

TITLE

EXTERNAL BEAM RADIATION THERAPY WAIT TIME ACCESSSCOPE

Provincial

DOCUMENT

HCS-03

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Vice President, Quality & Chief Medical Officer

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE

April 1, 2011

SPONSOR

CancerControl Alberta

REVISION EFFECTIVE DATE

July 5, 2017

PARENT DOCUMENT TITLE, TYPE AND NUMBER

Not applicable

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE

July 5, 2020

NOTE: The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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OBJECTIVES

- To ensure compliance with the requirements in Alberta Health's *External Beam Radiation Therapy Access Policy*.
- To support the timely delivery of high quality, consistent standards of care for an **eligible patient** requiring **external beam radiation therapy**.

PRINCIPLES

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is committed to the timely provision of external beam radiation therapy for cancer treatment by meeting the access target identified by Alberta Health.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

Note: This policy applies only to external beam radiation therapy for cancer treatment or external beam radiation therapy components of cancer treatment.

ELEMENTS**1. Access Target**

- 1.1 The external beam radiation therapy access target is a **wait-time interval** of less than four (4) weeks (i.e., 27 days or less) from the **ready-to-treat date** to the **start-of-treatment date** for all eligible patients.

2. Tracking Wait-Time Intervals

- 2.1 Once the eligible patient and the **Radiation Oncologist** have decided that the eligible patient is ready to treat, the start of the wait time shall be recorded using a standardized format within the designated AHS electronic clinical information systems. See AHS *Determination of External Beam Radiation Therapy Wait Time Intervals* Procedure for details.

3. Revision of Ready-to-Treat Date

- 3.1 The ready-to-treat date is the date on which all pre-treatment diagnostic testing is complete and the eligible patient is ready to begin the treatment process based on clinical decision and patient choice.
- 3.2 The ready-to-treat date may be revised only in cases of clinical necessity or eligible patient choice.
- a) A revised ready-to-treat date may be requested by the eligible patient for any reason.
 - b) A ready-to-treat date may be revised by the Radiation Oncologist, or delegate, due to an unexpected interruption or delay due to eligible patient condition.
 - c) Treatment may be cancelled by request of the Radiation Oncologist or the eligible patient when external beam radiation therapy is no longer necessary, appropriate, or desired by the eligible patient, including cancellation of the ready-to-treat date.
- 3.3 The ready-to-treat date shall not be revised in cases where scheduling of first treatment is delayed due to delays in referrals, equipment repairs, staff shortages, or other process issues over which AHS has reasonable control.

4. Recourse for Eligible Patient at Risk of Waiting Longer Than the Access Target

- 4.1 An eligible patient at risk of exceeding the target wait time shall be provided the option of receiving treatment at another **radiation therapy** facility within Alberta that is able to accommodate the eligible patient within the target wait time. See Appendix A: *Alberta Radiation Therapy Facilities*.
- a) In the event no other radiation therapy facility is able to accommodate the eligible patient within the target wait time, the eligible patient shall be notified and every effort made to provide the radiation therapy at the referring radiation therapy facility.
- 4.2 Treatment for an eligible patient accepting treatment at another radiation therapy facility shall be scheduled at the facility with the next available appointment.

- 4.3 An eligible patient may choose to accept or decline the option of receiving treatment at another radiation therapy facility based on eligible patient choice or clinical advice from the attending Radiation Oncologist.
- 4.4 Travel costs for **inpatients** accepting treatment at another radiation therapy facility are covered under current AHS policies for inter-facility transfers.
- 4.5 Travel and accommodation costs for **outpatients** accepting treatment at another radiation therapy facility are the responsibility of the eligible patient.

5. Wait Time Reporting

- 5.1 Alberta Health Services shall report wait time results for radiation therapy to the public via the AHS quarterly performance reports which shall include:
- the percentage of eligible patients meeting the target;
 - the number of weeks by which 50% of eligible patient received their first external beam radiation therapy treatment; and
 - the number of weeks by which 90% of eligible patients received their first external beam radiation therapy treatment.
- 5.2 Wait times for section 5.1 shall be reported for individual radiation therapy facilities (See Appendix A: *Alberta Radiation Therapy Facilities*).
- 5.3 Alberta Health Services shall report quarterly wait time results for external beam radiation therapy to the Minister of Health in the format described in sections 5.1 and 5.2 above.
- 5.4 Alberta Health Services shall provide identifiable wait time data for external beam radiation therapy treatments to Alberta Health, Performance Measurement Branch.
- 5.5 Alberta Health Services shall provide the Minister of Health with any other information as requested by the Minister.

DEFINITIONS

Eligible patient means, for the purpose of this policy:

- an Albertan who is registered with the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan; or
- a Canadian who is currently registered with a provincial or territorial health care insurance plan; and
- an Albertan/Canadian who has been diagnosed with a cancer requiring external beam radiation therapy; and
- an Albertan/Canadian for whom:

- a) decision to treat; and
- b) ready to treat date has been determined by a radiation oncologist in Alberta.

External beam radiation therapy means radiation therapy that directs radiation beams at the cancer cells and surrounding tissue from a machine outside the body.

Inpatient means, for the purpose of this policy, a patient admitted to and staying in an Alberta designated hospital.

Outpatient means, for the purpose of this policy, a patient staying at home or in another facility that is not a designated hospital in Alberta.

Radiation oncologist means a regulated member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta under the *Health Professions Act* (Alberta) who holds a practice permit respecting the practice of medicine, surgery or osteopathy, or a professional corporation registered with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, and is entitled to use the title Radiation Oncologist, and is a physician with active attending staff privileges with Alberta Health Services as a Radiation Oncologist

Radiation therapy means x-ray therapy radiation treatment, cobalt therapy, electron beam therapy or irradiation using high energy, penetrating waves or particles such as x-rays, gamma rays, proton rays or neutron rays to destroy cancer cells or keep them from reproducing; sometimes called radiotherapy.

Ready-to-treat date means the date on which all pre-treatment diagnostic testing is complete and the eligible patient is ready to begin the treatment process based on clinical decision and patient choice.

Start-of-treatment date means, for the purpose of this policy, the date the eligible patient receives their first cancer external beam radiation treatment at a cancer facility to which the patient has been referred.

Wait-time interval means the number of days an eligible patient waits from the ready-to-treat date (start of interval) to the start-of-treatment date (end of interval).

REFERENCES

- Appendix A: *Alberta Radiation Therapy Facilities*
- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
 - *Determination of External Beam Radiation Therapy Wait Time Intervals Procedure* (#HCS-03-01)
 - *External Beam Radiation Therapy Wait Time: Patient Notification Procedure* (#HCS-03-03)
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
 - *Directive D4-2010*, Alberta Health & Wellness
 - *External Beam Radiation Therapy Access Policy*, November 2010. Alberta Health & Wellness

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- *Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta on a Wait Time Guarantee for Radiation Therapy, March 2007*

VERSION HISTORY

Date	Action Taken
July 05, 2017	Revised
July 14, 2017	Non-substantive change

APPENDIX A**Alberta Radiation Therapy Facilities**

Cross Cancer Institute, Edmonton

Jack Ady Cancer Centre, Lethbridge

Central Alberta Cancer Centre, Red Deer

Tom Baker Cancer Centre, Calgary

Planned site:

Grande Prairie Cancer Centre, Grand Prairie (2019)