Bill 39: Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2)

Stronger protections, clearer legislation and stable health services

Overview

Alberta's health system continues to evolve to meet the needs of Albertans. If passed, Bill 39 will improve accountability, support effective health service delivery and help ensure Alberta's health legislation remain clear, current and responsive to the needs of Albertans.

Strengthening protections for Albertans receiving care
Every Albertan deserves to receive care with dignity and respect, free from abuse. If passed, proposed amendments to the *Protection for Persons in Care Act* will provide greater confidence that care concerns are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken when abuse concerns are identified.

Enhancing care for vulnerable Albertans
Albertans struggling with serious addiction or mental health challenges deserve care that is compassionate, consistent and responsive to their needs. If passed, Bill 39 would improve coordination in mental health care and ensure people with the most severe forms of addiction are connected to life-saving treatment and a path to recovery.

Clarifying public funding and establishing requirements for self-insurance plans
Alberta's government is committed to a strong, publicly funded health care system that puts patients first while giving Albertans more choice. If passed, Bill 39 will clarify eligibility for publicly funded community-based laboratory services and requirements around self-insurance.

Maintaining stable health-sector labour relations
Alberta's government is focused on protecting health-care workers' rights and maintaining labour stability. If passed, Bill 39 will ensure the public health-sector bargaining framework and compensation reporting reflects the current structure of the health care system.

Proposed changes under Bill 39: the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2)

Protection for Persons in Care Act

Under Bill 39	Currently in Alberta
• Albertans and their families would have greater confidence that abuse concerns will be addressed appropriately. • If passed, Bill 39 will clarify which publicly funded care and support providers are subject to the Act. • The amendments would strengthen investigation, appeal, compliance and enforcement processes. • Related amendments to the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* and *Health Professions Act* would update terminology and cross-references without changing the scope of those acts.	• The *Protection for Persons in Care Act* protects adults receiving publicly funded care or support services and sets out how reports of abuse are reviewed and addressed. • The Act has not been substantively updated since 2009, while care and support service delivery models have continued to change. • Changes in service delivery have created ambiguity about which providers are covered and have contributed to inconsistent application of the Act.

What is not changing:

- Existing protections and appeal rights would remain in place.
- The amendments would not replace existing oversight or inspection regimes.

Compassionate Intervention Act

Under Bill 39	Currently in Alberta
• If passed, proposed amendments would strengthen application and hearing processes, support timely access to information, provide more clinical and operational flexibility, and clarify oversight. • Changes will ensure services can be delivered safely, effectively and consistently once implemented in spring 2027.	• The Act establishes a compassionate intervention framework for family members, guardians, health care professionals, police or peace officers to request an assessment order as a measure of last resort for those whose severe addiction or substance use has made them a danger to themselves or others.

What is not changing:

- These changes do not alter the core purpose of compassionate intervention. It remains a health intervention and measure of last resort focused on assessing, stabilizing, treating and providing a path to recovery for people experiencing the most severe substance use or addiction.

Mental Health Act

Under Bill 39	Currently in Alberta
• If passed, proposed amendments would improve coordination in administering the *Mental Health Act* in approved hospitals. This will allow health service sectors to work together more effectively to support patient care.	• Clearer roles and responsibilities across health service sectors are needed ensure the Act continues to work as intended within approved hospitals.

What is not changing:

- These amendments do not expand the circumstances in which a person may be involuntarily assessed, detained or treated.
- Patient rights and safeguards under the *Mental Health Act* will remain in place.

Alberta Health Care Insurance Act

Under Bill 39	Currently in Alberta
• If passed, proposed amendments to the *Alberta Health Care Insurance Act* would maintain no-cost access to publicly funded laboratory services for insured and physician-referred care, while allowing costs to be recovered for services connected to uninsured, private-pay care.	• Laboratory testing connected to uninsured, private-pay services can currently be captured within publicly funded community laboratory arrangements, creating a gap in how costs are recovered.
• Additional amendments to the Act would provide authority to enforce restrictions for physicians who provide health services through self-insurance plans and insurers that offer coverage.	• Clear legislative authority is needed to oversee physician services and insurance coverage provided through self-insurance plans.

• This includes record-keeping and reporting by participating physicians and insurers.	

What is not changing:

- Albertans would continue to have access to physician services through the publicly funded health system.
- Publicly funded laboratory services required for insured and physician-referred care would continue to be available without charge.

Public health inspectors

Under Bill 39	Currently in Alberta
• Amendments to the *Public Health Act* would transfer public health inspectors from Alberta Health Services Regional Health Authority to Primary Care Alberta (PCA). • PCA would be able to appoint public health inspectors and transitional measures would allow inspectors to continue their responsibilities without interruption. • Related requirements and outdated references would be updated to align with Alberta's refocused health system. • Transitional provisions would support uninterrupted inspection and enforcement services. • Unproclaimed amendments from the *Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2)* would be repealed because they are no longer needed.	• Public health inspectors currently work within Alberta Health Services Regional Health Authority. • Previously proposed, unproclaimed amendments recommended they transfer to the Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services.

What is not changing:

- Public health inspection and enforcement services would continue throughout the transition.
- Existing union representation and collective agreements for public health inspectors would be preserved.

Labour relations

Under Bill 39	Currently in Alberta
• Amendments to the Labour Relations Code would update the public health-sector bargaining framework to reflect provincial health agencies and corporations. • References to outdated health regions would be removed while the existing bargaining structure and processes would continue under the new employer structure.	• Alberta's refocused health system created provincial health agencies and corporations that were not reflected in the former public health-sector employer structure. • The current transitional labour relations framework is scheduled to expire on Dec. 31, 2026.

What is not changing:

- Existing bargaining units, collective agreements and union representation would continue.
- The long-standing labour relations framework and bargaining processes would remain in place.

Administrative amendments

Under Bill 39	Currently in Alberta
• Proposed technical amendments to the *Provincial Health Agencies Act* would correct a cross-reference error and improve the accuracy of the legislation. • This would close a technical gap to ensure Labour Relations Code coverage for all public health-sector employees.	• The Provincial Health Agencies Act contains a cross-reference error and does not expressly reference provincial health corporations for Labour Relations Code coverage.
• Proposed amendments to the *Health Professions Act* would make administrative updates, including changing outdated ministerial references and clarifying that continuing competence requirements are set out in standards of practice.	• The *Health Professions Act* contains outdated ministerial references and currently refers to continuing competence requirements in regulations.
• Proposed amendments to the *Public Health Act* would remove outdated references to the Ministry and Department of Education and Childcare, ensuring the legislation reflects the current structure of government.	• The Public Health Act contains outdated references to the Ministry and Department "of Education".

What is not changing:

- These administrative amendments would not introduce new policy direction.
- The changes would not alter how health services are delivered.