

Vendor Guide to Doing Business with Alberta Health Services

September 2010

Information Reader Box

Policy	<p>AHS Conflict of Interest Bylaw AHS Code of Conduct</p> <p>Access these documents on the Alberta Health Services website under the section “About AHS” www.albertahealthservices.ca</p> <p>Under development: Vendor Engagement & Access Policy</p>
Document Purpose	To provide vendors and AHS staff and representatives with an understanding on how AHS conducts business, when and how vendors can engage with AHS staff, and what the responsibilities of AHS staff and representatives is when interacting with vendors
Title	‘Vendor Guide to Doing Business with Alberta Health Services’
Author	Vendor Relations Advisor, AHS
Publication Date	August 2010
Target Audience	AHS vendors, AHS staff and representatives
Circulation List	AHS vendors, AHS staff and representatives
Description	Contains general information about the AHS organization, business practices, requirements for various types of activities between AHS vendors and AHS staff, and relevant contact details for communications and further information
Cross Reference	<p>Areas to visit on the AHS website: “About AHS”</p> <p>Under this section you will find information about the “Corporate Organization” and “Doing Business with AHS”</p>

Action Required	To review this guide and related links in order to understand AHS business engagement requirements and opportunities, as well as to be able to contact appropriate AHS representatives for more information.
Superseded Docs	n/a
Contact Details	<p>Alberta Health Services Contracting, Procurement & Supply Management Suite 101, East Tower 14310 – 111 Avenue Edmonton, Alberta Canada T5M 3Z7 Ph: 780-735-0007 Fax: 780-342-0178</p>
Contact information for Vendor Relations	<p>Vendor Relations Office Ph: 780-342-0091 Email: vendorrelationsoffice@albertahealthservices.ca</p>
Notes For Recipient's Use	

About Alberta Health Services

Alberta Health Service (AHS) provides quality health care services to about 3.9 million Albertans. AHS employs approximately 85,000 skilled staff and dedicated co-workers, 7,200 physicians and 13,000 volunteers and operates more than 400 facilities. AHS facilities include acute care hospitals, cancer treatment centres, community health centres, and mental health and addiction facilities. There are over 6,800 acute care hospital beds and 18,000 long-term care and supportive living beds/spaces. Support services are provided to operations through multiple locations throughout the province.

The President and Chief Executive Officer of AHS, is accountable for the organization's overall operations and reports directly to the AHS Board.

AHS is governed by a Board of Directors led by a Chair and 14 Board members. The AHS Board reports directly to the Government of Alberta's Minister of Health and Wellness.

Responsibilities for daily operations of specific health areas are assigned to Senior Members of the Executive Leadership Team, that report directly to the President and Chief Executive Officer of AHS.

The AHS mission is:

“To provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.”

The AHS strategic direction is structured around three key goals:

“Quality, Access and Sustainability”

The [AHS Organizational Chart](#) outlines the clinical, business and policy area and how they fit within the AHS structure.

How AHS Does Business

AHS does business with almost 4,000 vendors of various types. This guide provides information on how vendors can do business with AHS. There is one centralized provincial business unit for AHS. Contracting, Procurement and Supply Management (CPSM) is responsible for contracting, purchasing, inventory management and distribution of supplies and equipment.

Contracting, Procurement & Supply Management

CPSM is responsible for AHS contracting and procurement activities, including the warehousing and distribution of supplies and equipment. CPSM develops contracting and procurement related policies / supporting framework (including development of tools, guidelines and best practices), provides strategic procurement advice to the organization and Senior AHS Executive; and is the link between AHS procurement related information to AHS staff and the vendor community.

The CPSM mission is to:

“Deliver and Integrate Contracting, Procurement, and Supply Chain Strategic Excellence”

For more information on CPSM organizational structure, go to the [AHS Organizational Chart](#), available on the AHS website.

AHS has created a Vendor Relations Office to assist in the vendor relationship management.

