

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the HQCA?

The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) is an independent government agency with a mandate to promote and improve patient safety and health service quality across Alberta and to survey Albertans about their experience with the healthcare system.

The HQCA gathers and analyzes information, monitors the healthcare system, and collaborates with Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, health professions, university researchers, and other stakeholders to translate that knowledge into practical improvements to health service quality and patient safety in the healthcare system.

Why is Alberta Health Services sharing patient information with the HQCA?

Alberta Health Services is collaborating with the Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) to conduct this survey. The HQCA is a custodian under Alberta's *Health Information Act* and has the legislated authority to use personal health information to monitor and improve the healthcare system. The HQCA strictly follows all of the requirements of the *Health Information Act* to protect your information and identity.

Who is Prairie Research Associates (PRA)? Why aren't patients getting calls from Alberta Health Services or the Health Quality Council of Alberta?

Prairie Research Associates (PRA) is a research company contracted by the Health Quality Council of Alberta to conduct this survey. They are required by the HQCA to adhere to the requirements of Alberta's *Health Information Act* (HIA).

Why are patients getting called from a 204/Manitoba number?

Prairie Research Associates' Survey Research Centre is located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. PRA is contracted by the HQCA to conduct this survey, and must follow the stringent security requirements of the HQCA, as specified by Alberta legislation.

What will patients get out of participating in this survey?

Their survey responses will be analyzed along with those of other patients who visited an emergency department in Alberta. The results will be used to improve the quality, safety, and performance of emergency department care in Alberta.

Why should patients participate?

Patients who are selected are one of only a few people selected from each hospital to participate, so their experiences during their emergency department visit are important. The HQCA wants to make sure that everyone who was selected has a chance to give feedback about their visit by taking part in the survey. We are looking for input from a variety of patients who used the emergency department for different reasons at different times.

Can patients refuse?

Patient participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Their participation will not influence any care they receive in the future. We hope that they choose to participate, but it is completely voluntary.

How will the information be used?

The information patients provide in the survey will be analyzed and reviewed by the HQCA, who will then report the results for each hospital's emergency department on its website, www.focus.hqca.ca. Additionally, the HQCA will share results from the full set of survey questions with AHS every month to support their patient experience activities. All information will be anonymous and confidential.

How will patient privacy be protected?

The HQCA is a custodian under Alberta's *Health Information Act* (HIA), and as such, the information the HQCA collects is strictly protected and confidential. All survey results will be completely anonymous and it will not be possible to identify individuals in the reports.

Will it be possible to identify patients in the information?

No. Any information reported will be a summary of all patient survey results for each hospital. The HQCA will not report information that could identify a patient.

Will the survey take patients a long time to complete?

The survey should only take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

Can patients complete the survey for a relative who has dementia/is unable to complete the survey on their own?

No. The survey is not designed to collect information about an individual's experience of emergency department care from a proxy respondent (i.e., someone answering on behalf of the person who was the patient).

Why can't a child complete the survey on their own? (PEDS SURVEY ONLY)

This survey is looking at the experiences of parents or guardians who have visited an emergency department in Alberta to get care for their child. Because the emergency department visit that they will be answering questions about was related to their child's care, parents or guardians can feel free to involve their child as much or as little as they see appropriate throughout the survey.

Can patients get a copy of the survey results?

Survey results for a subset of the questions will be reported publicly on a quarterly basis (every three months) via the Health Quality Council of Alberta's FOCUS website, www.focus.hqca.ca. If patients want to see these results, they can view them on the website.

Is there someone patients can talk to for more information about the survey?

If patients wish to speak with someone to verify the survey process, to ask questions, or to provide comments about the survey, please contact Mr. Benjamin Higgins at the Health Quality Council of Alberta:

- Toll-free at 1-855-508-8162

Why are you calling during a pandemic?

There's value in learning how patients use emergency department care during the time of a pandemic. Your experience can be used to help inform how a pandemic response may impact patient experience during public health emergencies like this one, and it may also inform improvements in the way emergency departments operate. Rest assured, patient participation in this survey is completely voluntary.

I have symptoms or questions about COVID-19. Can you help?

We recommend you go to the following trusted sources to get the most current COVID-19 information in Alberta:

- **Websites**
 - Alberta public health updates – alberta.ca/COVID19
 - Alberta Health Services updates and COVID-19 online self-assessment – ahs.ca/covid
- **Health Link 811**
 - If you have symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing and have travelled outside Canada or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, stay home and call Health Link 811.
 - If you are not seriously ill, do **not** go to a physician's office, a health care facility or a lab without consulting Health Link 811 first. Call 911 if you are seriously ill, and need immediate medical attention and inform them that you may have COVID-19.

