

Albertans encouraged to know their healthcare options

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Alberta Health Services (AHS) is always working to manage the capacity in emergency departments to ensure safe, efficient, high-quality care. This includes at our local AHS healthcare centres in St. Paul, Elk Point and Cold Lake.

There can be times when demand in our emergency departments reaches high levels. This may be a result of several factors, such as seasonal illnesses, which have caused increased hospitalizations and staff absences, or an increase in seriously-ill patients requiring care.

It's important to remember the sickest patients are given priority and no patients are turned away. If Albertans have a medical emergency, or come to an emergency department, they will always receive care.

However, sometimes an emergency department is not the best or most appropriate place to get care you need. We know, because Albertans have told us, that sometimes they aren't sure where to go and they choose an emergency department because of this.

It's so important that Albertans understand the options they have for care across the province.

AHS wants Albertans to get the right care in the right place. There are many options available to receive the care they need.

Let's be clear, if you need emergency care, Alberta's emergency departments and our healthcare teams are here for you. If you are experiencing a serious or life-threatening situation, always call 911 or visit the nearest emergency department.

However, if you're not experiencing an emergency, then you have other care options.

We have a website – [ahs.ca/options](https://www.ahs.ca/options) – that's part of our Know Your Options campaign, designed to help Albertans find the right care for them and their family. Information on this webpage is available in Arabic, French, Vietnamese, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Punjabi and Spanish.

You can also call Health Link 24/7 at 811 if you are not sure where to go for help.

Family doctors, community health clinics, and pharmacies where they are available, are all alternatives to help you with less immediate needs. Many of these can also help you manage your health long-term, which may even prevent the need for the emergency department.

AHS has information that can help parents and caregivers know when to seek medical attention and when they can provide care at home to sick or injured children. This information is available at [ahs.ca/heal](https://www.ahs.ca/heal) with advice from pediatric Emergency Medicine experts at the Alberta Children's Hospital and Stollery Children's Hospital.



If you are struggling, AHS has resources and services available to help you. For information on supports in place to help, visit ahs.ca/helpintoughtimes or call the Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-303-2642.

Albertans can also follow Alberta Health Services on our social media platforms where we regularly post information related to our Know your Options campaign.

Getting the care in the most appropriate setting is best for you, and it helps other patients and the healthcare system.

We encourage you to know your options now, before you need them.