of these locations, and get swabbed by a public health nurse through their car window.
- Once they've been swabbed, they then drive home and self-isolate until they get their results back.
- This model has shown to work well in other jurisdictions. Feedback is it is more convenient for those being tested. There is no need to enter a clinic, and there is no need for patients to don PPE.
- It eliminates spending time in a waiting room, reducing risk of transmission. And, it increases our capacity to test, and minimizes risk of public transmission.

Can we (MEDIA) go visit one?

- We won't be providing media access to the assessment centres, for a number of reasons.
- It would not be prudent or safe to let media into areas where people who may have COVID-19 are being assessed.
- In addition, we have to ensure that we protect patient privacy.
- And, we have to prevent any disruption to our healthcare teams during this time.
- We have developed b-roll footage, which can be provided at anytime.

Are assessment centres safe?

- We have taken every precaution to ensure that assessment centres are safe for patients being tested, staff and the public.
- Infection prevention control and personal protective equipment measures are in place at all assessment centres. These ensure that COVID-19 is not transmitted to staff or other patients
- Individuals who visit the centres for their referred testing are required to wear masks, and all staff working at the site are also wearing masks, gowns and all other necessary personal protective equipment.

- Additionally, enhanced cleaning is in place, to address the risk of droplet contact transmission on surfaces.

How are we coping with current volumes?

- We have significantly extended our lab testing hours for COVID-19 testing, starting early in the morning and typically ending after midnight.
- We are in the process of bringing in more well-trained staff from other areas of the lab network, as well as areas such as molecular pathology and genetics.
- We are bringing in additional laboratory instruments to help increase capacity.
- Fast-track drive-up assessment services have been established in Calgary Zone, Edmonton Zone, as well as Red Deer and Camrose, to increase capacity and speed of service for COVID-19 testing.
 - The first drive-up service was established on March 10. There are now five fast track, drive-up assessment centres operating with one more scheduled to open in Calgary and two more under consideration for Airdrie and the Bow Valley.
- Alberta Health Services has also developed a simple online assessment tool (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to help individuals decide whether they need to call Health Link 811 to be tested for COVID-19. The online assessment tool will guide individuals to answer questions about their symptoms and take them through steps to help determine whether they need testing.

What are the current wait times for testing appointments and testing results?

- Testing volumes are extremely high right now.
- Please keep self-isolating until you've been tested and received your results.
- We know this might be frustrating – thanks for your patience.

If someone was ill with symptoms before these protocols were put in place and recovered, can they still be tested? Should they?

- If 14 days have passed after the onset of their first symptom, anyone who has recovered will be clinically assessed as not contagious anymore and does not require testing at this time.

How can I follow along and stay-up-to-date with new developments?

- Visit alberta.ca/COVID19 for the latest information.

SELF-ISOLATION

I was requested to self-isolate. What does that mean?

- Public health officials recommend the following self-isolation guidelines:
 - Avoid close contact with other people, especially those with chronic conditions, a compromised immune system, or seniors.
 - Do not attend work, social events or any other public gatherings.
 - Watch for symptoms like fever, cough or difficulty breathing in yourself or a family member.

- Should any symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- [For more information, consult the self-isolation guidelines.](#)

Is their employer closed? Should co-workers be self-isolated?

- AHS works closely with an employer and any co-workers who are in close contact and at risk of exposure will be self-isolated.
- Alberta Health has not recommended that any businesses close to protect the public health from COVID-19.
- Some employers have made their own operational decision to temporarily close. That is the decision of the employer, not Alberta Health.

How will you know if someone in self-isolation is safe?

- If 14 days pass without symptoms, anyone in isolation will be clinically assessed as not having COVID-19.
- Any cases of the virus will need to have their symptoms end, followed by two successive negative test results 24 hours apart.

If family members or travellers are self-isolating in a household, do other members of the same household also need to self-isolate? Specifically, if no one is showing symptoms?

- At this time, no, other household members are not required to self-isolate, but they should monitor for symptoms (and self-isolate if symptoms occur).
- Should any symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

What should people do if friends/loved ones refuse to self-isolate?

- Take proper precautions and if possible, distance yourself from the individual to limit your risk of exposure if they have symptoms.
- Remind the person that not following public health guidelines puts people at risk.
- If there are supports that person needs to self-isolate, consider what options your community may have to provide those supports and encourage the person to reach out to those services.

How long do people need to self-isolate if symptoms present? 14 days total or 14 days after symptoms disappear? ** This is a big one

- Fourteen days from the onset of symptoms.

Should people at higher risk of complications be pre-emptively self-isolating?

- Right now, people are being asked to self-isolate if one or more of the following applies:
 - They recently returned from travel outside Canada
 - They have cough or fever, fatigue and/or difficulty breathing
 - They are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
 - They have been asked to self-isolate by a health care professional for another reason

- If you don't meet these criteria, we are not requesting that you self-isolate. If you are at a higher risk of complications from COVID-19, you may wish to stay at home and limit your time in groups and public spaces. We also encourage all Albertans to stay away from people who are sick, wash hands frequently and take the other steps for prevention outlined on alberta.ca/COVID19.

TRAVEL AND RETURNING TRAVELLERS

A flight attendant is isolating. Are passengers at risk?

- It's important to remember that COVID-19 is not airborne. It is spread by droplets or touching surfaces and then touching your face, so close contact is required.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

What advice are you providing Albertans who want to travel?

- We are recommending against any travel outside of the country. Given the rapid global spread of the virus, it is no longer possible to assess health risks for the duration of the trip.
- Additionally, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- We are making these recommendations based on the ongoing developments outside Alberta, both in the actions being taken by other jurisdictions, as well as the increasing spread of cases around the world.

What about families of returning travellers, do they also need to self-isolate?

- At this time, self-isolation does not extend to family members. However family members must practice good hygiene and take precautions to reduce potential exposure.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

Can people continue to final destination or must they self-isolate immediately upon arriving back in the country?

- They should self-isolate when they arrive home. However, if they experience any symptoms before their trip begins, they need to alert airport/travel officials and NOT take public transport.

A family member returned from international travel after March 12, does the whole household need to self-isolate? What should we do?

- At this time, self-isolation does not extend to family members. However, family members must practice good hygiene, take precautions to reduce potential exposure, and should self-isolate if symptoms emerge.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

I just returned from outside of Canada, what am I supposed to do?

- Travel outside Canada is not recommended at this time. All Albertans returning from outside Canada after March 12 should self-isolate for 14 days after arrival in Canada and monitor for symptoms.
- If you recently returned from outside Canada:
 1. [self-isolate](#) for 14 days, even if you're feeling well
 2. [monitor for symptoms](#) such as cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing
 3. If symptoms occur, complete the simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required

I just returned from somewhere in Canada, am I at risk, and what are my next steps?

- If you have recently returned from somewhere in Canada, [check the list of affected flights for updates](#).
 1. [self-isolate](#) for 14 days if you were found to be in an affected seat.
 2. [monitor for symptoms](#) such as cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing
 3. If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- Passengers who were on the plane but not in affected seats are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms for 14 days.

- If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

How should I travel home from the airport? Should I take a taxi or airport shuttle? Will I potentially put other passengers at risk?

- If you are well, there should be no concern.
- If you have a fever or cough or don't feel well, sit a safe distance from the driver/other passengers, if possible, cover your coughs and sneezes, and practice good hygiene. It is also recommend to wear a mask, if possible.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

What about people who are picking up international travelers (family, taxi/Uber drivers)?

- If the international traveller(s) are well, there should be no concern. If they are ill, they should be kept a safe distance from other passengers, if possible. The traveller(s) should also wear a mask, if possible.
- All Albertans should practise good hygiene, such as frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least twenty seconds, and should stay home if feeling ill.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

I'm a tourist from another Canadian province/territory. Do these rules apply to me?

- Yes, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever or cough linked to recent travel or other health concerns should contact Health Link 811.
- Anyone who is feeling ill, even if they have not travelled, should stay home and not visit hospitals, long-term care facilities or supportive living accommodations.
 - If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

How do I self-isolate if I'm staying in a bed-and-breakfast?

- Self-isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people. This means all situations where you may come in contact with others, such as social gatherings, work, school/university, child care, athletic events, faith-based gatherings, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, shopping malls, and any public gatherings.
- You should, where possible, avoid using public transportation including buses, taxis, or ride sharing. As much as possible, you should limit your contact with people and avoid having visitors, but it is okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food or other things you may need.
- You can also use delivery or pick up services for errands such as grocery shopping. If you need to leave your home for an urgent errand, such as picking up essential medication, as a precaution to further reduce risk of spread, you can wear a surgical mask while you are out.

I know someone who has symptoms/has recently travelled and is refusing to self-isolate. What should I do?

- Take proper precautions and if possible, distance yourself from the individual to limit your risk of exposure if they have symptoms.
- Remind the person that not following public health guidelines puts people at risk.
- If there are supports that person needs to self-isolate, consider what options your community may have to provide those supports and encourage the person to reach out to those services.

MASKS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Should I wear a mask to protect myself?

- Masks can be important in certain situations. When sick, wearing a mask helps prevent us from passing illnesses on to other people. This is why we ask people who have a cough or other respiratory symptoms to wear a mask when visiting an emergency department or clinic.
- If you are healthy, medical masks are not recommended as they can give a false sense of security as they do not fully eliminate the risk of illness. Masks can easily become contaminated and need to be changed frequently and fitted properly for them to provide sufficient protection.

What are n95 masks? Are they required?

- N95 masks are special protective masks that protect the wearer from airborne particles. These masks are recommended for health-care workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health-care facility). For the general public who will typically not find themselves in these settings, a N95 mask is not recommended.

Does the province have enough PPE? When will you run out?

- Alberta has been preparing for months, and has a stockpile of medical equipment available.

- One of the benefits of having a single, provincial healthcare system is that we are able to quickly and effectively respond to events such as this, both at a local level and at a provincial level when necessary.
- Alberta has a stockpile of equipment and medical/surgical supplies that is pre-positioned across the province, allowing for a quick and effective provincial response.
- AHS placed and received an order for additional PPE and other equipment in January, when the virus outbreak was largely limited to China and a select number of other countries.
- The federal government has also committed to help support additional supplies across the country.
- We are working with AHS to implement processes to ensure that our existing supplies are used shared with those who need it, while also being used as effectively as possible.

Are all family physicians getting PPE? Why not?