Vendor Relations Office

The **Vendor Relations Office (VRO)** is an access point for vendors and AHS vendor relations. The VRO provides education, support and addresses concerns or inquiries on vendor and AHS staff relationship management. Sources of referrals to the VRO may include vendors, public, 3rd party contracted services, staff, Ethics and Compliance Officer, Patient Concerns Officer, government agencies and organizations, etc.

The VRO provides leadership and support in the development and implementation of the vendor relations processes and proposes change to improve relationship efficiencies of vendor relations within AHS.

The Vendor Relations Advisor for AHS oversees the operations of the VRO; reviews and responds to vendor relations concerns; and is responsible to administer the AHS Vendor Bid Appeals Process. The Vendor Relations Advisor responds to any business ethics questions that are not within the purview of the Ethics and Compliance Officer, AHS.

Vendor Relations Concerns

The VRO addresses issues / concerns forwarded to the office. If AHS staff have a concern or issue related to vendor conduct, they may contact the VRO. A Vendor Relations Concerns Report can be requested from the VRO. Once the completed form is submitted, the VRO will perform the relevant follow up and communications between the vendor and AHS staff.

For vendors wishing to discuss or to request follow up on concerns, please contact the VRO for direction or to arrange an appointment time for a phone call or meeting, as appropriate.

The Legislation and Trade Agreements AHS Follows

AHS contracting and procurement activities are governed by legislation and other trade agreements laws of Canada and Alberta, and AHS Policies. These include:

- Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) - MASH Annex, which regulates trade between the provinces to ensure equal access to public sector procurement for all Canadian vendors. To view this and other related information, go to www.ic.gc.ca
- Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) signed between British Columbia and Alberta, which requires that government and public entities remove impediments across all economic sectors. To view this agreement, go to www.tilma.ca
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP), the purpose of which is to make public bodies more accountable to the public and to protect personal privacy. To view this act, go to www.foip.alberta.ca

The Health Information Act (HIA) passed by the Alberta Legislature in 1999 and came into effect on April 25, 2001. The Act provides individuals with the right to request access to health record. To view this and other Alberta Health legislation, go to www.health.alberta.ca. AHS uses electronic advertising in accordance with TILMA and AIT.

Where AHS Advertises Business Opportunities

- Business opportunities with AHS are posted on the Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC) website www.purchasingconnection.ca.
- Construction related opportunities are posted on Alberta Construction Association Website (www.coolnet.ab.ca).
- AHS may also advertise in a national or local newspapers or other electronic advertising for construction related procurement.
- Purchase Order general terms and conditions can be found at www.albertahealthservices.ca/files/org-purchasing-order.pdf.
- Other methods to advertise opportunities for procurement contracts with a value less than the AIT and TILMA thresholds include:
 - Written requests for quotations (RFQ) for larger contracts.
 - Invitational requests for proposals (RFP) for more complex transactions which may require vendor expertise to propose solutions for special situations.
 - Newspaper advertisements.
 - Verbal or written quotes for small value purchases.

AHS Vendor Insurance Requirements

Vendor insurance requirements are based on the level of risk for the product or services provided. Evidence of the type and coverage amount of insurance will be specified in the RFP document and will be requested from the vendor prior to finalizing any contract award.

AHS Guidelines for Purchase Order (PO)

PO's are sent to vendors by Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), Auto Fax, Manual Fax, e-mail or telephone confirmation. Vendors are requested to carefully review the PO and provide AHS with confirmation of receipt and acceptance.

AHS PO's reference the AHS web page. For a complete outline of AHS Terms and Conditions, go to: www.albertahealthservices.ca/files/org-purchasing-order.pdf.

AHS Vendor Invoicing Guidelines

Recently AHS consolidated billing locations. To expedite invoice payment, vendors should ensure that:

- All invoices quote the applicable PO and the Contract number (contract numbers are typically preceded by the prefix "CM").
- In emergency situations, emergent requests are exempt from requiring a PO or contract number. However the invoice must reference the contact name (first and last name), telephone number of the individual requesting service and date / time of the request.
- Invoice lines should reference the correct PO line number and be sequenced in the same order as the PO. This will facilitate the reconciliation process and help to ensure payment can be expedited in a timely manner. When discrepancies between the PO line details and the invoice line occur, payments will be placed on hold until the discrepancy is resolved.
- For AHS sites with dedicated receiving areas, all deliveries must be delivered to the receiving dock stores attendant for processing. If this process is bypassed, payments to vendors are likely to be delayed. Whenever possible, vendors should include delivery confirmation with the invoice to assist in expediting the payment process.

