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Why does AHS have a policy on Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services?

AHS provides equitable access to health services for Albertans no matter where in the province they live, who they are, or what health concerns they may have.

To help guide access to services, AHS has developed an [Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services policy](#) which aligns with applicable AHS policies, procedures, protocols, guidelines, operational standards and government legislation. The policy applies to all AHS personnel (anyone providing care or services or acting on behalf of AHS) within AHS-managed settings.

The Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services policy addresses issues related to access, including preferential access. The policy supports staff awareness of AHS' unequivocal stance prohibiting preferential access, and guides them in understanding their responsibility in ensuring it does not occur and what to do if it does.

What is preferential access?

Preferential access happens when, without supporting evidence or justification, one individual is purposely and inappropriately granted access to health services over another individual who has more urgent health needs.

Does AHS allow preferential access?

Preferential access is not allowed within AHS-managed health services settings. Every Albertan can be confident that AHS provides equitable access to health services no matter where in the province they live, who they are, or what health concerns they may have.

Albertans will be provided with appropriate priority access to care whether provided in a hospital, an urgent care centre, continuing care centre, home care, clinic or any other setting where AHS-managed health services are delivered.

The [AHS Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services policy](#) is in place to guide AHS personnel on how to ensure appropriate prioritization of access to AHS-managed health services.

How is access to AHS-managed health services determined?

Health need is the central factor in determining the priority of access to AHS-managed health services.

Health care providers determine health need using their professional judgment and by considering the patient's overall health and well-being (context).

When determining access to health services, health care providers must comply with the [AHS Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services policy](#), and decisions should demonstrate consistency with the ethical principles in the policy and comply with any applicable AHS policies, procedures, protocols, guidelines, operational standards and government legislation.

Where can I get more information?

The AHS Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services Policy can be accessed [here](#).

You may also speak with your health care team to learn more.

Who can I talk to if I have a concern or question on Preferential Access?

If you have concerns about preferential access there are a number of resources for you to access:

- Speak with your health care team.
- Alberta has appointed a Public Interest Commissioner to investigate concerns about wrongdoing in Alberta's public service sector. Anyone can report, and are required to do so in good faith, and without malicious intent or personal benefit. Alberta legislation is in place to provide protection from reprisal through the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act (PIDA).
 - To contact the Commissioner or learn more about the legislation:
<https://yourvoiceprotected.ca/>
- Within AHS, anyone may contact the Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer to report improper activity, and are protected from retaliation through the [AHS Safe Disclosure / Whistleblower Policy](#), which also aligns with provincial PIDA legislation. You may contact the AHS Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer as follows:
 - E-mail: complianceofficer@albertahealthservices.ca
 - Fax: 780-735-1450
 - Mailing address:
 - 2nd Fl. Seventh Street Plaza, North Tower
 - 10030 – 107 Street
 - Edmonton Alberta T5J 3E4
- To report confidentially, you may contact the Safe Disclosure Line, (1-800-661-9675), a dedicated 24/7 confidential reporting and disclosure service engaged by AHS to receive reports of improper activity within AHS.