- Alberta Health and AHS support family doctors with personal protective equipment.
- With the increase in global spread, and travel related cases in the province, we want to be sure that family doctors have access to personal protective equipment in a time when they are having difficulty ordering these supplies from their usual providers.
- Alberta Health Services zones will be working with primary care networks to move this forward, with priority given to those family doctors who are doing testing for COVID-19 in their offices.
- We are committed to working with physicians and other health care providers to ensure a collaborative response to the evolving COVID-19 outbreak.

Is PPE being provided to first responders like firefighters, paramedics and non-healthcare personnel?

Do clinic staffers gear up in haz mat suits or other measures?

- At this time, the novel coronavirus appears to be spread by droplets and contact, so standard contact and droplet precautions would be taken.
- This includes the appropriate personal protective equipment such as gloves, a long-sleeved gown, surgical mask and eye protection.
- These are routine practices that are also used when treating influenza or any other severe respiratory illness.
- No additional or novel coronavirus equipment are recommended at this time.

HEALTH LINK 811

Why are you asking people to complete a self-assessment and then call Health Link 811? Shouldn't I go to the hospital if I have symptoms?

- Individuals with symptoms and at risk of COVID-19 (such as travellers returning from outside of Canada), should not visit emergency departments or urgent care centres to avoid potential spreading of the virus.

- Individuals with symptoms are asked to first use Alberta Health Services' simple online assessment tool (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to help you decide whether they need to call Health Link 811 to be tested for COVID-19. The online assessment tool will guide the individual to answer questions about their symptoms & take them through steps to help determine whether they need testing.
- Calling Health Link 811 is the best way to arrange for quick assessment and testing, if required.

What is being done to address Health Link wait times?

- Alberta Health Services has developed a simple online assessment tool (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to help individuals decide whether they need to call Health Link 811 to be tested for COVID-19. The online assessment tool will guide the individual to answer questions about their symptoms and take them through steps to help determine whether they need testing.
- Health Link continues to be critical to the COVID-19 response and case management.
- Health Link is regularly receiving more than 5,700 calls a day. Given this volume, wait times can be high, particularly during peak times of 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. and 6 a.m. – 10 p.m.
- We are working hard to manage wait times. Health Link is training additional clinical staff to join the Health Link team rapidly, to provide dedicated additional COVID-19 support.
- We know that waiting times can be frustrating and thank the public for continued patience. Albertans can help the call volumes by
 - considering visiting alberta.ca/covid for information, if you do not need a health assessment.
 - calling Health Link during non-peak times, if possible, for those who need a health assessment.
 - if you are awaiting COVID test results, please do not call Health Link.
- Health Link does not have access to test results. If you have been tested for COVID, you will be called directly with your test results.
- It's important for Albertans to understand what COVID-19 is and what it means for them. Anyone looking for information about COVID-19, including what it means for them, how to prepare, or how to protect themselves, can find that info on alberta.ca/COVID19.

FOOD HANDLING

What is being done to focus on food processing facilities?

- It's important to remember COVID-19 is not a food-borne pathogen.
- This is not to dismiss the importance of all food processing facilities following appropriate food handling precautions in accordance with Food Regulations and other applicable provincial and federal legislation.
 - Precautions include cleanliness, good personal hygiene, and proper hand washing as often as necessary to prevent contamination of food or food areas.
- In addition, the Chief Medical Officer of Health has recommended that any Albertan who is ill with influenza-like symptoms such as fever or cough stay at home for 14 days if they are sick.

Do people need to take steps to disinfect purchased goods (particularly stuff like fruit and vegetables) above and beyond what they'd normally do?

- The virus is primarily transmitted through person-to-person spread by larger droplets, like from a cough or sneeze.
- It can also be passed by touching contaminated objects or surfaces, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- While the virus can live under ideal circumstances (such as on stainless steel) for several days, it is generally only live on surfaces like paper or plastic for a few hours.
- There is no evidence of the virus being spread by packaging mail, grocery goods or other items.
- As always the best steps to prevent transmission is for Albertans to wash their hands, regularly clean surfaces and follow the other recommended steps on alberta.ca/COVID19.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND PANDEMIC PLANNING

Have you increased emergency protocols?

- A Public Health Emergency was declared March 17, 2020.
- Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services are using emergency response processes. The Alberta Emergency Management Agency Provincial Operations Centre is at a Level 4 (of 4) to assist in the co-ordination.

Does Alberta have a pandemic plan in place? Is it still accurate/applicable for this virus?

- The Alberta Pandemic Influenza Plan is a joint plan of Alberta Health and AHS. It has guided, influenced and informed the Alberta response.
- The plan was developed by Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, and the Alberta Emergency Management Agency.
- Aspects of the Pandemic Plan based on medical assumptions relevant only to influenza do not necessarily apply to COVID-19.
- In 2019, the pandemic influenza plan was the basis of a series of provincial emergency management exercises to practice the Government of Alberta's pandemic preparedness and response processes.

What funding is allocated for pandemic planning and response?

- Government has committed an additional \$500 million to the COVID-19 response. The new funding will ensure front-line health professionals have the tools they need for testing, surveillance and treatment of patients as the province works to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Charitable and non-profit groups will immediately receive an additional \$60 million to support seniors and other vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19.
- Emergency Isolation Support for individuals (\$50 million funding) announced March 18.
- Utility payment and student loan repayment holiday announced March 18.

- The Alberta government will also take any necessary additional measures to help ensure the health, safety, and economic security of Alberta.

Should people be hoarding food or stocking up on supplies?

- It is always best practice for individuals to have at least three days worth of supplies on hand, whether due to sickness, an ice storm, or a pandemic situation.
- A basic emergency kit should include water, non-perishable food items, toiletries, medication and other items.
- For more information on how to be prepared for emergencies, go to: <https://www.alberta.ca/build-an-emergency-kit.aspx>
- The Retail Council of Canada has confirmed to us that retailers are well-positioned to continue to supply Albertans with the foods and goods they need.
 - The supply chain is secure. There is inventory available to refill shelves daily.
 - There is plenty of inventory in warehouses and in the supply chain to meet the needs of Albertans.
 - Some store shelves and in-store inventory are depleted as retailers met the equivalent of two months of demand in just a few days.
 - The Canada-U.S. border remains open for truckers and rail, hauling large supplies of goods between the two countries.
 - Public health officials suggest that you can prepare by having 72 hours worth of food and supplies at home. We do not recommend stockpiling goods.

What services are available right now to support Government of Alberta staff to work remotely?

- Service Alberta already provides the following services to facilitate mobile or work-from-home capabilities for Government of Alberta (GoA) staff:
 - GoA-managed mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets are setup with the ability to access GoA emails and other services.
 - GoA-managed laptops can be setup with the ability to connect remotely to the GoA network through secure software.
- This can be requested from the Service Desk.
 - Video conferencing facilities are available to all staff through instant messaging, webinar hosting, and other tools.
 - Users can connect to the GoA environment from their own home systems through our secure Citrix environment.

Are you ramping up cleaning in government buildings?

- Employees should always maintain clean work stations and offices.
- We are ensuring that soap and hand sanitizer stations are kept full.
- Regular and thorough hand-washing by employees, contractors and customers is required at all times to keep our workplaces safe from the spread of germs.
- We are monitoring the situation very closely and working with our partners at Alberta Health.

What if someone violates prohibitions put in place by the Chief Medical Officer?

- Anyone violating the prohibitions can be subject to penalties under the Public Health Act. The nature of these penalties can vary. Any person who contravenes an order of the Chief Medical Officer of Health is guilty of an offence and is liable to a fine of \$100 per day. Police officers have the authority to enforce these orders. Also, the Minister or a regional health authority may apply to the Court for any order it considers necessary to enforce the Public Health Act.

MASS GATHERINGS

What is a mass gathering?

- A mass gathering is any event or assembling that brings together people in a single room or single space at the same time, such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, place of worship, large conference room, meeting hall, cafeteria, theater, or any other confined indoor or confined outdoor space.
- Mass gatherings do not include normal operations at airports and shopping centres, or other spaces people may be moving or walking about as part of normal activities of daily living. It also does not include typical office environments or retail or grocery stores where large numbers of people are present.

Why are organizers being asked to cancel mass gatherings? What types of events are being cancelled?

- We are taking COVID-19 extremely seriously, and acting quickly to minimize risk and keep Albertans safe and healthy.
- In light of the extraordinary circumstances, we are issuing recommendations on mass gatherings to limit the potential spread of COVID-19.
- New public health measures are now recommended to limit the time Albertans spend in large crowds and crowded spaces. Effective immediately:
 - Mass gatherings are now limited to no more than 50 attendees.
 - This includes worship gatherings and family events, such as weddings and funerals.
 - This does not include: grocery stores, shopping centres, health-care facilities, airports, the legislature and other essential services.
 - Albertans are prohibited from attending public recreation facilities and private entertainment facilities.
 - This includes gyms, swimming pools, arenas, science centres, museums, art galleries, community centres, children's play centres, casinos, racing entertainment centres and bingo halls.
 - Albertans are restricted from attending bars and nightclubs, where minors are prohibited by law.
 - Sit-down restaurants, cafes, coffee shops, food courts and other food-serving facilities, including those with a minors-allowed liquor license, are limited to 50% capacity to a maximum of 50 people.
 - Take-out, delivery or drive-through service is permitted
 - Licensed facilities are permitted to deliver liquor
 - Buffet restaurants are an exception and must close

- Events that do not meet these criteria can proceed, but risk mitigation must be in place such as sanitizer stations and distancing between attendees.

What about international events?

- Effective immediately, the Alberta government is asking all large gatherings or international events in the province to be cancelled and advising Albertans against travel outside of the country.
- Any event that has more than 50 attendees should be cancelled.
- Travel outside of the country is not being recommended at this time. Given the rapid global spread of the virus, it is no longer possible to assess health risks for the duration of the trip.

What about grocery stores and shopping centres, etc.? These places are likely to be busier than usual with people stocking up on supplies. Should they be avoided?

- At this time, the public health restrictions do not extend to grocery stores, airports or shopping centres.
- All Albertans should practise good hygiene, such as frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least twenty seconds, and should stay home if feeling ill.
- It's important to remember that COVID-19 is not airborne. It is spread by droplets or touching surfaces and then touching your face, so close contact is required.
- In the event of someone testing positive for COVID-19, or being a close contact, AHS will contact anyone at risk.
- Please visit alberta.ca/COVID19 for up-to-date information.

Do restrictions apply to public rest stops? Private campsites?

- See the directions regarding mass gatherings – nothing over 50 people. But these particular facilities would not be closing – they're neither private entertainment facilities or recreation facilities.

Why haven't malls been shut down? Restaurants and stores each have to have only 50 people in at a time, but otherwise, large shopping malls can remain open?

