

Alberta Doctors' Digest

State of Health Care Report 2026

The AMA released its second annual [State of Health Care Report](#) in June. Based on responses from 1,100 Albertans and insights from [PatientsFirst.ca](#), the report captures what Albertans experience when they access care.

Building on last year's [baseline](#), this year's report offers a clearer picture of how the system is evolving, tracking trends to identify emerging challenges and opportunities to strengthen Alberta's health system.

The findings reveal a clear disconnect: while Albertans continue to express strong confidence in the quality of care they receive and in the health professionals who provide it, confidence in the system's ability to deliver timely care is declining.

"Albertans are not questioning the skill of health care providers or the quality of the care they provide," said AMA President Dr. Brian Wirzba. "They are questioning whether they can reach that care when it matters most."

What we heard

Health care use is widespread, with nine in 10 Albertans accessing services in the past year. But wait times are now the defining challenge across the system – from primary care to specialist referrals and emergency services – shaping how patients experience and evaluate their care.

Access to family physicians is a persistent challenge

82% of Albertans reported seeing a family physician in the past year, and most rated their care as very good or excellent. While the proportion of Albertans without a family doctor has decreased modestly, just over 50% say they can usually get an appointment when they need one.

These challenges are pushing patients toward walk-in clinics, urgent care and emergency departments, disrupting continuity of care and adding pressure to other parts of the system.

Specialist care wait times are a critical bottleneck

Nearly one in four Albertans is waiting to see a specialist, and most Albertans (70%) rate the quality of specialist care as good or excellent. But wait times are described as unacceptably long, and many patients reported worsening health conditions while waiting for specialist assessment and treatment.

Pediatric mental health: high need, limited access

40% of parents surveyed reported that at least one child in their household has a mental health or developmental condition. At the same time, less than half say their child is receiving the support they need, and families consistently report difficulties navigating pediatric mental health supports.

***State of Health Care* report in the news**

The AMA released the [2026 State of Health Care Report](#) findings through a series of targeted media releases, which generated significant [news coverage](#) in major outlets across the province. Key findings and news coverage were further amplified through AMA social media channels.

The bottom line

The report points to a consistent theme: while the quality of care remains a core strength of Alberta's health care system, patient access is under increasing strain.

Albertans continue to value the dedicated care of physicians and other health care professionals, but question whether the system can ensure timely access when they need it most.