AHS Vendors Payment Information

AHS vendor payments are typically made within the agreed payment terms.

For payment inquiries, vendors are encouraged to contact **AHS Finance - General Reception (1-403-943-0755)**. The call can then be forwarded to the appropriate person / area.

AHS uses a procurement card program for some areas and instances.

AHS Contract Award Notification Information

CPSM will notify unsuccessful bidders that the competitive process is complete once a preferred vendor has been selected and the contract has been signed. Unsuccessful bidders, who participate in procurements bids valued at \$25,000 or more, will be offered an opportunity to participate in a debriefing session (see “Vendor Debriefing”). In accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA), AHS will provide the name of the successful bidder upon receiving a formal request.

AHS Vendor Debrief Meeting after Contract Award Notification

Information about how the bids will be evaluated as well as how Vendor Debrief meetings are booked and conducted is included in the bid documents. AHS will allow up to and including 30 calendar days post contract award notification for vendors to request a Vendor Debrief meeting. Every attempt to resolve questions and concerns post award should be done through the Vendor Debrief process.

During an AHS Vendor Debrief meeting, discussion may include:

- General overview of the evaluation process set out in the procurement document.
- Discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the vendor’s bid submission in relation to the specific evaluation criteria and the vendor’s evaluated score.
- Feedback from the vendor on current AHS procurement processes and practices.
- AHS’ response to specific questions and issues raised by the vendor in relation to the vendor’s bid submission.

AHS will not disclose information concerning other vendor submissions. Questions unrelated to the procurement process will not be responded to during the Vendor Debrief meeting and will be noted as out of scope based on the debriefing process agreed to in the procurement documents.

Vendor Bid Appeal Process

Most vendor concerns about a contract award can be resolved through a request for clarification or a Vendor Debrief meeting with the AHS Contracting Lead identified in the procurement document. (For additional details please refer to the section on “**Vendor Debriefing**”).

If the vendor concern is not resolved after a Vendor Debrief meeting, the vendor may opt to initiate the formal Vendor Bid Appeal Process. The process and corresponding Vendor Bid Appeal form can be requested from the VRO @ vendorrelationsoffice@albertahealthservices.ca

Completed Vendor Bid Appeal forms should be submitted to:

Alberta Health Services
Contracting, Procurement & Supply Management
Suite 101, East Tower 14310 - 111 Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada, T5M 3Z7
Attention: Vendor Relations Advisor

OR

Email: vendorrelationsoffice@albertahealthservices.ca

Please note: Incomplete Vendor Bid Appeal Process forms will not be processed.

Vendor Gifting to AHS

AHS staff and representatives must comply with AHS Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Bylaw. All vendor activities and supports to AHS are subject to audit and must comply with AHS policies and procedures.

The AHS Conflict of Interest Bylaw and Code of Conduct outline the appropriate levels of engagement that AHS staff can have with others. The principles outlined in these documents align AHS with other well recognized industry codes on ethical vendor engagement and behavior.

Conflicts of Interest

AHS must consider any conflicts of interest during contracting and procurement activities applicable to all staff, advisors, external consultants or vendors. Any individual involved in related activities will be required to declare in writing all actual or potential conflicts of interest. Signed declarations will be retained by AHS for audit purposes.

Conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Situations or circumstances that could give a vendor an unfair advantage during a procurement process or compromise the ability of a vendor to perform its obligations under the agreement;
- Providing assistance or advice to a particular vendor participating in a competitive process;
- Accepting favours or gratuities from those doing business with the organization;
- Not disclosing an existing relationship that may be perceived as being a real or apparent influence on objectivity in carrying out an official role.