- At this time, large shopping malls and other setting such as Grocery stores, health care facilities, airports and other essential services are not been shut down. Dr. Deena Hinshaw and her team at Alberta Health is continually assessing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 to ensure that Albertans are as safe as possible.
- While shopping malls and other settings remain open, Albertans are encouraged to maintain social distancing and limit the amount of time they spend in crowded spaces. Albertans are discouraged from attending shopping malls or other public spaces unless it is necessary. If necessary to attend a mall, social distancing should apply. Individuals should maintain a 2 meter distance between each other and not crowd together on elevators.
- Dr. Hinshaw has reinforced that we must take measures to improve sanitization and cleanliness in all spaces, including shopping malls.

Can I continue going to daily prayer service at my place of worship?

- We are taking COVID-19 extremely seriously, and acting quickly to minimize risk and keep Albertans safe and healthy.
- In light of the extraordinary circumstances, we have issued recommendations on mass gatherings to limit the potential spread of COVID-19.
- Alberta has announced new public health measures prohibiting any event with more than 50 attendees.
- This includes worship gatherings and family events, such as weddings and funerals.

What about long-term care facilities? Can I still go and visit my family members?

- We are taking COVID-19 extremely seriously, and acting quickly to minimize risk and keep Albertans safe and healthy.
 - Only essential visits to any continuing care or long-term care facility in Alberta are recommended:
 - Individuals over 60 years of age and those with pre-existing health conditions are most at risk of severe symptoms from COVID-19.
 - Families and friends of those in these facilities to think of other ways besides visiting that they can support and encourage their loved ones through this difficult time.

What about visits to congregate living sites?

- Effective immediately, we are restricting visitors to all congregate living sites.
- Residents are at extreme risk if exposed to COVID – 19.
- We are asking that visitors are restricted to one or two people at a time and that those visitors be immediate family or designated support persons only.
- This will reduce the risk of loved ones being exposed to Covid-19.
- We ask you to also restrict visitation of children as children do not necessarily show symptoms of COVID-19.
- If you are ill with fever, cough or sore throat, please do not visit.
- If you have any symptoms, and if there is an absolute critical need for visitation to occur, such as in an end of life situation, visitors need to be equipped with PPE suitable for droplet and contact precautions, escorted to and from the room, and must not stop to visit with any other residents either before or after visiting loved-ones.

Should businesses consider shutting down/closing their doors while the mass gathering restrictions are in place?

- Alberta Health has not recommended that any businesses close to protect the public health from COVID-19.
- However, businesses should self-assess and find alternate ways to organize large group meetings, or employ mitigation strategies to limit risk.
- All municipalities, businesses and other organizations should continue business continuity planning to prepare critical operations for any potential interruption.

- All Albertans should practise good hygiene, such as frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least twenty seconds, and should stay home if feeling ill.

What about smaller events like weddings, birthday parties, meetings, etc.? Should these types of events still proceed?

- Smaller events with 50 or fewer people can still proceed, but risk mitigation must be in place, such as:
 - Reducing the number of participants or changing the venue to prevent crowding;
 - Recommend those at high-risk of severe disease not attend the event;
 - Staggering arrivals and departures;
 - Providing packaged refreshments instead of a buffet;
 - Increasing access to handwashing stations;
 - Clean surfaces often that are frequently touched;
 - Promoting personal protective practices (hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, staying home if ill);
 - Offering virtual or live - streamed activities; and
 - Changing the event program to reduce high risk activities such as those that require physical contact between participants.
- All Albertans should practise good hygiene, such as frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least twenty seconds, and should stay home if feeling ill.

Should I still go to work?

- Practicing good hygiene is the most important thing Albertans can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This includes cleaning your hands regularly, avoiding touching your face, and staying home and away from others if you are sick.
- Anyone with specific health questions or concerns should call Health Link at 811 for assessment and health advice.

How will you enforce the restrictions on mass gatherings?

- The coming weeks are vital in our fight to protect Alberta from COVID-19.
- We are calling on every Albertan and organization to assist our public health efforts and do their very best to comply with the public health guidance.

Some gatherings are being closed that don't fit the provincial guidelines. Why?

- We are taking COVID-19 extremely seriously, and acting quickly to minimize risk and keep Albertans safe and healthy.
- In light of the extraordinary circumstances, we have issued restrictions on mass gatherings to limit the potential spread of COVID-19.
- Local authorities may choose to close additional areas or facilities at their discretion, but may not relax or reduce the provincial restrictions.

JUBILEE AUDITORIA

How long will the Jubilee Auditoria be closed?

- We are uncertain at this time how long the Auditoria will be closed.
- We will continue to monitor the situation and follow the recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- We will provide updates to our website and social media channels as they become available.

Are you closing because a visitor or staff member tested positive for COVID-19?

- We closed based on the recommendations to cancel mass gatherings over 250 people by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- At this time we have no confirmed cases of COVID-19 related to the Jubilee Auditoria.

How will we be refunded for shows that are cancelled?

- If your show has been cancelled, and you purchased your ticket through TicketMaster, you will be notified via e-mail and provided options for a refund.
- If your show has been rescheduled, hang onto your tickets and they will be honoured for the new performance date.
 - It may take a few days to determine if your show has been cancelled or rescheduled, so please be patient as this situation evolves.

When will I know if a show booked later in the year is cancelled?

- There are two ways you will be notified about a show cancellation as that information becomes available:
 - The first is through our website and social media channels;
 - The second is through an e-mail from TicketMaster advising of your options for a refund, or holding on to your tickets in the event the show is rescheduled.

Will my graduation ceremony at the Jubilee Auditoria be cancelled?

- It is too early to confirm cancellations into April, May and June.
- We will be working closely with your school to review our options that may include cancellation, rescheduling, or proceeding if the situation allows.

HISTORIC SITES AND MUSEUMS

Are the historic sites and museums going to close because of COVID-19?

- Albertans are prohibited from attending public recreation facilities, private entertainment facilities and cultural centres and facilities.

- This includes gyms, swimming pools, arenas, science centres, museums, art galleries, community centres, children's play centres, casinos, racing entertainment centres and bingo halls.

For sites with food services or bars

Are you going to close the café/restaurant/bar?

- Effective March 17, sit-down restaurants, cafes, coffee shops, food courts and other food-serving facilities, including those with a minors-allowed liquor license, are limited to 50% capacity to a maximum of 50 people.
 - Take-out, delivery or drive-through service is permitted
 - Licensed facilities are permitted to deliver liquor
 - Buffet restaurants are an exception and must close

BLOOD DONATIONS

Can people still donate blood during the pandemic?

- The need for blood donors remains strong. It is safe to donate blood during COVID-19 and donations can help save lives.
- Blood donor centres across Canada are places of wellness within Canada's health system.
- Blood donation can help address the feeling of helplessness people have in the face of COVID-19. Gaining a sense of control during this situation can help contribute to an overall sense of wellbeing.
- To learn more, visit Canadian Blood Services website at: blood.ca

BILLING CODE FOR DOCTORS

Is there a new billing code for doctors to use when they are dealing with COVID-19 remotely?

- Alberta Health has activated a billing code, know as 03.01AD, which was also used during the H1N1 response. Physicians have received a bulleting on the code which will allow them to bill for phone calls they are receiving regarding COVID-19.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS

Should essential services workers – police, firefighters, nurses, doctors, paramedics, etc. – be going to work if they feel ill?

We encourage all Albertans with flu-like symptoms such as a fever or a cough, no matter where they work, to self-isolate for 14 days from the start of their symptoms. Testing is not required to follow this advice. We continue to look at our testing capacity and how best we can use the resources available.

What should essential service workers do when returning from travel?

For essential service workers who are feeling well but returned from travel in the last 14 days, some groups have been granted exemptions as long as they continue to feel well, with extra mitigating measures in place to prevent the possibility of spread should they start to feel ill at work. Exemptions are assessed on a case-by-case basis for specific groups of essential service workers.

PHARMACEUTICALS

There are reports of people stockpiling medication. What is the government doing in response?

- To ensure Albertans continue to have access to essential medications and to help pharmacists address this situation, we will be recommending that pharmacies provide a maximum 30-day supply of prescription drugs.
- We recognize this means that Albertans will need to refill their prescriptions more often.
- Albertans should speak with their pharmacist about when it is appropriate to fill their prescriptions.
- To assist with the added cost, those with Alberta government-sponsored drug coverage will pay a lower co-payment of up to \$8 per prescription for a 30 day supply. The current co-payment is up to \$25 per prescription.
- Other provinces are implementing similar supply measures to ensure a consistent approach across the country.

Should people take ibuprofen for COVID-19 symptoms?

- Currently, there is no strong evidence to indicate ibuprofen could make COVID-19 symptoms worse, beyond the usual known side effects that limit the use of ibuprofen in certain populations.
- Until we have more information, [people may wish](#) to take paracetamol/acetaminophen to treat COVID-19 symptoms, unless your doctor has told you paracetamol/acetaminophen is not suitable for you.
- Those already taking ibuprofen for other conditions should not stop without consulting a doctor.

DENTAL HEALTH

Are we going to direct dental offices to close?

- The Alberta Dental Association and College have introduced a mandatory suspension of all non-emergency dental treatment and services. However, dentists may continue to provide emergency treatment, but must take proper risk mitigation.

CLOSE-CONTACT INDUSTRIES (HAIR-STYLING, MASSAGE, ETC.)

Are we giving any direction to employees who work in close-contact industries?

- Take The same preventative measures that are being suggested to all Albertans, including thorough cleaning procedures and hand-washing. Additionally, it is recommended that service providers ask customers if they are feeling sick and recommending those who are to follow guidelines for those experiencing symptoms.

BABYLON BY TELUS HEALTH APP

Is this an example of investing in a private company to take over health care services?

- No. Through this program, our government continues to invest in publicly funded health care. While TELUS will hire the physicians, government is paying their salaries through an alternate relationship plan (ARP).

Will this program save the province money?

- The province will see some cost-savings because the program will reduce the number of emergency room visits. The program makes physicians more accessible to Albertans who don't have their own family doctor or who live in a community with limited health care services.
- Being able to consult with a physician virtually means fewer visits to more costly walk-in clinics and hospital emergency rooms.
- The app also has an AI-powered symptom checker. It's available 24/7 and, where appropriate, can offer other courses of action for patients that would eliminate the need to see a doctor.
- The program is also an ARP, which supports government's commitment to take a smarter approach to promoting innovation and attracting investment in the health sector. Both of these things can lead to better efficiencies in health care.

