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| Expanding Calgary ER and mental health units February 19, 2020 [Media inquiries](#media-contacts)  The Alberta Government is committing $137 million to build a bigger, better emergency department and mental health units at Calgary’s Peter Lougheed Centre.  This capital funding is in addition to the $20.6 billion annual budget for health services, the highest ever in the province and the highest per capita of all provinces.  “For years, Calgarians have been calling for the Peter Lougheed Centre to be expanded, and our government is delivering. We are committed to making long-term capital investments in the facilities that Albertans need to stay healthy, strengthening public health care and improving access to the services that matter most.”  Jason Kenney, Premier  The Lougheed Centre has one of the busiest and most congested emergency departments in the province.  These renovations will improve access to emergency care and boost mental health services by adding a new mental health intensive care unit and expanding the mental health short-stay unit.  The project will provide faster care and more privacy and comfort for patients and families, in a space that will serve Calgary and Southern Alberta families for decades to come.  “Staff at Peter Lougheed hospital have been going full blast for many years, providing top-quality emergency care to twice as many patients as the space was designed to serve. This project will give families in and around Calgary better access to life-saving emergency and mental health services.”  Tyler Shandro, Minister of Health  “This investment of $137 million into the Peter Lougheed Centre will benefit all Calgarians. We remain committed to addressing the vital infrastructure needs of Albertans, and we will continue to make significant investments in our health system.”  Prasad Panda, Minister of Infrastructure  A new rapid-response laboratory will also be built to replace the current aging lab, and provide state-of-the-art diagnostic services.  “This announcement is great news for Calgarians. This expansion will greatly benefit both patients and staff today and in the future, by ensuring our health-care infrastructure and services keep up with the growing needs of people in Calgary.”  Dr. Verna Yiu, president and CEO, Alberta Health Services  Budget 2020 commits $137 million in capital funding for the Peter Lougheed project over three years. Additional capital dollars for other health projects will be announced in Budget 2020, to be released on February 27.  Design work will begin soon, with construction of the first phase of the project scheduled to start in 2022. This will include expansion of the emergency department by 1,500 square metres, including new triage and trauma areas, and moving the ambulance drop-off closer to the emergency department. Quick facts  * The Peter Lougheed Centre opened in 1988 with an emergency department designed to accommodate 30,000 to 40,000 patient visits, and a maximum design capacity of 59,500 visits. * In 2018/19, the hospital handled almost 82,000 emergency visits. * Mental health visits to the emergency department have increased by more than one-third in the past five years. * The mental health short-stay unit at the hospital is consistently at more than 100 per cent capacity. * Lab volumes at the hospital are also growing, with 2.3 million tests forecast to be done at the site by 2029/30, up by more than one-third from current levels.  Media inquiries[Steve Buick](mailto:Steve.Buick@gov.ab.ca)  780-288-1735 Press Secretary, Health |
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