

Quality Improvement within Alberta Health Services: How Accreditation Helps

Alberta Health Services was awarded “Accreditation with Condition” by [Accreditation Canada](#) for the second consecutive year.

Twenty Accreditation Canada surveyors visited 61 facilities October 3 – 7, 2011. AHS services were compared to national standards for cancer care, critical care, emergency department, obstetrics, operating rooms and surgery, and provincial services for mothers and their babies, children and youth and persons at risk for cancer.

Alberta Health Services met 89% of the total criteria, with 11% criteria determined to be unmet. This was a great achievement for a large organization. Services that have unmet criteria may be very close to achieving these standards; however, there is some further work to be done to fully meet or exceed Accreditation Canada criteria. Alberta Health Services will report on progress to Accreditation Canada in June and December of 2012.

The Accreditation Canada Report states that the “strengths of Alberta Health Services include an enormous amount of very good work in developing foundational strategies, plans, policies and other initiatives which will serve as a strong basis for moving forward. Alberta Health Services is well poised to now move from strategy development to implementation.”

Alberta Health Services is proud of its caring, compassionate and knowledgeable physicians and staff and its committed and dedicated volunteers. We are pleased to hear that our patients feel safe, prepared and informed.

Alberta Health Services has a number of initiatives underway to improve patient safety and quality of care. Specifically, AHS will target and report back to Accreditation Canada on:

- Educating patients and families on their role in promoting safety (e.g. brochures, videos);
- Appropriate and timely transfer of information so that patients receive the best care possible (e.g. at shift changes, when transferring to another facility or service);
- Determining what is a ‘high-risk’ activity or service and putting strategies in place to reduce risk (e.g. surgery checklists);
- Annual staff training on the use of intravenous pumps; and
- Learning from ‘good catches’ and ‘adverse events’ to increase patient safety.

Alberta Health Services looks forward to the next Accreditation Canada survey of several AHS facilities across the province against national quality standards in October 2012. The focus will be on medicine services (rural acute medicine and renal medicine), brain injury, rehabilitation, addictions and mental health, chronic disease and seniors’ health.

Everyone has a role in patient safety and quality improvement.