How can an app take the place of an in-person consultation with a real-life physician?

- Patients who use the app meet in real-time with real-life physicians who are licensed to practice medicine in Alberta.
- In a virtual visit, physicians can provide many of the same services as a doctor would during an in-person visit, including a video-based physical exam that looks at general appearance, breathing, joint colour and range of motion, hydration status, mental status exam, skin lesions, ability to bear weight, activity level, extra-ocular movements, facial symmetry, tremors and more.
- Physicians who consult with patients using the app can also order prescriptions, labs, imaging or referrals if required.

Is there a fee for a virtual appointment?

- There is no charge for patients who have Alberta Health Care to visit a physician using the app.

How are you going to find physicians to participate in this program? Physicians are leaving the province and you're having trouble attracting new ones.

- This program will actually alleviate some of the physician shortages Alberta is experiencing in some areas.

- Using the app, Albertans anywhere in the province can consult with a physician. The app will make it easier for Albertans who would otherwise find it difficult to meet with or even find a physician. This includes those who live in rural or more isolated areas where health care is limited, people who don't have a family physician, and those who have mobility or travel issues.

Will “virtual physicians” be less qualified?

- TELUS Health typically hires physicians who have at least three years experience. Many of them already have established practices in the community and have the capacity to take on more patients. All physicians are licensed to practice Medicine in Alberta.

Is the government paying TELUS as a private clinic?

- Our government isn't paying TELUS anything. We are paying the salaries of physicians participating in Babylon, just as we publicly fund all Alberta physicians. The ARP is an alternative compensation model that provides a more stable way for physicians to be paid.

If pay is comparable, why would a physician switch from the fee-for-service model to this ARP?

- This ARP, like many ARPs, offers benefits beyond monetary compensation. This is a good fit for physicians who have capacity to add patients to their practice. And it would appeal to those who want the flexibility to spend more time with patients, such as those with complex needs, for example, without reducing the compensation they receive.
- ARPs also remove the need for the physician to act as gatekeeper. Babylon by TELUS uses a multi-disciplinary team – including family physicians, nurse practitioners, mental health therapists, dietitians, clinical operators and support staff. Patients are directed to the most appropriate provider, so the physician does not have to attend every appointment.

How does this program work with family physicians or primary care networks? How will they be connected or will they work together?

- The virtual clinic supports continuity of patient information. The health information of patients who consult with physicians using the app will be integrated to their Electronic Health Record and, with a patient's consent, shared with their family physician.

How will you ensure privacy of medical patients is protected? Will TELUS, a private company, be in charge of our data?

- Over 80 per cent of Electronic Medical Records in Alberta are managed using Telus-owned technology. TELUS has three EMR platforms available to physicians, and that adds a layer of complexity as health information from EMRs is integrated to each Albertans' individual Electronic Health Record.

Will physicians in this program only spend a minimal amount of time on visits with patients?

- There is no set time limit associated with a consultation.

Has this program been successful elsewhere?

- Babylon by TELUS launched in B.C. in March 2019. The app has been downloaded more than 100,000 times. TELUS can't provide specific numbers of patients who have used the virtual clinics because of confidentiality, but they say it's in the tens of thousands since it launched.

Can Albertans living in other provinces use this app? For example, can an Alberta snowbird in Arizona see an Alberta physician this way?

- If you're traveling outside of Canada, you can access the symptom checker and your medical records using the app, but you won't be able to make an appointment to see a physician.
- If you're traveling in Canada, in most cases you will be able to consult with a licensed physician using the app. However, there are cases where this might not be possible due to provincial or territorial differences in regulation or processes.

How do physicians sign up to be a part of this program?

- Physicians can learn more about joining the team at Babylon by TELUS here: [Babylon by Telus website](#).
- Interested groups of physicians can call 780-643-1436 (or 310 first for toll-free access) or email health.arpinfo@gov.ab.ca for more information on applying for an ARP.

How does this app, with virtual doctors, help foster people to develop a patient/physician relationship?

- Continuity of care includes both the sharing of information between providers and patients and an ongoing relationship between a doctor and a patient. Babylon will augment the services offered by our current physician community.
- For example, Babylon will be available evenings and weekends and reduce visits to emergency rooms for patients who lack transportation. Babylon will be part of NetCare and will, along with other initiatives, allow physicians to know when their patients have been seen by other providers.

Was there an open bidding process & RFP to develop this service?

- No. Telus Babylon is provided through an ARP. TELUS Health approached the ministry before the pandemic to make this service available in Alberta. Their application was processed within our standard timelines of 6-8 weeks.
- TELUS Health, which is a health care provider, applied to Alberta Health to offer its services through an ARP to Alberta patients. Applications for ARPs are open on a continuous basis. We are always looking to increase the number of ARPs available in Alberta.

How were the participating AB-licensed doctors recruited?

- Telus Health is recruiting physicians to work in their virtual clinic. Participating physicians must be licensed to work in Alberta.

What is their rate of pay?

- Like all ARPs, the rate of pay a physician receives is a matter between the authorized representative, in this case Babylon's medical director, and individual physicians.

What is the value of the ARP negotiated to deliver this service?

- TELUS Health is receiving approximately \$1.5 million annually to provide this service for 36,000 visits. The compensation rate was based on the current visit code for family medicine.

Is Babylon intended to replace family MDs in clinics that are currently struggling to provide virtual care in the midst of this pandemic at a rate that doesn't cover their ongoing costs and overhead?

- No, it's intended to provide additional capacity to the system.

Were they offered a chance to participate in the initiative?

- TELUS Health is currently recruiting physicians.

NON-COVID-19 HEALTHCARE

I don't have COVID-19 symptoms and I need medical assistance for another reason, but I can't get treatment (medicentres are closed/doctors are turning patients away/I can't get through to Health Link)...what do I do?

- We understand the strain that COVID-19 is causing on many Albertans. If your family physician or other health-care provider is unable or unwilling to receive you, we recommend you contact another health-care provider to find out if they are available.
- To find a family doctor near you who is accepting new patients, Primary Care Networks and the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta offer online tools. Visit <https://albertafindadoctor.ca/> and <https://search.cpsa.ca/physiciansearch>
- We recommend any non-essential visits are postponed at this time.

Minstries

Advanced Education

For public post-secondary institutions

What is the current state of post-secondary institution (PSI) campuses?

- We are taking COVID-19 extremely seriously and are in close contact with Alberta's post-secondary institutions. Alberta Health remains the lead on COVID-19 response.
- In-person post-secondary classes are cancelled as institutions transition to alternate modes of delivery (e.g. online, remote teaching, video, etc.). Campuses will remain open.
 - This includes all public and private post-secondary institutions, private career colleges, the Alberta Pipe Trade College, faith-based institutions, First Nations Colleges and other Indigenous adult learning institutions, providers funded through the Community Adult Learning Program, and foundational learning programs at public, private, and community-based institutions.
- Many institutions have already taken steps to transition to online and remote delivery of classes – students and faculty should pay attention to information shared by their post-secondary institution.
- We are confident in the work of our post-secondary institutions as they put their response plans into action.
- Government is committed to working closely with Alberta's post-secondary institutions to find solutions and identify supports that may be required to work through COVID-19 challenges.
- At this time, all institutions are following their pandemic or emergency response plans and have stood up emergency operations centres as appropriate.
- Advanced Education will maintain regular contact with post-secondary institutions to stay abreast of issues and concerns.

Will PSI campuses close? How would that be determined?

- At this time, campuses remain open, but in-person classes are cancelled while institutions move to remote delivery.
- If there is direction to close campuses, that decision would be made with advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health in collaboration with Advanced Education officials and post-secondary institutions.
- Student residences will remain open although institutions will be implementing measures to help mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
 - This could include social distancing in accommodations, changes to food services, or a move to self-contained accommodations (where possible).

How will the Government of Alberta keep PSIs updated?

- We are committed to ongoing communications with the PSIs and have a number of ways to ensure open lines of information flow.
- We have been hosting teleconferences with the entire system – presidents, boards and students – to share information and answer questions.
- Department staff are in regular contact with their contacts in each institution.
- Information will also be shared on [Alberta.ca/COVID19](https://alberta.ca/COVID19)

Who decides when/how long campuses could close?

- If there is direction to close campuses, that decision would be made with advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health in collaboration with Advanced Education officials and post-secondary institutions.

What is the impact on apprentices?

- The March-April and May-June intakes for apprenticeship training are cancelled.
 - Apprenticeship students who started classroom instruction on or after March 2, 2020 should discuss tuition refund options with their institutions and will receive priority for fall intake.
 - Apprenticeship students who started classroom instruction before March 2, 2020 will be advised by their institution about next steps for distance learning options, assessments and completion.

For post-secondary employees

If in-person classes are cancelled, what happens to my job?

- Employees should contact their institution/employer for more information.

Will PSIs compensate employees affected by class cancellations?

- Employees should contact their institution/employer for more information.

What accommodations will be made for employees who have kids out of school/daycare?

- Employees should contact their institution/employer for more information.

What are the standards for online teaching? Is it enough to simply post course materials online?

- Employees should contact their institution/employer for more information.

For post-secondary students

Will online classes, lectures and labs be available? How can I access them?

- Students should connect with their institution for more information.

Since the whole student experience is changing, can I get a refund of my tuition and fees?

- Students should connect with their institution for more information.

What if I don't have my own computer to access online classes and course materials? What if I don't have the right software?

- Students should connect with their institution for more information.

Are libraries still open? Can I use computers on campus?

- Students should connect with their institution for more information.

Will student loans be affected?

- Advanced Education is pausing all repayments of Alberta Student Loans for six months beginning March 30, 2020.
- Interest will not accumulate during this period. This mirrors the approach of the Canada Student Loans Program.
- Students do not need to apply for the repayment pause.
- Borrowers may continue making payments during this period if they choose. This will not affect their eligibility to receive the benefit.

How will in-person class cancellation affect my studies? Can I attend labs, study groups, etc.?

- Students should connect with their institution for more information.

Will/could campus residences close?

- Student residences will remain open although institutions will be implementing measures to help mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
 - This could include social distancing accommodations, changes to food services, or a move to self-contained accommodations (where possible).

What will happen with residence meal plans?

- Students should connect with their institution for more information.

Can students return to campus to pick up personal belongings (in lockers, etc.)?

- Campuses remain open for the time being. Students and staff should connect with their institution for more information.

Are school fitness facilities affected?

- Students and staff should connect with their institution for more information.

What is being done to support international students? Should they return home?

