

## NEWS RELEASE

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October 12, 2017

### **Auditor General’s October report notes both progress by government and areas needing improvement**

*Edmonton, Alberta, Canada* ... Assurances on food safety, progress on primary care networks and a need for improvement in the Government of Alberta’s capital planning process are among the findings in a report released October 12, 2017 by Alberta Auditor General Merwan Saher.

*The Report of the Auditor General—October 2017* comprises two new performance audit reports, seven follow-up audit reports, the 2016–2017 financial statement audits of Government of Alberta departments and their agencies, and the audit of the *2016–2017 Consolidated Financial Statements of the Province of Alberta*, released by the government in June 2017.

The report includes five new recommendations and two repeated recommendations resulting from the performance audits, and six new recommendations and two repeated recommendations stemming from financial statement audits of government departments and agencies.

Over the past year, 40 recommendations by the Auditor General have been implemented by government.

“Very often after reviewing our audit reports, there is a tendency for the media and the public to pay less attention to what is working well, in favour of focusing on areas where we have identified improvement is needed,” said Saher. “While it is absolutely appropriate to emphasize areas of concern in order to drive understanding and action to make things better, I believe it is equally important for Albertans to understand where our auditing shows that their government is working effectively in serving them.”

The findings in the October 2017 report include progress in the areas of food safety—specifically how government departments and Alberta Health Services (AHS) are working together to ensure the safety of meat products—and infection prevention and control measures in Alberta’s hospitals.

Other areas where government implemented recommendations include improved security on vendor access controls at the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, a better understanding of IT security for industrial controls in Alberta’s oil and gas industry, better oversight of non-hospital contracted surgical services for Albertans, and improvements to Alberta’s primary care networks (PCNs).

As noted in the Auditor General’s May 2017 *Better Healthcare for Albertans*, report, effective primary care is the foundation of a high-performing health system.

“In our follow-up audit on primary care networks in Alberta, we found the healthcare sector’s understanding and awareness of how PCNs, and primary care in general, should evolve has also progressed considerably,” Saher said. “However, the department, AHS and physicians all recognize that more work is needed to fulfill the objectives of the PCN program.”

To help the department and PCNs continue to advance the program in a structured and timely manner, the Auditor General is providing two new recommendations:

- First, to set measurable targets for each PCN and report publicly to Albertans on whether and how the PCN program targets are being achieved.
- And second, to establish and deliver on a firm plan to attach every Albertan to a PCN and inform all Albertans about the PCN to which they belong.

“It is vital to understand how well PCNs are performing in order to make any necessary adjustments and continuously improve the systems to best serve Albertans,” said Saher. “It is equally important for Albertans to know which PCN they belong to in order to become more active participants in their own care, as well as to receive better access to effective and quality care built around their needs as an individual patient.”

Other noteworthy findings in the October 2017 report include:

- A need for better guidance to government departments on long-term strategic capital planning
- A need for clearer guidelines and controls on Alberta Culture and Tourism’s Alberta Production Grant program [and any related successor program]
- A lack of progress on the commitment for collaboration between Alberta’s post-secondary institutions

The full report and the report *At a Glance* are available at [www.oag.ab.ca](http://www.oag.ab.ca).

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