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Theme: Screening

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is Canada's first and largest provincewide, fully-integrated health system, responsible for delivering health services to the over four million people living in Alberta, as well as to some residents of Saskatchewan, B.C. and the Northwest Territories. Programs and services are offered in 5 zones across Alberta (North, Edmonton, Central, Calgary and South) at over 650 facilities throughout the province, including hospitals, clinics, continuing care facilities, cancer centres, mental health facilities and community health sites. The province also has an extensive network of community-based services designed to assist Albertans maintain and/or improve health status. AHS are currently developing a method to support individuals who are exposed to domestic violence and who access their facilities.

#### *Critical Elements*

- Health care providers can be an important link for the individuals exposed to domestic violence to community resources, as well as physical and mental health support. AHS are currently researching methods that are most effective and safe in connecting victims of domestic violence with supports they need.
- Whatever direction is chosen, AHS is committed to using trauma-informed approaches (not focusing on "what's wrong with you" but "what happened to you"); engaging with patients in a way that keeps them safe (using discrete ways to engage or share information); and providing them with supports and linking them to resources they need.
- AHS has developed several learning modules that it uses to support training of its staff on the issue of domestic violence, its impact, how patients might present when they are victims of domestic violence and how they might be best supported (e.g., dialogue pathways). The training also includes Domestic Violence and Your Workplace component in recognition that an overrepresentation of nurses are victims of domestic violence.
- AHS has incorporated directions for work with victims of domestic violence in its standards of practice.
- Domestic Violence Response Team (DART) is a new project that is being piloted in Red Deer, that has an AHS nurse working with the women's outreach centre. The team from the centre is available 24/7 to come out to the hospital to meet with victims of violence, provide them with safety planning supports and any other necessary resources.