- International students should remain in close communication with the institutions they are attending regarding recommended next steps.
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has established special measures to assist temporary and permanent residents affected by COVID-19.
 - This information is continuously being updated, and is available at:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-special-measures.html>

For high school students

How will school closures affect my application for post-secondary?

- We expect every student to receive a final mark and that students will progress to their next grade level next year. Diploma exams essential for post-secondary acceptance will continue.
- We are confident that every student who is eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this year will graduate.
- The government will be working with post-secondary institutions to ensure these extraordinary circumstances do not prevent students from being eligible for admission to post-secondary studies for the upcoming school year.

What will happen to Rutherford and other scholarships? Will I still be eligible? How will eligibility grades be calculated? (E.g., from the day of school closures, or end of term marks based on remote learning?)

- We will work with Alberta Education to understand how high school grades will be calculated and provide information in advance of the application period.

Agriculture and Forestry

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation

How is the Agriculture Financial Services supporting producers in response to COVID-19

- AFSC programs will continue to support producers during these challenging times.
- AFSC programs, such as AgrilInsurance and AgriStability, are designed to help protect producers from production losses and significant declines in farming income.
- The safety and well-being of AFSC's staff, clients and communities is the top concern.
- AFSC staff are happy to make alternate arrangements for clients who feel unwell or prefer not to meet face-to-face at this time. Simply call your local branch office, talk with a Client Interaction Agent at the Client Service Centre (1-877-899-2372) or use the online chat function

within AFSC Connect. You can also self-serve many of your transactional needs online using AFSC Connect.

- AFSC are currently reviewing additional relief for producers including:
 - For lending clients – offering interest only payments, payment re-amortization and payment deferral.
 - For insurance clients – they are working with the Federal government to consider extensions to insurance deadlines.
- The government is working with AFSC and its existing suite of programs to ensure beekeepers have the help they need. AFSC has completed meetings with industry and is reviewing the programs.
- The department and AFSC will continue to monitor the situation and continue to explore additional measures to support the agriculture sector.

Children's Services

Communications and Public Engagement

Community and Social Services

COVID-19 social services emergency funding

What is Community and Social Services doing to support vulnerable Albertans during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Government is acting quickly to address the impacts of the spread of COVID-19 by supporting vulnerable Albertans. The Ministry of Community and Social Services will be immediately providing \$60 million in funding to support charitable and non-profit social services organizations in addressing the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Why did government make this decision?

- Our government is taking COVID-19 extremely seriously and we are moving quickly to help slow the spread of the virus and protect public health. This funding move will allow government to keep front-line critical services operating while also providing support for vulnerable populations. We are concerned about the impacts of the spread of COVID-19 and we are committed to supporting our most vulnerable, at-risk people.

Which organizations will receive the funding?

- We will be providing immediate support to organizations servicing vulnerable people in our communities, such as homeless and women's shelters, and civil society organizations through the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program. In total, we will be providing \$30 million to FCSS, \$25 million to adult homeless shelters and \$5 million to women's emergency shelters. The funding will support these organizations to allow for social distancing, sanitization of common areas and extra spaces as required, among other things.

How do civil society organizations access the funding?

- We are currently working on finalizing the criteria for the \$60 million in emergency funding and will reach out to community stakeholders as soon as possible.
- FCSS is assisting in disbursing the funds to community organizations, but projects do not need to be existing FCSS partners. The funding will be distributed through the FCSS program, as local FCSS partners are well positioned to provide social supports to Albertans in need. The 80/20 funding rule for this emergency funding will not apply. Civil society organizations are encouraged to connect with their local FCSS program regarding available supports within the grant guidelines.
- More information about how to request funding for emergency shelters and supportive housing programs will be available soon.

What services and supports will be impacted by the funding?

- The emergency funding for FCSS could be used to support services such as home support for seniors, emotional and mental health counselling, information and referral services, increased volunteer involvement, crisis lines and helplines, and food security supports.
- The emergency funding for women's emergency shelters and homeless shelters will be prioritized to provide direct support to address immediate and emergent needs for Albertans experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness and who are isolated or impacted by COVID-19. Any remaining funding will be distributed to Community-based Organizations to address needs for the homeless serving system in their respective community.

What other services and supports are currently available to Alberta's experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness who are impacted by COVID-19?

- There are currently a number of programs and services provided by eligible service providers to support Albertans experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness and who are isolated or impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes:
 - Services to support the health and safety of staff and service participants, such as the purchasing of personal protection equipment.
 - Emergency shelter options to support isolation mechanisms for Albertans who are experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness, such as temporary hotel stay, food and meal delivery and transportation costs.
 - Additional staffing needs.
 - Supports to prevent the occurrence of homelessness, such as rent supplements, damage deposits and case management services.

Will government still require municipalities and Métis Settlements to provide a portion of the funding, as per the FCSS funding partnership agreement?

- The emergency funding is being approved outside of the FCSS Act and Regulation. Generally, FCSS is an 80/20 funding partnership between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities and Métis Settlements. However, the 80/20 split will be waived for this emergency funding as we work together to address the spread of COVID-19.

Where is this funding coming from?

- The \$60 million will be provided immediately by Community and Social Services and will supplement the funding already provided by government for organizations that support seniors in particular, and that have a broader mandate to support the vulnerable including people with disabilities.

Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women

Economic Development, Trade and Tourism

Travel and returning travellers

A flight attendant is isolating. Are passengers at risk?

- It's important to remember that COVID-19 is not airborne. It is spread by droplets or touching surfaces and then touching your face, so close contact is required.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

What advice are you providing Albertans who want to travel?

- We are recommending against any travel outside of the country. Given the rapid global spread of the virus, it is no longer possible to assess health risks for the duration of the trip.
- Additionally, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- We are making these recommendations based on the ongoing developments outside Alberta, both in the actions other jurisdictions are taking, as well as the increasing spread of cases around the world.

What about families of returning travellers, do they also need to self-isolate?

- At this time, self-isolation does not extend to family members. However, family members must practice good hygiene and take precautions to reduce potential exposure.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

A family member returned from international travel after March 12, does the whole household need to self-isolate? What should we do?

- At this time, self-isolation does not extend to family members. However, family members must practice good hygiene, take precautions to reduce potential exposure, and should self-isolate if symptoms emerge.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

I just returned from outside of Canada. What am I supposed to do?

- Travel outside Canada is not recommended at this time. All Albertans returning from outside Canada after March 12 should self-isolate for 14 days after arrival in Canada and monitor for symptoms.
- If you recently returned from outside Canada:
 4. [Self-isolate](#) for 14 days, even if you're feeling well.
 5. [Monitor for symptoms](#) such as cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing.
 6. If symptoms occur, complete the simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

I just returned from somewhere in Canada. Am I at risk, and what are my next steps?

- If you have recently returned from somewhere in Canada, [check the list of affected flights for updates](#).
 4. [Self-isolate](#) for 14 days if you were found to be in an affected seat.
 5. [Monitor for symptoms](#) such as cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing.

6. If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- Passengers who were on the plane but not in affected seats are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms for 14 days.
 - If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

How should I travel home from the airport? Should I take a taxi or airport shuttle? Will I potentially put other passengers at risk?

- If you are well, there should be no concern.
- If you have a fever or cough or don't feel well, sit a safe distance from the driver/other passengers, if possible, cover your coughs and sneezes, and practice good hygiene. It is also recommend to wear a mask, if possible.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

What about people who are picking up international travelers (family, taxi/Uber drivers)?

- If the international traveler(s) are well, there should be no concern. If they are ill, they should be kept a safe distance from other passengers, if possible. The traveler(s) should also wear a mask, if possible.
- All Albertans should practise good hygiene, such as frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and should stay home if feeling ill.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

I'm a tourist from another Canadian province/territory. Do these rules apply to me?

- Yes, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever or cough linked to recent travel or other health concerns should contact Health Link 811.
- Anyone who is feeling ill, even if they have not travelled, should stay home and not visit hospitals, long-term care facilities or supportive living accommodations.

- If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

How do I self-isolate if I'm staying in a bed-and-breakfast?

- Self-isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people. This means all situations where you may come in contact with others, such as social gatherings, work, school/university, child care, athletic events, faith-based gatherings, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, shopping malls, and any public gatherings.
- You should, where possible, avoid using public transportation including buses, taxis, or ride sharing. As much as possible, you should limit your contact with people and avoid having visitors, but it is okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food or other things you may need.
- You can also use delivery or pick up services for errands such as grocery shopping. If you need to leave your home for an urgent errand, such as picking up essential medication, as a precaution to further reduce risk of spread, you can wear a surgical mask while you are out.

Education

K-12 schools, out-of-school care, child care

Have you made the decision to close schools and child care facilities?

- Effective immediately, students will no longer be attending classes in K-12 schools until further notice.
- Teachers and other school staff need to continue working either in school or from home to ensure content is delivered to students.
- Decisions on how exactly to do this are still to come and may vary depending on the school jurisdiction.
- All licensed childcare and out-of-school care programs in Alberta are closed at this time as well.
 - Approved day homes are exempt due to the number of children they care for, but are encouraged to use enhanced sanitation practices.

What prompted this decision?

- Some recent cases seem to have been acquired through community spread.
- The health of Albertans is, and always will be, our top priority.
- This suggested it was time to move forward with more aggressive measures to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Alberta.
- We will get through this together, but we need your support.
- All Albertans are strongly encouraged to follow public health guidance and do their part to keep themselves and their communities safe through good hygiene practices, social distancing and other protective measures.

How long will schools, post-secondary institutions and child care centres be closed?

- Effective immediately, students will no longer be attending classes in K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions until further notice.
 - Every K-12 student will receive a final mark and teachers will make a recommendation on a students' progression to the next grade, as they normally would.
 - Provincial achievement tests in grade six and nine will be cancelled.
 - At this time, diploma exams essential for post-secondary acceptance will continue.
 - Every student who is eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this year will graduate. Teachers and other school staff will still be expected to work, either from home or at their workplace, to ensure these expectations are met.
 - Decisions are still being made on how to do this, and they may vary depending on the school jurisdiction.
 - Government will also be working with post-secondary institutions to ensure these extraordinary circumstances do not prevent students from being eligible for admission to post-secondary studies for the coming school year.
 - Post-secondary campuses will remain open, but classes are cancelled.
- All licensed child care, out-of-school care programs and preschool programs in Alberta are closed at this time, as well.
 - Approved day homes are exempt because they care for fewer than seven children at a time. These programs are encouraged to use enhanced sanitation practices.
- The situation continues to evolve rapidly and there is no timeline at this point.

