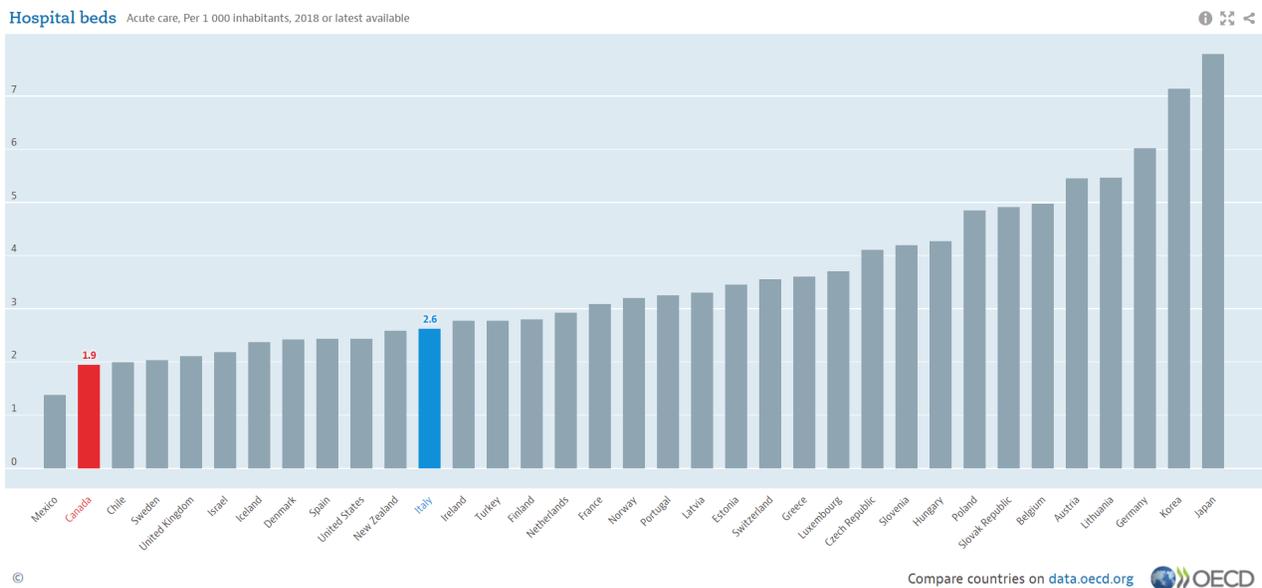
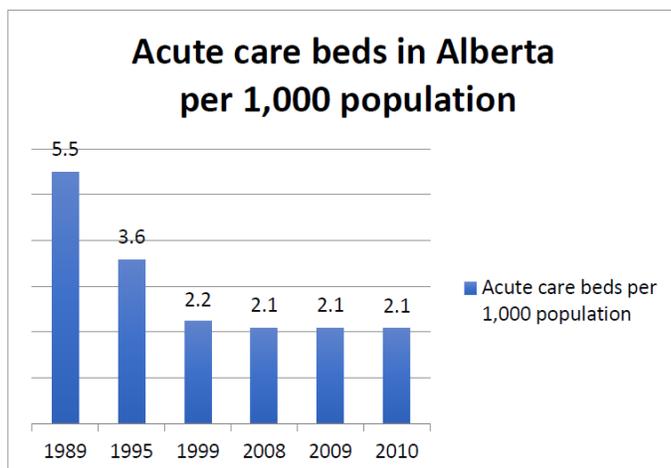


Due to the current lack of capacity in Alberta’s healthcare system, the province will be in an increasingly perilous position the quicker COVID-19 spreads. We currently do not have surge capacity or the capacity to manage a crisis – a direct result of years of right-wing cuts to our health care system with the goal of achieving the most bare-bones system that can barely keep up with business as usual.

Italy is currently facing a similar crisis. Their doctors are having to decide which patients to treat with ventilators, which patients to give acute care beds to, and which patients are left to fend on their own, likely to die. It should be noted that Italy has 2.6 acute care beds per 1,000 people.



After years of conservative cuts Alberta has seen a severe drop in the number of acute care beds in the province.



According to the most recent AHS report, Alberta has 7,967 acute care beds in total, including acute psychiatric beds, NICU, and pediatric ICU. To put this in context, Alberta has approximately 2 acute care beds per 1,000 people.

Summary of Bed Numbers by Zone and Detailed Facility Listing

Number of Beds/Spaces as of March 31, 2019	South Zone	Calgary Zone	Central Zone	Edmonton Zone	North Zone	Provincial
Hospital Acute & Sub-Acute Care						
Hospital Acute Care	517	2,181	933	2,414	839	6,884
Psychiatric in Acute Care	72	287	50	236	40	685
Neonatal Intensive Care (NICU Levels II and III)	23	126	17	130	10	306
Intensive Care (includes ICU, SCU, CCU, CVICU and PICU)	24	136	21	198	19	398
Sub-acute in Acute Care	9	32	32	22	0	95
Palliative beds in Acute Care	0	29	45	20	21	115
Total Hospital Acute & Sub-Acute Care	645	2,791	1,098	3,020	929	8,483

The Government of Alberta has noted that there are currently [477 adult critical care ventilators](#), another 50 currently on order, and 78 pediatric critical-care ventilators. Even with the 50 additional ventilators, Alberta only has 1 ventilator per 6,453 adults.

The most recent review of our health care system under the UCP government suggests there are lots of areas that can still be cut – including the level of care that Albertans currently receive in hospitals. The response to this crisis makes it clear that the Alberta health care system cannot afford any more cuts – not now during the COVID-19 pandemic and not in the future if we want a robust health care system.

As a result of conservative cuts and “trimming the fat” year after year, we now have a health care system and social safety nets that have no capacity to deal with this pandemic. This kind of extreme efficiency may work for private businesses, but for government these cuts come with very real costs, realized through the suffering and deaths of Albertans.

The Alberta government must make drastic moves to reinforce our health care system to deal with the impending spike in demand because of COVID-19. Moving forward the provincial government must properly fund our health care system so it can respond to such spikes. Although we may not have been able to directly predict COVID-19, our experience with SARS, H1N1, and now COVID-19 makes it clear that we have to have robust systems in place that are capable of responding to worst-case scenarios. Our very lives depend on it.