To prevent any conflict of interest, AHS reserves the right to require:

- Prospective vendors participating in a procurement process to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest;
- Vendors to avoid any conflict of interest during the performance of their contractual obligations for the organization;
- Vendors to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest arising during the performance of an agreement.

As a result of any actual or perceived conflict of interest, AHS reserves the right to:

- Solely determine whether any situation or circumstance constitutes a conflict of interest;
- Disqualify vendors from a procurement process due to a conflict of interest;
- Prescribe the manner in which a vendor should resolve a conflict of interest;
- Terminate an agreement where a vendor fails to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest or fails to resolve its conflict of interest as directed by the organization;
- Terminate an agreement where a conflict of interest cannot be resolved.

The AHS "[Conflict of Interest Bylaw](#)" and "[Safe Disclosure Policy](#)" provide further guidance on this topic.

Vendor Requests to Meet Clinical Staff and Physicians

AHS understands and values the needs of the patient and the staff who care for them. It is important that vendors have the opportunity to engage with AHS staff under the appropriate circumstances. Vendors meeting with AHS clinical staff and physicians will be guided to comply with the following:

- For meetings that are outside of the RFP process and are clinically focused, AHS staff may engage in approved meetings with vendors providing it does not interfere directly or indirectly with patient care and services, does not create a business relationship, does not interfere with existing contracts or the RFP process, or provide any one vendor with undue advantage.
- Vendors may meet with Clinical AHS staff and physicians regarding products (equipment and supplies), for the purposes of education, technical support or updates to product use if the product is currently under contract with AHS.
- If the product is *new*, please see the section on “**Introducing New Products to AHS**”
- Meetings with vendors may not interfere with patient / client confidentiality, appointment or clinic times. Vendor meetings should be scheduled 3 days in advance and have a clearly stated purpose. The area Manager has the right to accept, amend or reject the meeting.
- Meeting times should not conflict with AHS staff work times or work flow.
- Vendor meetings must comply with the AHS Conflict of Interest Bylaw, and AHS Code of Conduct.
- Vendor meetings that have potential to alter or form business relationships, contracting, pricing or RFPs may only be done in the presence of appropriate CPSM staff. These meetings must be minuted / documented and a copy of the minutes retained by CPSM.

For more information, go to the AHS website www.albertahealthservices.ca . Click on “**About Alberta Health Services**” and “**Doing Business with Alberta Health Services**”.

Providing Vendor Product or Service Information to AHS

It is important that CPSM be aware of products that are currently in use within AHS. Introducing new products may interfere with contractual agreements and obligations as well as impact patient care being provided by multiple end users.

AHS Clinical staff wanting information about new products should contact BizWorx @ 1-780-735-0007 or email @ bizworx@albertahealthservices.ca. The request for information will be forwarded to the appropriate information channel within CPSM to provide a response to the inquiry.

Vendor Access and Monitoring - AHS Sites and Facilities

Vendor access and monitoring strategies including vendor access to AHS staff and physicians through prior registration with CPSM, or designated departments, requiring compliance with policies and standards on access to patient care areas, contract negotiations, introduction of new products, product evaluation and patient privacy is currently under development. Once finalized, information on the

process will be found on the AHS website www.albertahealthservices.ca . Click on “**About Alberta Health Services**” and “**Doing Business with Alberta Health Services**” as it is developed.

How AHS Evaluates New Products

Vendor engagement in evaluations, trials and new products is key to leading edge patient care and service. In order to ensure that AHS mission and goals are met, AHS is developing a central access point for monitoring evaluations. Once finalized, information on the process will be found on the AHS website www.albertahealthservices.ca , click on “**About Alberta Health Services**” and then “**Doing Business with Alberta Health Services**”.

Product Quality & Safety

AHS has a responsibility to effectively communicate and carry out medical device product advisories and recall action when notified by AHS facilities, Health Canada and as requested by the product manufacturer/vendor. A timely and effective response to a Medical Device product advisory or recall notice is essential to ensure that any mitigating risk to patients and AHS staff through the use of faulty product is minimized.

Product Quality & Safety in CPSM will monitor and identify risk associated with the use of medical / surgical products and equipment used within AHS facilities, where ever possible, to reduce or manage that risk for all of AHS facilities and providers.