Will school be cancelled for the rest of the year?

- At this time, students will no longer be attending classes until further notice.
- It is too early to know how long this situation will continue.
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health and other government officials are monitoring the situation closely and will make further decisions as necessary.

What is happening for Grade 12 students and their diploma exams?

- At this time, diploma exams essential for post-secondary acceptance will continue.
- Every student who is eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this year will graduate.
- The government will be working with post-secondary institutions to ensure these extraordinary circumstances do not prevent students from being eligible for admission to post-secondary studies for the upcoming school year.
- We will also ensure adult learners scheduled to write diplomas exams still have an opportunity to do so.

Can my child go to school to pick up materials and personal items?

- We ask for your patience right now as school divisions sort out these details.
- Schools will be in touch with parents/guardians as soon as they are able.

Will learning continue online or through other mechanisms?

- Yes, learning will continue for students.
- Government is working with school jurisdictions across the province on the details.
- Information will be shared as soon as possible.

What about student grades?

- We expect every student to receive a final mark and that students will progress to their next grade level next year based on their teacher's recommendation.
- However provincial achievement tests in grade six and nine are cancelled.

What are the expectations for teachers and school staff?

- Teachers and other school staff are expected to work, either from home or at their workplace.
- Decisions are still to be made on how to do this, and may vary depending on the school jurisdiction.
- We encourage school employees to speak to their employer about their specific situation.

Does this situation change spring break?

- Spring break will continue as scheduled in your school division.
- Schools will be closed during this time, and all staff who would normally not work during this break will continue to not work.

Can home schooling still continue?

- Yes. As long as health recommendations are followed, home schooling can continue.

What about provincial achievement tests (PATs)?

- Every student will receive a final mark and students will progress to their next grade level next year.
- Provincial assessments, such as provincial achievement tests, will be cancelled.

Will teachers and support staff still be paid during the closure?

- To be clear, we are not closing schools. Teachers and other school staff need to continue working either in school or from home to ensure content is delivered to students.
- Decisions on how exactly to do this are still to come and may vary depending on the school jurisdiction.

Will school boards be providing resources to parents to help them keep their kids occupied/teach them at home?

- Teachers are still working and student learning will continue for students.
- The province is currently working with school jurisdictions across the province to sort out the details.
- Schools will be in touch with their parents as soon as they are able.

If parents are considering placing their children in day homes, what should they consider?

- If parents are considering placing their children in day homes, they should ensure that the homes are following safe guidelines as set out from Alberta Health, including:
 - Make sure handwashing facilities or hand sanitizer are available and encourage children and visitors to wash their hands frequently.
 - Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces that people regularly touch like door handles, keyboards, toilets and tables.
 - Have tissues on hand for people who start coughing or have a runny nose, as well as closed bins for hygienic disposal.
 - Advise visitors not to enter if they aren't feeling well.
 - Avoid physical contact like handshakes and hugs.
 - Discourage people from sharing food or drinks.
 - Display posters with prevention information.
 - Be aware of public resources available (like the online self-assessment tool) to help Albertans determine whether they should be tested for COVID-19.

I've heard rumours of unlicensed day homes opening up due to daycare closures. What are the rules around that?

- A child care provider can have up to six children, not including their own children, at one time without a child care licence.
- Any private provider with seven or more children would require a child care licence as per the *Child Care Licensing Act*.

What about school bus drivers? Will their contacts be upheld?

- Decisions on this still need to be made, and may vary depending on the school jurisdiction.
- Government is committed to working with school divisions during this unprecedented situation.

Will school boards be providing resources to parents to help them keep their kids occupied/teach them at home?

- Teachers are still at work and student learning will continue for students.
- The government is currently working with school jurisdictions across the province to sort out the details.

- Schools will be in touch with their parents as soon as they are able.

Energy

Utility bill deferrals

What does it mean if my utility bill payment is deferred? Does deferral mean we do not need to pay them at all or does it mean we have to pay what is owed after 90 days?

- When payment is deferred it means the customer does not have to pay within the usual agreed upon payment period.
- Customers ordinarily have 30 days from the last billing period in which to pay their utility bills. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, utility companies are deferring payment by 90 days. At the end of that period, payment is due. Customers can contact their utility companies and discuss how deferred payments will be paid.

What are you doing about work camps at the oil sands?

- We are strongly encouraging businesses and employers to take this opportunity to review their own business continuity plans and consider how they would lower the risk of the spread of infection in the workplace.
- Appropriate steps include making sure that staff are familiar with continuity plans and that processes are in place in case of a community disruption.
- All Albertans should practice good hygiene, such as frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least twenty seconds, and should stay home if feeling ill.

Oil sands companies fly workers from the US to work on camps, should they be self-isolated? Are you concerned about work camps?

- We have updated our travel advice and are recommending against any travel outside of the country. This includes oil sands workers.
- Additionally, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to call Health Link 811 for follow-up assessment and testing. We are making these recommendations based on the ongoing developments outside Alberta, both in the actions being taken by other jurisdictions, as well as the increasing spread of cases around the world.
- We are strongly encouraging businesses and employers to take this opportunity to review their own business continuity plans and consider how they would lower the risk of the spread of infection in the workplace.

Environment and Parks

Alberta Parks

Can I still visit Alberta Parks?

- Yes, at this time, Alberta Parks are still open; however, access to Alberta Parks facilities, including toilets and picnic and warm-up shelters, is prohibited. This is the same approach the federal government is taking with national parks. While using the parks, Albertans are reminded to practice appropriate social distancing.

Can I still book a campsite for this summer?

- Yes, at this time, we're still taking reservations. Alberta Parks continues to monitor COVID-19 developments for alignment with the Chief Medical Officer's directions. If the direction is to prohibit camping this season, we will refund customer online reservations and waive cancelation fees. The safety of our parks visitors, staff and volunteers is our top priority.

Health

Indigenous Relations

Infrastructure

Government Buildings and Projects – General Info

What is Government doing to keep its buildings safe?

- The role of the Alberta Public Service is critical right now.
 - Albertans are counting on our employees to protect their health and continue delivering essential frontline programs and services they rely on.
- We are monitoring the situation very closely and working with our partners at Alberta Health to determine best practices for our buildings.
 - We are in touch daily with government property managers to ensure proper maintenance and cleaning of buildings.
 - Cleaning at government buildings and facilities will be adjusted appropriately when necessary.
- We are ensuring that soap and hand sanitizer stations in government buildings are kept full.
- Regular and thorough hand-washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds by employees, contractors and customers is required at all times to keep our workplaces safe from the spread of germs.

- Government employees should always maintain clean work stations and offices, and stay home if feeling ill.
- We have reached out to all of our contractors on Infrastructure projects to ensure there is no issue with Supply Chain Management, and to ensure protocols are followed to protect the health of their employees.

What is the Ministry of Infrastructure doing to help support efforts to contain COVID-19?

- We are looking at options for using vacant or underutilized government facilities to house essential services or operations if necessary.
- This could include, for example, providing space for an expanded emergency provincial operations centre.

What is the Ministry of Infrastructure doing to help support Albertans during this crisis?

- We know that continued investment into infrastructure is critical to supporting jobs and the economy.
- We are focusing our efforts on ensuring construction and maintenance of government buildings continues to move forward so we keep Albertans working during this difficult time.

Calgary Cancer Centre Project

Is construction continuing as normal?

- The COVID-19 virus has required the implementation of additional protocols on all construction projects.
- Examples of the protocols include; anyone exhibiting flu-like symptoms is required to not come to work and consult with a health professional; in-person meetings are being avoided when possible and attendees minimized; workers are required to maintain separation; personal hygiene practices and job sanitation measures have been implemented.

Have there been protocol standards implemented in light of COVID-19?

- Yes, all Government of Alberta requirements have been implemented. Health and safety of all Albertans is a priority. We will continue to follow the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and ensure that all necessary steps are taken to provide safe workplaces for all Albertans.

Is this project an essential service, that must continue?

- Essential services are public services that, if interrupted, would endanger the life, personal safety or health of the public. Construction is not considered an essential service at this time. However, this situation is evolving rapidly and we continue to respond and adapt as needed to protect Albertans.

Is there a concern that there are many people working in close proximity, including in communal lunchrooms?

- All workers are required to work 6' from others for extended durations. The site is 2 million square feet in size which allows for adequate separation of workers.
- Cleaning products are available and are being used to sanitize lunchrooms.
- Any staff or workers with any symptoms are required to not come to work and obtain direction from a health professional.
- Any staff or worker may self-isolate at any time and there is no pressure to attend work.

Justice and Solicitor General

Courts

Are courts shutting down?

Alberta Court of Queen's Bench

- The Alberta Court of Queen's Bench is limiting hearings to emergency or urgent matters only.
- Emergency matters are those in which serious consequences to persons or harm to property may arise if the hearing does not proceed, or if there is a risk of loss of jurisdiction or expiration of an existing protection or restraining order.
- For information on specific matters, please visit <https://www.albertacourts.ca/qb/resources/announcements/covid-19-suspension-of-sittings>

Jury Summons

- Alberta's Court of Queen's Bench has suspended all jury trials scheduled between March 16 and May 31, 2020.
- If Albertans received a summons to attend jury selection between March 16 and May 31, 2020, they are released and do not need to attend.
- Current jury trials are proceeding; jurors are required to report to court.
- Crown prosecutors and defense counsel in all cases have been notified.
- Any counsel or juror showing symptoms should contact the court to seek instructions from the judge presiding over their case.

Provincial Court of Alberta

- As of Tuesday, March 17, if you have a family, civil, criminal court or a Provincial Offences/traffic court appearance in the Alberta Provincial Court, you do not need to attend unless the matter is an in-custody or urgent criminal matter, or an urgent family or child protection matter.
- No members of the public will be permitted in courtrooms unless they are required for a court matter (parties, witnesses, media). Legal counsel are permitted access to the courthouse for urgent court-related business.

- Albertans should not to come into a courthouse in person if they have been advised to self-isolate by public health officials, their doctor, or the Alberta Health Services website; or are self-isolating as a result of travel or contact with individuals with COVID-19
- For more information visit, <https://www.albertacourts.ca/pc/home>.

Alberta Court of Appeal

- Only those persons necessary to the proceedings should attend court. This includes counsel, litigants, and members of the media. No one who is ill or experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms should attend.
- Filing deadlines have not changed. The Court's Case Management Officers remain available to consider requests for extensions, fiats and other administrative directions.
- Parties and counsel are encouraged to provide the Registry with an email address if they have not already done so. At this time, correspondence from and to this court may be sent by email instead of fax.
- The Court of Appeal Registry is operating on social distancing guidelines that are posted at the Court of Appeal Registry counters.
- For details on matters before the court and sitting procedures, please visit: <https://albertacourts.ca/ca/publications/announcements/notice---covid-19>

Courts and correctional facilities

What steps are in place to protect individuals in prisons or jails?

