

SUPPORT PROGRESS  
STAKEHOLDERS

GOALS  
TRANSFORMATION

OPPORTUNITIES LEGACY

KNOWLEDGE

LEADERSHIP EXPERTISE  
PARTNERSHIPS TRANSLATION



■ ■ ■ STRATEGIC  
■ ■ ■ FRAMEWORK



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# INTRODUCTION

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■ **ALBERTA INNOVATES** is a strategically aligned and integrated provincial research and innovation system, and Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions (AIHS) is an integral part of it. Under the banner of AIHS, the Board and management work to support and improve research and innovation in the province, and make Alberta more competitive in the global economy. To achieve this, they work with other key research and innovation agencies, publicly funded post-secondary institutions, health care institutions, industry (or private sector), government, and others.

This document is the first Strategic Framework developed by the Board of AIHS. It is intended to:

- Represent the collective vision and accountability of the Board of AIHS in achieving its intended future;
- Serve as a directional document that guides management in creating the strategies required to achieve the vision;
- Provide information to stakeholders on the strategies and priorities of AIHS; and
- Help identify opportunities to align stakeholder's interests with those of AIHS and the Government's broad health, and health research and innovation agenda (including those expressed in Alberta's Health Research and Innovation Strategy, AHRIS).

In this document, we present the Mandate and Roles, Vision and Mission, Core Values, and Strategies for Success of the organization, and outline the major implementation strategies we expect to put in place.



# CONTEXT

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## AIHS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Government of Alberta established the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR) in 1980. Over a period of 30 years, AHFMR created a community of health researchers in Alberta who contributed world-class research that could improve the health and health care of Albertans. AHFMR undertook new and different ways of creating capacity for health research and was a significant reason why Alberta has, for its size, an enviable and highly respected health-research community.

The Government of Alberta created AIHS on January 1, 2010, which continues the legacy of excellence and capacity from AHFMR. AIHS was created in an environment significantly different from the one that existed 30 years ago when AHFMR came into being. Health research has evolved into a major enterprise provincially, nationally, and internationally, particularly over the last decade. As a result, fierce competition exists for limited public resources and for the best minds to accomplish the work.

The funding to support the health research enterprise started out as a mostly reactive, conservative, low-risk approach that gave a long-term investment in broad support for research activity. It is now a more pro-active, outcomes-focused activity that expects timely returns on its investments. Globally, the trends are:

- Research organizations increasingly setting priorities for their investments
- Funders increasingly using shared partnership models for their investments
- Increasing investment in collaborative and multi-disciplinary research
- Public funders expecting (or demanding) a timely return on their investments
- Monitoring progress and measuring achievements and success becoming key features



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These trends have resulted in changes in research agencies' funding models and processes. These changes include:

- Selecting research that has the potential to directly provide timely societal and economic benefits
- Agreeing with researchers and knowledge users on expected deliverables
- Identifying ways to assess progress towards these deliverables
- Creating management processes that allow both supportive and corrective action.

We present AIHS' initial Strategic Framework in this document. We have designed it to maintain Alberta's current excellence in research and innovation and to sustain our leadership position over the next 30 years within a rapidly changing global context.

## PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

■ AIHS is part of the global health research environment and works to maintain Alberta's role and influence in that environment. We also strive to learn from emerging trends and innovations elsewhere.

Within Alberta, the mandate of AIHS purposely integrates with the work of many partners and collaborators. This Framework was created and will be put into action in close partnership with other major public institutions and organizations and aligns with their plans and activities. Our Framework recognizes the particular requirements of the health system and the private sector.

