

KEY MESSAGES

THE 1990s GOAL OF INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE IS THE RIGHT GOAL BASED ON THE FACTS

- Integrated care—a healthcare framework built around the patient—has been the stated policy for healthcare in Alberta since the 1990s.
- It is a framework used by the highest performing health systems in the world.
- Progress has been made in establishing the foundation for an integrated care framework in Alberta, but there are inherent barriers in how the current system is set up that have prevented successive governments from establishing this kind of system.

INTEGRATED CARE HAS NOT BEEN ACHIEVED IN ALBERTA FOR THREE MAIN REASONS

- The key building blocks are in place in Alberta, but change is needed if we are ever to achieve the goal of an integrated healthcare framework.
- More money is not the solution.
- After looking at proven models of high performing integrated systems with the best quality of care, we determined it can be done with changes to three key areas:
 - **Structure**—the appropriate participants playing appropriate roles
 - **Integration of physicians with AHS and other providers**—more coordination with allied healthcare providers, and compensation and accountability around high quality care and health outcomes
 - **Clinical information systems**—full, rapid access to records when needed

ACTION IS NEEDED NOW

- All the people in the system—the Minister, government, all MLAs, healthcare providers and professionals, and individual Albertans—must act together immediately if we are to make a difference in the lives of Albertans.
- The **government** must provide leadership to make integrating care a priority and hold others in the system accountable for results around the quality of care and health of Albertans.
- **MLAs** must make decisions for the long term, not from the perspectives of short-term politics, election cycles, isolated controversies and lobbying of local interests.
- **Healthcare providers and medical professionals** must change how they work, break down the silos, integrate services, and align data and funding flows around the care needs of patients.
- The biggest change needed is for **Albertans** to get more involved. Individual Albertans must take a more active role and interest in managing every aspect of their health and their healthcare.

BACKGROUND: Why we did this work

- Since 1990 the Office of the Auditor General has conducted over 40 audits on aspects of the Alberta health system.
- The Department of Health and Alberta Health Services have implemented many of our recommendations for improvement from our previous audits, and are working toward implementing more recent recommendations.
- Alberta Health Services has also undertaken significant initiatives to improve quality of care.
- Through our many audits over the years, weaknesses noted in our findings keep emerging and re-emerging because their **root causes** have not been—or are not being—resolved.
- This is a frustration for all—including the people working in the system—because as a result Albertans are not receiving the quality of care they expect and deserve.
- As of today there remain 41 outstanding recommendations in the health sector, 19 of which have been outstanding for more than three years.
- Using our skills as legislative auditors, we have developed this report to offer a broader analysis of what has frustrated a comprehensive shift toward best-quality care in Alberta.
- This report is our analysis of the root causes behind the lack of progress toward integrated care.
- Our report identifies opportunities based on models from other jurisdictions to take the entire health system to a higher level—to make a quantum leap rather than continuing to make incremental change, reorganize or move in circles.
- The current system is not able to handle our recommendations, all of which point to an integrated healthcare framework.
- This report is our attempt to help the government better deal with our recommendations for improvement.