

Engagement Survey: Modernizing Emergency Health Services (Emergency Health Services Act Amendment)

Glossary

Term	Definition
Air Ambulance	Aircraft used to provide in-flight medical care and transport for patients when it is clinically needed
Ambulance Operator	An organization granted license by Hospital and Surgical Health Services to run an ambulance service.
Clinical Governance	The rules and oversight that keep care safe and consistent (e.g., protocols, audits, quality checks).
Dispatch	In the context of EHS, a dispatch centre is a part of the EHS dispatch system that receives 911 calls and sends the right help; dispatch centres are approved by the Minister under the Act.
Emergency Health Services Act (EHSA)	The provincial law that sets out how emergency health services are governed in Alberta (e.g., licensing, dispatch, inspections, enforcement).
Emergency Health Services Modernization	A transformation of Alberta's emergency response system aimed at redesigning dispatch, improving clinical oversight, expanding appropriate care pathways, reducing unnecessary ambulance use, and strengthening rural coverage. Key initiatives include removing ambulance pre-alerts, reducing lights-and-sirens use, deploying HELP-U units, strengthening clinical triage, aligning to high-acuity events, expanding rural resources, and centralizing IFT oversight.
First Responder	Trained responders (often fire/volunteer groups) who arrive first to provide basic first aid before an ambulance; may be recognized and directed under the Act.
Ground Ambulance	A dedicated vehicle approved for use by HSHS to provide mobile paramedic services and in some cases, transport patients to a health care facility.
Health Evaluation and Linkage Paramedic Unit (HELP-U)	HELP-U is a provincial EHS initiative launching in Calgary and Edmonton in March 2026, with three dedicated units in each city. HELP-U clinicians respond to EHS events that are typically not time-critical and are not expected to require an urgent response. They perform focused clinical evaluations, provide treatment within PCP scope, and support shared decision-making with patients on the safest next steps.
Hospital and Surgical Health Services	The Government of Alberta ministry that delivers emergency and acute care services including hospital care, surgical procedures, cancer care, and organ and tissue services and also administers the EHSA (EHS Branch is part of HSHS).
Industrial EHS	Emergency medical services are deployed specifically for industrial or remote work environments, such as oil and gas sites, construction zones, or mining and forestry operations.
Interfacility Transfer (IFT)	The IFT program provides clinical support to patients during ground or air transport between approved healthcare facilities.
Medical First Responder (MFR)	Services provided in response to emergency calls when non-ambulance resources (typically fire department personnel) are dispatched to provide first aid prior to EMS arrival.
Mobile Integrated Health (MIH)	The MIH program aims to provide hospital-level care in the community, particularly for individuals who face barriers accessing traditional healthcare facilities, such as the elderly, homebound individuals with complex chronic medical needs, and those with mobility challenges. By delivering care at the patient's location, this model seeks to reduce unnecessary 911 calls, interfacility transfers (IFTs), emergency department visits, hospital admissions, and healthcare costs, while improving patient outcomes and overall health.
Mobile Treatment Centre (MTC)	A specialized industrial medical vehicle or unit that serves as both a medical treatment area and emergency transport resource on industrial sites. An MTC functions as an industrial ambulance equipped for first aid care and patient stabilization and can transport injured workers short distances to a licensed ambulance meeting point or healthcare facility.

Non-clinical/Low-acuity transport	Planned or lower urgency trips for patients who need safe medical transport but not a full emergency response.
Urban/Rural/Remote	Urban: large population centres; Rural: small towns and countryside; Remote: communities far from hospitals or services (often with long travel times).