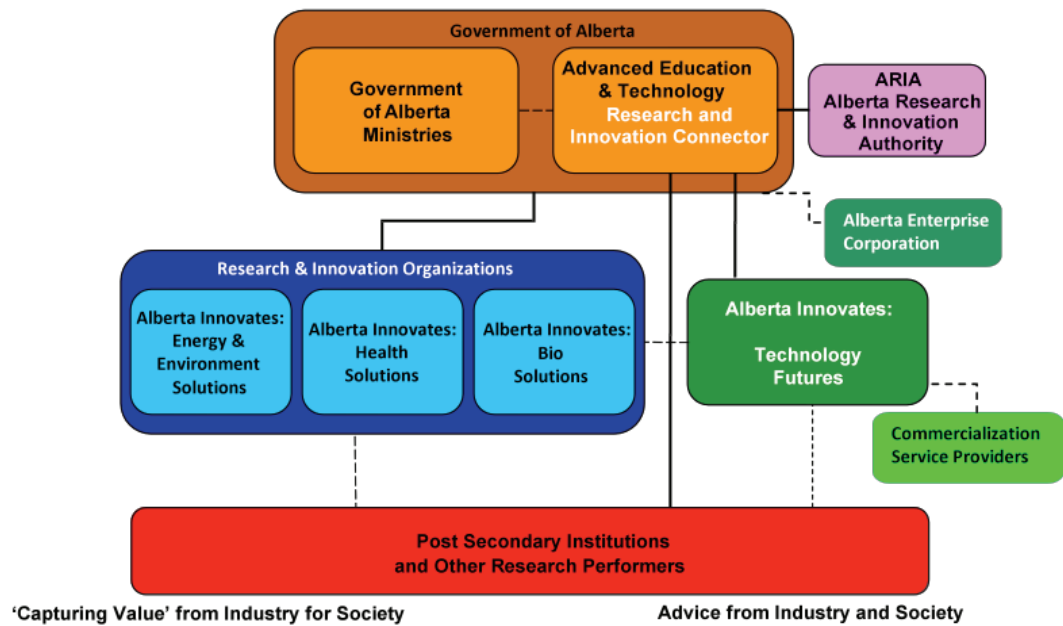


# THE ALBERTA INNOVATES SYSTEM

■ AIHS draws its mandate and mission from its governing legislation. It also draws direction from the provincial strategies of the relevant government ministries. AIHS has created this Framework to outline the ways we will:

- implement this overarching mandate
- help provincial government strategies succeed

The Alberta Government has put in place the following Alberta Innovates System.



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## THE ALBERTA RESEARCH AND INNOVATION BUSINESS FRAMEWORK

This government Framework directs the coordinated efforts of the Alberta Innovates corporations. It also outlines the overall vision for Alberta's publicly funded research and innovation efforts and identifies the following objectives:

- Strengthen and evolve Alberta's Research and Innovation System.
- Derive significant health, social, economic, and environmental benefits for Albertans through focused investment in priority research and innovation areas.
- Expand Alberta's knowledge-based economy through company growth and increased jobs and exports.

In collaboration with the other Alberta Innovates corporations and within the context of its mandate and roles, AIHS will keep a line of sight to these system objectives and focus on priorities and activities that are generally aligned with the Alberta Research and Innovation Business Framework.



# MANDATE AND ROLES

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We have drawn the mandate of AIHS (see figure below) directly from the *Mandate and Roles document*, as developed by the Department of Advanced Education and Technology.

AIHS is also mandated to create value by:

- Investing in excellence, based on the standards for world-class health research;
- Prioritizing investments to support Alberta's strengths, or give Alberta a unique opportunity;
- Optimizing health, societal, and economic benefits from investments in health research (through innovation);
- Using performance management to demonstrate accountability and measure the impact of investments in health research; and
- Increasing support for private sector health research and innovation in Alberta.



# VISION AND MISSION

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## VISION

Our vision, in the picture below, is the future that we want to create as an organization.

We will measure our success by linking the innovation output and system-level outcomes (such as better health, health systems, and society) to the investments we make in Alberta. AIHS has a performance and evaluation framework in place that measures changes in these systems and links them to the investments made in research and innovation (see page 16 for more details).

