

Please distribute to all physicians, dentists, oral & maxillofacial surgeons and/or podiatrists.

Date: December 11, 2015

To: AHS Practitioners

From: Dr. Verna Yiu, AHS Vice President Quality and Chief Medical Officer

Re: Policy update: Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services Policy (new) and;
Safe Disclosure/Whistleblower Policies (updated with new policies and procedures)

Dear Colleagues:

After extensive consultation with physicians and other internal and external stakeholders, AHS has developed the [Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services policy](#) effective December 17, 2015. The policy helps physicians and health care providers working within AHS to ensure equity and consistency in determining priority of access to AHS-managed health services, so Albertans can continue to be confident in the integrity of our provincial health system, workforce and clinical operations.

Some of you may recall the 2013 provincial [Health Services Preferential Access Inquiry report](#) which made eight recommendations for AHS to address the potential of improper access to health services. While the report concluded there was no evidence of widespread improper access, it did identify potential system vulnerabilities. The new policy meets three of those recommendations.

The policy confirms and expands on what we're already doing (applying the policy does not entail a new approach):

- Health need continues to be the central factor in determining the appropriate priority of access.
- Physicians and health care providers continue to determine health need using their professional judgment and in consideration of the patient context.
- Access decisions will continue to demonstrate alignment with AHS governance documents (i.e. policies, procedures and practice support documents), applicable operational standards, and provincial and federal legislation.
- Going forward, access decisions will align with the ethical principles outlined in the policy.
- Preferential access is not acceptable within our provincial health system.
- A [procedure document](#) accompanies the policy and details what health services AHS may be required to provide to Internationally Protected Persons under an international convention Canada is bound to uphold.

The policy addresses a number of access matters and provides commentary on patient advocacy and health care navigation, site courtesy notifications (heads-up calls), professional courtesy, and what should occur during a pandemic, outbreak or declared emergency. Along with the policy, you can find support resources posted [here](#).

Questions? Contact your professional practice lead, the AHS Clinical Ethics at clinicaethics@albertahealthservices.ca or the AHS Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer at complianceofficer@albertahealthservices.ca.

Safe Disclosure/Whistleblower Policies and Procedures

AHS has also recently updated the [Safe Disclosure/Whistleblower Policy](#) and expanded it with two new related policies and two new procedures to ensure continuing support for anyone reporting improper activity or unethical conduct within AHS.

These policies comply with Alberta's [Public Interest Disclosure \(Whistleblower Protection\) Act and Regulations \(PIDA\)](#) and are intended to protect AHS personnel including AHS Medical Staff, from retaliation or intimidation when reporting improper activities in good faith.

Questions? Contact your professional practice lead, or the AHS Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer at complianceofficer@albertahealthservices.ca.

Best Regards,

Dr. Verna Yiu, AHS Vice President Quality and Chief Medical Officer