



Alberta Health Services Non-hospital Contracted Surgical Services



Audit Report Executive Summary

October 2017

Who

Alberta Health Services

What

Follow-up performance audit

When

We conducted our field work from March to May 2017.

Quick Facts

- Alberta Health Services (AHS) has legislated responsibility for the planning and delivery of health services in the Province of Alberta.
- Under this legislation, AHS can either provide services directly or contract with service providers who meet AHS requirements.
- Non-hospital surgical contracted services include ophthalmology; dermatology; pregnancy termination; plastic surgery; ear, nose and throat surgery; and oral and maxillofacial surgery

Learn More

albertahealthservices.ca

Why we did this audit

Surgical services in Alberta can be provided at public hospitals or non-hospital surgical facilities. Most surgical procedures, including all major surgeries, are performed at hospitals, where specialized resources and equipment are available for complex procedures and managing serious complications. However, some other operations may be contracted to non-hospital surgical facilities.

Since the initial audit in 2001, we have completed several follow-up audits. Most recently, in 2014, we have repeated our recommendation that Alberta Health Services strengthen its process to monitor the performance of contracted non-hospital surgical facilities.

What we concluded

We conclude that Alberta Health Services has implemented our recommendation by establishing an oversight process to monitor the performance of contracted non-hospital surgical facilities and improving its processes to record and analyze performance information for these surgical facilities.

Why this is important to Albertans

Maintaining safety and achieving appropriate surgical outcomes are imperative, whether the surgery occurs in a hospital or in a contracted facility. AHS is legislatively responsible for ensuring that all of Alberta's surgical services, including those delivered in contracted facilities, meet AHS requirements. Accordingly, AHS must have systems that monitor and manage surgical performance and patient outcomes in contracted non-hospital surgical facilities.

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(continued)



What we examined

To perform this audit we examined:

- changes in the AHS committee structure and terms of reference involving the non-hospital surgical facilities program, including meeting agendas, information provided to the committee, and meeting minutes
- contracts with non-hospital surgical facilities, annual report submissions to AHS, and summary reports provided by the AHS oversight committees

We conducted interviews with staff involved with the non-hospital surgical facilities program at AHS, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta and the Alberta Dental Association and College. We conducted interviews with medical directors and executive management representatives from four contracted surgical facilities. We also interviewed Department of Health representatives.

We did not examine processes or procedures at contracted surgical facilities, the College of Physician and Surgeons of Alberta or the Alberta Dental Association and College.

What we found

Alberta Health Services has:

- established a multidisciplinary provincial oversight committee whose mandate includes reviewing annual reports from non-hospital surgical facilities, and related analysis, to ensure the facilities are meeting appropriate outcomes
- developed an online incident reporting system for use by contracted surgical facilities, improving the timeliness and consistency of incident information collected
- improved the timeliness of its follow-up on incidents reported by contracted facilities
- enhanced the quality of the performance analysis completed by AHS's contract management group for internal use and reporting to the provincial oversight committee

- begun sharing its performance information on surgical facilities and comparing it with similar data obtained by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta and the Alberta Dental Association and College
- improved dialogue with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta and the Alberta Dental Association and College, which has resulted in discussions about joint inspections of contracted surgical facilities' infection prevention and control procedures

What needs to be done

We have no further recommendations related to non-hospital contracted surgical services in Alberta.

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