Product Quality & Safety will:

- Act as the initial point of contact for manufacturers and vendors to send safety notices and advisories for AHS facilities and service providers.
- Develop and promote patient safety and risk management strategies for the safe, effective and efficient handling of internal product concerns and external vendor / manufacturer notifications or alerts regarding medical device failures or concerns.
- Guarantee that the end user receives the correct message in a timely fashion and understands the impacts, implications and corrective action required.
- Utilize a standardized communication tool to disseminate a clear and concise message to a targeted end user group.
- Ensure compliance with regulatory and or legal agencies by maintaining accurate records and document control.

These objectives apply to all equipment and supplies / consumables in use within AHS sites, facilities and providers.

Vendors / manufacturer must directly report product advisories and recall announcement to Product Quality & Safety, CPSM. All vendor notification must be received both electronically and in hard copy format. Notification should be transmitted as follows:

Electronic notification. Notification should be sent by email to ep.advisory@albertahealthservices.ca.

Hard copy notification. Original written notification should be sent by **fax** to **403-955-9981** for the attention of the **Product Quality & Safety**, Contracting, Procurement & Supply Management. Any follow up communication can also be addressed to the above mentioned coordinator by **telephone** on: **403-955-9903**.

Appendix I: Contact Information for Commonly Asked Vendor Relationship Questions

Contact Information	Type of Questions	Rationale
BizWorx Telephone: 1-780-735-0007	For general questions on product / vendor assistance or advise, or contracts, RFP's and pricing	Bizworx will forward the question or request to the correct department for follow up and response to requests for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Need new type of product information. ■ Technical support or inservicing is required. If AHS staff have the vendor contact information, they may call directly. ■ Vendor contact information is required.
Contact Information Product Quality & Safety Phone: 1-403-955-9903 Email: ep.advisory@albertahealthservices.ca	For product issues related to safety or recall process	Product Quality & Safety staff will provide assistance and guidance
Contact Information Vendor Relations Office (VRO) Telephone: 1-780-342-0091 Email: vendorrelationsoffice@albertahealthservices.ca	Vendor AHS business relationship questions and any business ethics questions that is not within the purview of the Ethics and Compliance Officer (ECO).	Contact the VRO to guide or assist as required. Please note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All vendor activities of support to AHS are subject to audit and compliance.
	For AHS staff wanting to report an AHS vendor concern	The VRO is the central access point for all Vendor Relations concerns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concerns are reviewed, recorded and outcomes are monitored.
	For AHS staff or vendors to request clarification on vendor meetings with AHS staff	Vendor meetings are at the discretion of AHS staff for educational / product information and are not to form business relationships with AHS clinical staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ AHS Clinical staff may meet with vendors for specific product / equipment support or education. ■ AHS CPSM staff may meet with vendors for product / equipment / service RFP, Contracting, and other business / relationship related reasons. ■ Vendor meetings with AHS staff should be pre-arranged in a time that does not interfere with patient scheduling of clinic, patient treatment or education time, and

		<p>have a clearly stated purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All contracting, procurement, RFP, pricing and other like discussions must be done through CPSM.
	For vendor requesting introduction of new products to AHS	<p>Vendors requiring guidance about introducing new products to AHS should contact VRO to avoid conflicts with current contracts, RFPs or AHS strategic direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Products for use on AHS patients must be reviewed by CPSM to ensure Health Canada and other regulatory compliance has been met.
	For vendor wanting to initiate a Vendor Bid Appeal Process (RFP)	<p>If the vendor concern is unresolved after the Vendor Debriefing, the vendor may then initiate a formal Vendor Bid Appeal Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vendors may request the submission form by contacting the VRO.
Contact Information	Type of Questions	Rationale
Ethics and Compliance Officer, AHS Phone:1-780-643-4536	For clarification on gifting to AHS and AHS staff as well as other conflict of interest related matters	The Ethics and Compliance Officer provides AHS staff with legal guidance and oversight on matters pertaining to the Conflict of Interest Bylaw - AHS