- Alberta Health Services Corrections is responsible for inmate health care services delivery including the implementation of COVID -19 infectious disease protocols, and as per their directions:
 - AHS has increased inmate admission screening questions, including travel, COVID-19 symptoms, or exposure, to individuals with COVID-19 symptoms. We have reached out to our partner agencies to ensure they are making our correctional services division aware of any possible symptoms of COVID-19 prior to admission to our facilities.
 - Hand sanitizer is available to inmates in the admissions and discharge areas. Once they are through that process and awaiting placement, they have access to soap and water in the holding cell.
 - On the units, inmates have access to soap and water and are being encouraged to be extra vigilant with hand washing, as per AHS directions.
 - All provincial adult correctional, remand, and young offender centres have enacted changes to the "out of cell" time. Each centre will balance "out of cell time" with social distancing. How this will be achieved depends on a number of factors.
 - If any inmate is showing signs of cold or flu like symptoms, they are immediately taken to a sink to wash their hands with soap and water and given a mask and gloves, to help prevent the spread of any virus/illness.
 - AHS would then complete the cursory medical, which now contains questions specific to COVID-19. Depending on the inmate's answers to these questions they may or may not be isolated. AHS would make that call.
 - If an inmate was deemed to be COVID-19 presumptive or confirmed, they would be placed in an infirmary unit in isolation in accordance with current AHS clinical guidelines.
 - AHS has provided informational signage advising inmates and staff of COVID-19 symptoms, and practices to prevent spread of the virus.

- Correctional centre staff are informed, screened and monitored as per advisements from the Public Service Commission and the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- This is in line with the approach being adopted across Canada

Are correctional facilities still allowing visitors?

- Effective March 16, family, professional and volunteer visits to all Alberta provincial correctional facilities and young offender centres have been suspended.
- If defence counsel requires an in-person meeting, arrangements may be made, dependent on operational, hygiene and safety considerations.
- All provincial adult correctional, remand, and young offender centres have increased phone access. External agencies have been made aware to call the specific centres to make any additional arrangements for contacting an inmate or youth. Each centre will balance phone access with social distancing.
 - There are no charges for calls to lawyers and youth are not charged for phone calls.
- We will continue to closely monitor the situation and take additional steps as necessary.
- When it comes to protecting Albertans, we will continue to consider all options.
- Correctional Services staff in collaboration with Alberta Health Services will continue to provide support and health services to inmates and youth in all Alberta provincial correctional facilities and young offender centres.

Have there been any cases inside a remand centre or correctional facility?

- To date there have been no confirmed COVID-19 coronavirus cases in any of the provincial correctional, remand or young offender centres.

Would inmates will be released from provincial correctional or remand centres to avoid overcrowding amid the COVID-19 pandemic?

- The safety of the public, visitors, staff, and inmates is of the utmost importance in our provincial correctional and remand centres. The Alberta government has had a long-time policy that authorizes the temporary release of low-risk, non-violent offenders that meet certain criteria including medical need, such as the spread of virus, while still ensuring those with serious charges are in custody.
- All potentially-applicable inmates are reviewed to determine their suitability for temporary absence and their risk to public safety. This policy does not apply to individuals who have been remanded into custody.

Will the province be doing away with sentences that allow people to serve only on the weekends, but be out during the week?

- Offenders serving intermittent sentences will continue to be held responsible. Effective March 20, offenders serving the custody portion of their intermittent sentences on weekends will be on house arrest with their conditions closely monitored by community corrections. This measure will mitigate

the amount of individuals entering and exiting provincial correctional and remand centres as part of helping to avoid the spread of virus.

Labour and Immigration

What are my options for leave as an employee if I have potentially been exposed to COVID-19?

- Employees can access the COVID-19 leave, which provides 14 days of unpaid job protection for purposes of self-isolation or self-quarantine.
- This leave is available to all employees, regardless of how long they have been employed with their employer. A medical note is not required to access the COVID-19 leave.

What if I need to access this leave more than once?

- If an employee needs to self-isolate more than once, and is directed by the Chief Medical Officer, they will be able to access this leave as needed.

With school and daycare closures, are employees eligible to take this leave?

- We understand this is challenging for families and we ask employers and employees to work together to explore alternative work arrangements.
- The COVID-19 leave is for an employee to self-isolate or self-quarantine for 14 days. However, if a child is required to self-isolate or self-quarantine, it is likely that the parent or guardian will also meet the criteria to self-isolate or self-quarantine, in which case the leave can be used.

Do employees require medical direction to go on leave for quarantine or isolation or medical clearance to return to work?

- A medical note is not required to access the COVID-19 leave if directed by the Chief Medical Officer or Health Link 811 to self-isolate.
- There is no requirement to produce a return to work note. Employees self-isolating should indicate to the employer the expected date of return.
- If an employee develops COVID-19 symptoms during self-isolation and are directed to further self-isolate by Health Link 811, they are able to use the COVID-19 leave for the additional time off and should notify the employer immediately.

If an employee has the common cold or flu, do they still require a sick note?

- The removal of the medical note only applies to Albertans affected by COVID-19.
- Family and Personal Responsibility Leave (5 days of unpaid leave) does not require a medical note to access and we encourage employers not to request one at this time to avoid placing any burden on the health care system.
- To protect other vulnerable Albertans and to contain the spread of illness, employees should stay home and connect with the employer immediately.

What are my obligations as an employer to employees potentially exposed to COVID-19?

- Employers and employees are encouraged to work together to find alternate work arrangements to ensure workplaces are safe and the spread of COVID-19 is mitigated.

- If an employee has travelled outside of Canada before March 12, or was potentially exposed to someone who has COVID-19, they should complete the self-assessment tool or call Health Link 811 for further direction.
- If an employee is self-isolating on the direction of Alberta Health Services, they do not need to provide a doctor's note to their employer.
- Government has established a COVID-19 leave, which provides employees with 14 days of job-protected leave. There is no requirement for an employee to have worked 90 days for an employer, and a medical note is not required.

Can an employee lose their job if they become ill and are off for an extended period with COVID-19?

- Employees may not be terminated while on the job-protected leave.
- If an employee develops COVID-19 symptoms during self-isolation and are directed to further self-isolate by Health Link 811, they are able to use the COVID-19 job-protected leave for the additional time off.
- In addition, if an employee leave is not related to COVID-19, the Long-term Illness and Injury Leave provides employees with up to 16 weeks of time off.

Is an employee with the common cold or flu allocated the same length of time off?

- The special leave only applies to COVID-19 specific circumstances.
- Any worker who is ill is urged to stay home from work. Employees should work with their employer to address other illnesses and follow directions provided by a health professional.

Can an employer refuse to schedule an employee for shifts, or terminate for self-isolating if they have traveled before March 12 or are of the same nationality of one or more of the affected countries?

- If an employee has been advised by Alberta Health Services to self-isolate, an employer cannot terminate the employee on-leave.
- Under Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation, employers cannot take discriminatory action against a worker if the worker is taking reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and others.
- An employer taking action against an employee who is of the same nationality of one or more of the affected countries may be considered to be discriminating against the employee and this should be discussed with the Human Rights Commission.

Can an employer force an employee to cancel travel plans?

- The Government of Canada has advised to avoid all non-essential travel outside of the country. Reasonable consideration should be given to review if the travel plans are essential or non-essential.
- Employer policies may dictate work-related travel; however, Employment Standards legislation does address an employer's ability to affect personal travel for employees.

Can an employer refuse to let the employee come to work for two weeks if self-isolation has not been directed and do they need to pay them for that time?

- Employers are not required to schedule employees, pay for sick time, or pay for time where an employee did not work and earn wages unless there is a collective agreement or employment agreement in place that provides this.

- Employers are recommended to work with their employees to explore alternate working arrangements. If alternate arrangements cannot be made, employers are not required to schedule employees.
- Federal employment insurance benefits (EI) allow for up to 15 weeks of financial assistance if a person cannot work due to medical reasons such as quarantine. The one-week waiting period for EI benefits has been waived.

How many inquiries related to COVID-19 is the Ministry of Labour & Immigration receiving?

- Both our OHS and ES contact centres have been tracking COVID-19 related inquiries since March 6, 2020.
- The number of inquiries has been steadily increasing with OHS responding to 181 inquiries and ES responding to 570 as of March 16.
- The ES inquiries have been specific to protected leave entitlements while OHS has received inquiries specific to Discriminatory Action Complaints and Work Refusals.

How will financial supports be provided to Albertans affected by COVID-19? Who is paying the employees and how will they get this pay?

- We are working with the federal government on measures to address COVID-19.
- We are exploring options for leave with the federal government and anticipate a national approach to this issue. We anticipate that the federal government will be making announcements in the coming days.

How will these supports help workers who are self-employed?

- Our government is looking into measures that will assist self-employed workers. Details will be announced in the coming days.

What supports are in place for laid off workers who get sick?

- The federal Employment Insurance benefits covers workers who are laid off and sick with 15 weeks of sick benefits. These benefits can be accessed through Service Canada.

Is the government inspecting health care facilities to ensure health care workers are protected from COVID-19?

- Proactive inspections of health care facilities continue to ensure supplies and appropriate personal protective equipment is available to protect health care workers and ensure they are able to maintain care of sick Albertans.
- The Government of Alberta is completing additional inspections of senior care facilities and assessment centres as well to ensure workers and Albertans are protected. More staff will be added to support this team if needed.
- Inspections of workplaces provide additional opportunities to educate workers and employers about health and safety issues. We continue to work with our stakeholders to help them understand our priorities and resources to keep workers safe.

Can an employee be forced to wear a mask?

- If through a hazard assessment process an employer has determined that a respirator is a necessary control to protect workers' health, the employee must wear a mask.

- Occupational health and safety legislation requires that a worker cooperate with the employer and use all appropriate controls including training, procedures and personal protective equipment such as respirators.
- If an employer has determined that additional measures, such as a respirator, is a necessary control to protect workers' health, occupational health and safety legislation requires that a worker wear the respirator.

I feel unsafe reporting to work due to COVID-19, and want to refuse dangerous work. What can I do?