In this document, AIHS uses the TCPS2<sup>1</sup> definition of **research**, which is: “any original and systematic investigation undertaken in order to increase knowledge and understanding and to establish facts and principles.” **Innovation** is defined as: “the design, invention, development and/or implementation of new or altered products, services, processes, systems, organizational structures, or business models for the purpose of creating new value.”



## MISSION

Our mission is to work with partners and stakeholders to design, develop, deliver and evaluate programs, services, and initiatives to help us achieve focus and excellence in innovation and health research, and give us solutions to health sector problems. The result will be a robust health-research-based economy in Alberta.

<sup>1</sup> Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

# CORE VALUES

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AIHS will honour the following core values and principles in every action it takes:

- **RELEVANCE:** Listening and responding to the needs of Alberta
- **LEADERSHIP:** Having the courage to take on tough issues, seize opportunity, and transform
- **CREATIVITY:** Finding unique ways to work – for ourselves and others
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Being counted on to openly assess impact and progress
- **EXCELLENCE:** Passionately striving for the highest quality in our processes and the research we fund, as well as fair ways to measure success.



# STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

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To succeed in our mission, we will use the following strategies:

1. *SUPPORT DISCOVERY: STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION AND IN HEALTH RESEARCH*

AIHS will support excellence in innovation and health-related research in the areas of strategic focus (defined in AHRIS). We understand that timely change is dependent on vibrant, interlinked, and high-quality activities.

2. *STIMULATE APPLICATION: SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO HEALTH SECTOR PROBLEMS*

AIHS will collaborate with the research community, the private sector, and the health care community to meet, through research and innovation, their priority needs and challenges. AIHS will also facilitate the translation of research findings into an efficient and effective health system (or a business advantage).

To support these strategies for success, AIHS will have to carefully balance our research and innovation investments. We can do this through operational mechanisms such as:

- open and targeted research grants or contracts,
- AIHS-based services and program delivery, and
- our partnerships with the public and private sectors.



# STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Department of Advanced Education and Technology and the Department of Health and Wellness developed the strategic framework that will pursue the strategies on the previous page. The Government of Alberta endorsed this framework as a provincial-level strategy for the next decade. AHRIS—which summarizes the framework—was released in late August 2010. The AIHS Board of Directors accepted the framework, recognizing that it sets the provincial health research priorities from the perspective of the shareholder of the organization.

This provincial strategy sets out a vision and clear direction for health research and innovation for the next ten years. It creates common aims for the health system and the health research and innovation system. These aims focus on three high-level strategic priorities, which are:

- Wellness at Every Age—improved health outcomes for Albertans
- Innovative Health Service Delivery—a more accessible and responsive health care system
- Enhanced Socio-Economic Outcomes—diversified opportunities that benefit Alberta's economy

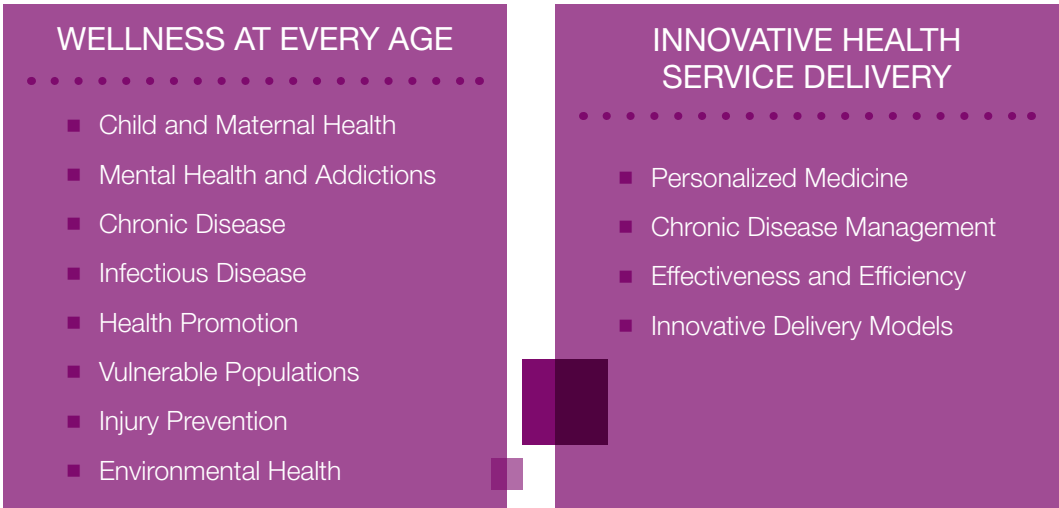
The Government expects that the many organizations, entities, and individuals who make up the research and innovation system in Alberta will move over time to focus their research investments and attention on meeting these priorities. AIHS needs to take action in three enabling directions to make this happen. These are:

