



Report of the Alberta Health Reform Implementation Team To the Minister of Health and Wellness May 2003

Since our last report was released on January 13, 2003, some progress has been made on the Alberta government action plan for health reform. This report highlights new developments and priorities in reform activities, as well as areas where progress is still expected.

Reform activities

Ten-year health objectives and targets

A Healthy Alberta Promotion and Prevention Policy Framework has been completed to establish clear objectives, targets and strategies to reduce rates of diabetes, obesity, chronic heart and lung disease, substance abuse, accident and injury. The framework is awaiting government review.

Non-financial health targets

The Healthy Alberta Promotion and Prevention Policy Framework includes strategies for non-financial incentives to keep people healthy.

Primary health care programs

The province is moving ahead with expanding access to primary health care services. Ten new programs approved April 25, 2003 will improve access to primary health care services in urban and rural communities, provide training for health professionals in primary health care, prevent disease and injuries and promote wellness and manage chronic disease.

The province-wide expansion of the telephone health information line Health Link is on schedule for June 2003.

Posting wait times

Waiting times for diagnostic imaging facilities will be posted on the ministry Web site by June 2003 and surgical facility waiting times will be posted later this summer.

Electronic health records

Provincial rollout of the Pharmaceutical Information Network (PIN) program is on schedule for this summer. Pilot tests of electronic medication information have resulted in effective management of drug prescriptions for thousands of patients. Laboratory test results will also be added to more pilot programs this summer.

Access standards for services

Access standards are being established for the following procedures: MRI/CT scans, major joint replacement, adult open heart and angioplasty surgery, breast and prostate cancer and children's mental health services.

Alternative payment plans

Alternative payment plans for physicians are part of current negotiations with the Alberta Medical Association. Several alternative funding plans (AFPs) for academic physicians have been implemented at the University of Alberta and University of Calgary, including recent agreement with both departments of pediatrics. Work is progressing to develop further AFPs at both universities.

Centralized booking

Work is on schedule to provide centralized booking for select procedures on the ministry Web site by 2006.

Healthy U public information campaign

A public information campaign and a dedicated Web site have been launched to encourage Albertans to include healthy eating and physical activity in their daily lives.

Canada Food Guide

Alberta has communicated to Health Canada its support to review the current *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Living*. Health Canada has struck an expert panel to review the need to revise the guide.

Progress yet to be made**Primary health care reform strategy**

The primary health care strategy is yet to be completed and will provide a framework for further development of primary health care programs.

Comprehensive Health Workforce Plan

A comprehensive plan to establish an overall strategy for Alberta's health workforce has been drafted and is awaiting review by regional health authority CEOs this spring/summer.

Committee on Collaboration and Innovation

Action is being taken to implement recommendations made by this committee. Three-year performance contracts are being negotiated with regional health authority CEOs, and are expected to be in place by June 30, 2003. Work to divest the Alberta Aids to Daily Living program and ambulance services to the regional health authorities is also underway.

Expert Advisory Panel on Publicly Funded Health Services

The panel has submitted two reports to the Minister, proposing a process and structure for reviewing new and currently funded health services, and identifying criteria for selecting items for review. Government is reviewing both reports.

Health Services Utilization and Outcomes Commission

The government is currently working to clarify the roles and expand the responsibilities of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Larry Robert Ohlhauser, MD
Chair

Alberta Health Reform Implementation Team