- Employers and workers need to work together. Employers need to ensure the health and safety of their workers and workers need to take reasonable care to protect their and others' health and safety.
- Dangerous work refusals do not allow workers to refuse to report to work entirely, they relate more to the refusal of a specific work task.
- Workers are required to report dangerous conditions, and their reasons for refusing that work, to their supervisor or employer. If the issue is not resolved internally, workers may file a complaint with OHS.

Can you be forced to work in an environment where you suspect others might have COVID-19?

- We have taken action to implement special leave related to COVID-19, so no employee who is directed to self-isolate should be entering the workplace.
- Employers and workers need to work together on these types of issues. Employers need to ensure the health and safety of their workers and workers need to take reasonable care to protect their and others' health and safety. Bring your concerns to your employer to start the process.

Oil sands workers

What are you doing about work camps at the oil sands?

- We are strongly encouraging businesses and employers to take this opportunity to review their own business continuity plans and consider how they would lower the risk of the spread of infection in the workplace.
- Appropriate steps include making sure staff are familiar with continuity plans and processes are in place in case of a community disruption.
- All Albertans should practice good hygiene, such as frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least twenty seconds, and should stay home if feeling ill.

Oil sands companies fly workers from the US to work on camps. Should they be self-isolated? Are you concerned about work camps?

- We have updated our travel advice and are recommending against any travel outside of the country. This includes oil sands workers.
- Additionally, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to call Health Link 811 for follow-up assessment and testing. We are making these recommendations based on the ongoing developments outside

Alberta, both in the actions other jurisdictions are taking, as well as the increasing spread of cases around the world.

- We are strongly encouraging businesses and employers to take this opportunity to review their own business continuity plans and consider how they would lower the risk of the spread of infection in the workplace.

Municipal Affairs

Business and municipalities

What steps should municipalities be taking?

- Alberta and other provinces are providing advice based on the best current evidence and guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Municipalities can find recommended public health measures [on the Government of Canada website](#).
- Business continuity planning is vitally important to prepare critical operations for any potential interruption.
- Field officers from the Alberta Emergency Management Agency are available to support municipalities, First Nations and Metis Settlements with their emergency management and business continuity planning.

What steps should businesses be taking?

- We are strongly encouraging businesses and employers to take this opportunity to review their own business continuity plans and consider how they would lower the risk of the spread of infection in the workplace.
- Appropriate steps include making sure staff are familiar with continuity plans and processes are in place in case of a community disruption.
 - More information is available on alberta.ca/COVID19.

Who is responsible for managing the COVID-19 pandemic in Alberta?

- Alberta's monitoring, preparations and response planning for the COVID19 (Coronavirus) are being led by Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services, who are in regular communication with Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Under the Government Emergency Management Regulation, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency is responsible for Alberta's Emergency Plan.
- Individual Ministries are responsible for their hazard specific plans such as the Pandemic Plan under Alberta Health.
- A cross-government team is working on a specific COVID-19 Pandemic Response Plan.
- Alberta Health works closely with Alberta Health Services, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Health Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health and other stakeholders.

State of Emergency

Alberta declared a state of emergency under the Public Health Act on March 17. What does this mean for Albertans?

- The safety and well-being of all Albertans our top priority. Due to this, Alberta's Provincial Operations Centre has been elevated from a Level 3 to a 4 to ensure we can effectively respond to COVID-19.
- When the Provincial Operation Centre elevates to a Level 4, it means we are implementing a whole of society approach with full co-ordination of cross-government and jurisdictional response to COVID-19.

What criteria needs to be met for the province to call a State of Emergency?

- The criteria established under the Emergency Management Act must be met before the province declares a state of emergency.
- In doing so, the province is able to respond to disasters in a consistent, collaborative and resourceful way. The criteria are:
 - A local authority's capacity or ability to respond to an emergency or disaster has been exhausted, and the local authority is unable to restore public safety in their jurisdiction.
 - The resources typically available to a local authority or the Government of Alberta are not sufficient to support and/or respond to the emergency or disaster event.
 - The emergency or disaster is widespread, and the need for the additional powers provided under a declaration is necessary to cross jurisdictional boundaries.

What powers does declaring a State of Emergency under the Emergency Management Act give the government?

- When a State of Emergency is declared under the Emergency Management Act, government is authorized to lead response efforts, including making all decisions on behalf of the province to keep Albertans safe. This also includes implementing emergency response plans and collaborating with partners to plan and implement controls around evacuation orders, travel, requisitioning property, authorizing entry and exit and more.

What is Municipal Affairs, which is responsible for emergency management, doing to manage the impacts of COVID-19?

- We are working alongside municipalities and emergency management partners during this pandemic.
- The provincial government's monitoring, preparations and response planning for the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) are being led by Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services. These ministries are communicating regularly with Health Canada.
- Within Municipal Affairs, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency is responsible for cross government coordination through the Provincial Operations Centre.
- Weekly conference calls are happening with municipal Directors of Emergency Management (DEM) and others to provide information to share with their municipal leadership and communities. These will increase as needed. The DEMS can also raise concerns on these calls.

Budget

Has your ministry budgeted any funds for COVID-19 (Coronavirus) preparation and response?

- A \$750 million contingency fund was approved for emergencies and disasters for the 20/21 year. Government will access these funds to help support COVID-19 response measures across our province.
- Government is prepared to take any necessary additional measures to help ensure the health, safety, and economic security of Alberta.

Public Service Commission

Seniors and Housing

Temporary closure of seniors information services office

What is happening to the Seniors Information Services Office?

- Effective immediately, the Seniors Information Services Office, located on Jasper Avenue in Edmonton, will be closed.

Why are you closing this storefront location?

- To protect the health of staff and clients during the COVID-19 pandemic, our government has decided to close the office.

What is the Seniors Information Services Office?

- The Edmonton Seniors Information Services Office provides in-person service to clients in need of information and support to access provincial seniors financial assistance programs.
- This storefront setup is unique to Edmonton. Seniors in all other areas of the province access information in-person through the Alberta Supports Contact Centres or via the Alberta Supports phone line.

How much traffic does the office typically receive?

- On average, the office supports around 39 clients a day.
- This number has decreased since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.

Where should seniors go for information and supports now that the office is closed?

- Seniors can contact Alberta Supports at 1-877-644-9992.

When will the office reopen?

- We have closed the Seniors Information Services Office until further notice.

Service Alberta

Price gouging

What about price-gouging in the retail market? We've seen reports about people buying up stockpiles of critical supplies and selling them at a premium, or stores jacking their prices for things like sanitizer and toilet paper. What are you doing to protect consumers?

- Our hope and expectation would be for everyone, including individuals and retailers, to behave ethically during this situation.
- Under the Consumer Protection Act, sellers cannot grossly raise prices with no explanation above what is reasonable for goods that are readily available.
 - Albertans can make formal complaints to the Consumer Investigations Unit through the [government website](#).

Transportation

Are learner's exams and road tests going to be postponed or rescheduled?

- Currently there are no plans to postpone or reschedule road tests, but that is subject to change as the situation continues to evolve. If people aren't feeling well, they should rebook.

A flight attendant is isolating. Are passengers at risk?

- It's important to remember that COVID-19 is not airborne. It is spread by droplets or touching surfaces and then touching your face, so close contact is required.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

What advice are you providing Albertans who want to travel?

- We are recommending against any travel outside of the country. Given the rapid global spread of the virus, it is no longer possible to assess health risks for the duration of the trip.
- Additionally, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- We are making these recommendations based on the ongoing developments outside Alberta, both in the actions being taken by other jurisdictions, as well as the increasing spread of cases around the world.

What about families of returning travellers, do they also need to self-isolate?

- At this time, self-isolation does not extend to family members. However family members must practice good hygiene and take precautions to reduce potential exposure.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

A family member returned from international travel after March 12, does the whole household need to self-isolate? What should we do?

- At this time, self-isolation does not extend to family members. However, family members must practice good hygiene, take precautions to reduce potential exposure, and should self-isolate if symptoms emerge.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be [posted online as information is confirmed](#). Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

I just returned from outside of Canada, what am I supposed to do?

- Travel outside Canada is not recommended at this time. All Albertans returning from outside Canada after March 12 should self-isolate for 14 days after arrival in Canada and monitor for symptoms.
- If you recently returned from outside Canada:
 7. [self-isolate](#) for 14 days, even if you're feeling well
 8. [monitor for symptoms](#) such as cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing
 9. If symptoms occur, complete the simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required

I just returned from somewhere in Canada, am I at risk, and what are my next steps?

- If you have recently returned from somewhere in Canada, [check the list of affected flights for updates](#).

7. self-isolate for 14 days if you were found to be in an affected seat.
 8. monitor for symptoms such as cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing
 9. If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- Passengers who were on the plane but not in affected seats are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms for 14 days.
 - If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

How should I travel home from the airport? Should I take a taxi or airport shuttle? Will I potentially put other passengers at risk?

- If you are well, there should be no concern.
- If you have a fever or cough or don't feel well, sit a safe distance from the driver/other passengers, if possible, cover your coughs and sneezes, and practice good hygiene. It is also recommend to wear a mask, if possible.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be posted online as information is confirmed. Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

What about people who are picking up international travelers (family, taxi/Uber drivers)?

- If the international traveller(s) are well, there should be no concern. If they are ill, they should be kept a safe distance from other passengers, if possible. The traveller(s) should also wear a mask, if possible.
- All Albertans should practise good hygiene, such as frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least twenty seconds, and should stay home if feeling ill.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats will be posted online as information is confirmed. Passengers in affected seats are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure.
 - Passengers in affected seats should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - Other passengers are not required to self-isolate but should monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms do emerge, the individual is asked to complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

I'm a tourist from another Canadian province/territory. Do these rules apply to me?

- Yes, we are recommending as of March 12th that any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
 - If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever or cough linked to recent travel or other health concerns should contact Health Link 811.

- Anyone who is feeling ill, even if they have not travelled, should stay home and not visit hospitals, long-term care facilities or supportive living accommodations.
 - If symptoms occur, complete a simple online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

How do I self-isolate if I'm staying in a bed-and-breakfast?

- Self-isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people. This means all situations where you may come in contact with others, such as social gatherings, work, school/university, child care, athletic events, faith-based gatherings, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, shopping malls, and any public gatherings.
- You should, where possible, avoid using public transportation including buses, taxis, or ride sharing. As much as possible, you should limit your contact with people and avoid having visitors, but it is okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food or other things you may need.
- You can also use delivery or pick up services for errands such as grocery shopping. If you need to leave your home for an urgent errand, such as picking up essential medication, as a precaution to further reduce risk of spread, you can wear a surgical mask while you are out.

Treasury Board and Finance