

Handle with Care

How will we fix what's ailing our health care system?



Alberta's physicians look forward to working with government, Alberta Health Services and other system partners to make much-needed improvements to our health care system. Help us understand how the health care system is serving you. If you are waiting for a family physician, a procedure or test, please visit [PatientsFirst.ca](https://patientsfirst.ca) and complete our short survey to tell us about your experience. Monitoring this data helps us identify priorities for improvement.



Primary Care

ISSUE

Challenges in accessing primary care have escalated over the past three years. Hundreds of thousands of Albertans do not have a family physician. Without access to primary care, chronic conditions worsen and new concerns may not be caught until they are more difficult – or even impossible – to treat.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Albertans want access to a family doctor who is connected to a team. How will your party ensure every Albertan has a medical home?
- How will your party work to encourage medical students and residents to choose comprehensive family medicine in Alberta?
- How will your party financially stabilize and sustain the independent, small-business family practice offices that deliver the majority of primary care, including recognizing the increasing administrative requirements that are burdening them?



Health Human Resources

ISSUE

We are in an unprecedented time when pre-existing demographic changes causing a reduced workforce have been worsened everywhere by the pandemic, accompanied by fatigue and burnout. The shortage of physicians, nurses and other health professionals is the number one challenge facing our health care system. With ongoing shortages, we will continue to struggle to deliver the care Albertans need, when and where they need it.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What strategies will your government employ to make Alberta an attractive place for physicians and medical learners to come and stay?
- How will your government identify and remove impediments to practice in Alberta for medical learners and practicing physicians?
- To help re-establish safe, respectful working environments for health care workers, will your government commit to upholding federal legislation (Bill C-3) to protect our providers in Alberta?



Care of the Elderly

ISSUE

A recent Auditor General report noted that Alberta's continuing care facilities were insufficiently prepared for the pandemic, including outdated infrastructure and staff shortages. Seniors living in the community continue to struggle to access essential primary and home care. We need to do all we can to support seniors. We know the best scenario is to appropriately equip seniors to stay in their homes and communities as long as they can. Creating supports for family caregivers is essential and must be part of the solution.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How will your government ensure Alberta's seniors receive the care they need, when they need it, in their own communities so that they can choose to remain at home?
- How will your government support family caregivers to better sustain the care they provide, and to maintain their own health and well being?
- What will your government do to ensure Alberta's seniors are better cared for in any future public health emergency?



Drug Poisoning Crisis

ISSUE

Over the past three years, Alberta's drug poisoning deaths have exploded, affecting every area of the province. A combination of factors, including changes to the illegal drug supply and challenges in accessing services, are contributing to a situation that has claimed far too many lives and left too many families and communities grieving. This is a complex situation that requires a range of harm reduction, addiction treatment and psycho-social interventions to reduce the immediate risk of death and support people to reduce or stop using substances. Involuntary treatment is unsafe and ineffective.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How does your party plan to deliver a comprehensive continuum of services for people who use substances?
- What steps does your party plan to immediately reduce the number of drug poisoning deaths?



Rural Health Care

ISSUE

Rural communities across Alberta are experiencing an unprecedented health workforce crisis that is forcing rural physicians to take on even more or reduce services provided in their communities. Poor work-life balance and shrinking services make it even harder to attract new physicians to rural and remote communities.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How will your government ensure rural Albertans get the care they need, when they need it, in their own communities?
- What specifically will your government do to retain physicians in rural and remote areas?
- What specifically will your government do to recruit physicians to rural and remote areas?



Pediatric Mental Health

ISSUE

Children and youth were profoundly impacted by pandemic disruptions. Many children who were struggling before the pandemic saw their physical and mental health worsen and new data indicates that these issues linger.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How will your government address the pediatric mental health crisis and ensure Alberta's children and youth get the care they need both in schools/communities and the health care system?
- How will your government assist parents and families to guide children through their journeys in the mental health care system?



Indigenous Health

ISSUE

First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Alberta have higher rates of chronic illness, mental health challenges and addictions due to the impacts of colonization and ongoing health inequities. They live shorter lives, continue to experience racism and culturally unsafe care in our health care system and are disproportionately impacted by the opioid poisoning crisis.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How will your party improve health equity for Indigenous peoples in Alberta?
- How will your party ensure Indigenous peoples receive the care they need, when they need it, in their own communities?
- How will your government address racism and discrimination in our health care system?
- What will your government do to support Indigenous communities in addressing the opioid crisis?

For more information, visit albertadoctors.org/handle-with-care.