

Seventh-day Adventist® Church

ALBERTA CONFERENCE

Name: Eric Ollila
Communication/Media Director
Email: eollila@albertaadventist.ca
Phone: (403) 342-5044
Address: Alberta Conference of the
Seventh-day Adventist Church
5816 Highway 2A
Lacombe, Alberta T4L 2G5
Website: albertaadventist.ca

Alberta Conference COVID-19 Update

Following Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health Statement of March 12

In light of the update on COVID-19 issued by Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw on Thursday, March 12, 2020, at 3:30 PM (MST), the Alberta Conference Administrative Leaders are issuing this statement:

The overarching aim of this communication is to protect the health, safety and wellness of our churches, schools and families. We want to be sensitive to the health risks that we are all facing and, at the same time, remember the faith needs of our members.

The latest recommendations for Albertans, from Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw are these:

- *Effective immediately, we [Alberta Government] are asking all large gatherings or international events in the province to be cancelled and advising Albertans against travel outside of the country.*
- *By "mass gathering," we mean any mass gatherings of more than 250 people. This includes large sporting events, conferences and community events.*
- *It does not extend to places of worship, grocery stores, airports or shopping centres.*
- *Any event that has more than 50 attendees and expects to have international participants, or involves critical infrastructure staff, seniors, or other high-risk populations should also be cancelled.*
- *Events that do not meet these criteria can proceed, but risk mitigation must be in place such as sanitizer stations and distancing between attendees.*
- *At this time, schools and daycares can remain open, but steps should be taken to ensure that no more than 250 individuals are in the same room at any given time.*
- *Any travel outside of the country is also not being recommended at this time. Given the rapid global spread of the virus, it is no longer possible to assess health risks for the duration of the trip.¹*

To reach or watch the full statement go to <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>



The Alberta Conference Administration encourages all employees, members, churches, schools, and other groups within our constituency to carefully read and watch the full interview with Dr. Hinshaw and adhere to the guidelines she outlines.

What this means for Alberta Conference

Church Gatherings

We understand the above guidelines to allow for church gatherings. However, risk and vulnerability assessment needs to be performed by the local church leadership following the steps outlined on the Alberta.ca website.² Decisions to proceed or cancel church gatherings should be made accordingly and with common sense, by local church leadership.

Gatherings of more than 250 people need to take extra precautions. While the announcement yesterday exempted houses of worship, grocery stores, airports, and shopping malls, the Medical Officer voiced concerns for the groups who do meet and that is made up of people in three vulnerable sectors

- the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.
- Those who have travelled or are travelling and who may have come into contact with the virus in the course of their travels and
- health care workers who are currently, or who may be, required to care for the sick or the elderly.

School Gatherings

At this time, schools and daycares can remain open but steps should be taken to ensure that no more than 250 individuals are in the same room at any given time.

Additional Considerations for Members, Churches and Schools:

The Alberta Government is strongly recommending that no Albertan travel outside of Canada. Dr. Hinshaw stated:

- *If you are returning to Alberta from outside of Canada you should self-isolate for 14 days, even if you are feeling well, and monitor for symptoms. Do not visit long-term care facilities if you are sick with a fever or cough. All Albertans should practice good hygiene, including washing their hands regularly and avoiding touching their face and eyes.*
- *Develop a plan for what might need to change if you and your loved ones need to stay home for two weeks. Talk with your neighbours and friends to see how you can support each other if any of you are in this situation.*
- *There is another important part of preparing: talking to your children. All parents and guardians should talk to their children about this virus if they haven't already done so.³*

We at the Alberta Conference acknowledge that times like these may be stressful and cause fear in many of your hearts. We want to encourage you that God is in control. He will never leave you nor forsake you. His promises are sure. Whatever challenges may come, we are confident that God will lead us through.

Stay faithful, and God bless!

Gary Hodder, President
Alberta Conference Administration

Wayne Williams
Vice President for Administration

Keith Richter
Treasurer/CFO

²<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

³Ibid.