1. Highly skilled people
2. Knowledge translation
3. Innovation platforms



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AIHS is engaging stakeholders from government, the research community, health services delivery system, not-for-profit organizations, and private industry to develop new initiatives in these directions. The implementation process involves convening expert working groups in the three directions listed above to define the needs, gaps, and opportunities in a dozen thematic areas (as highlighted in AHRIS). The AIHS Board of Directors will approve these initiatives based on their quality and relevance to Alberta's needs and opportunities. The Figure below lists these areas.



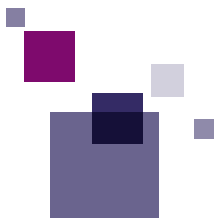
To align its activities to the strategic framework of AHRIS, AIHS will develop a new business model that provides a much more focused perspective on its investments. This will include measurements of quality and more defined purposes (with deliberate expectations and a keen interest in system-level outcomes).



# RISK MITIGATION

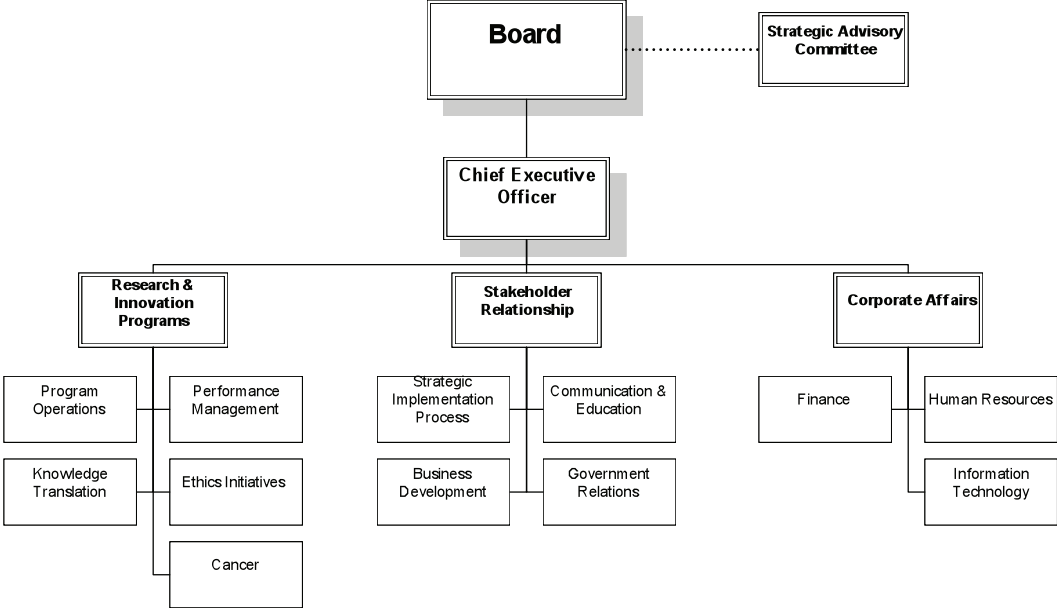
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Risks associated with the provincial or AIHS strategies may come to light during the planning horizon. AIHS will continue to monitor the risk environment and adjust its strategies and tactics accordingly throughout the duration of this Framework. The Board and management will implement appropriate risk mitigation strategies, if needed.



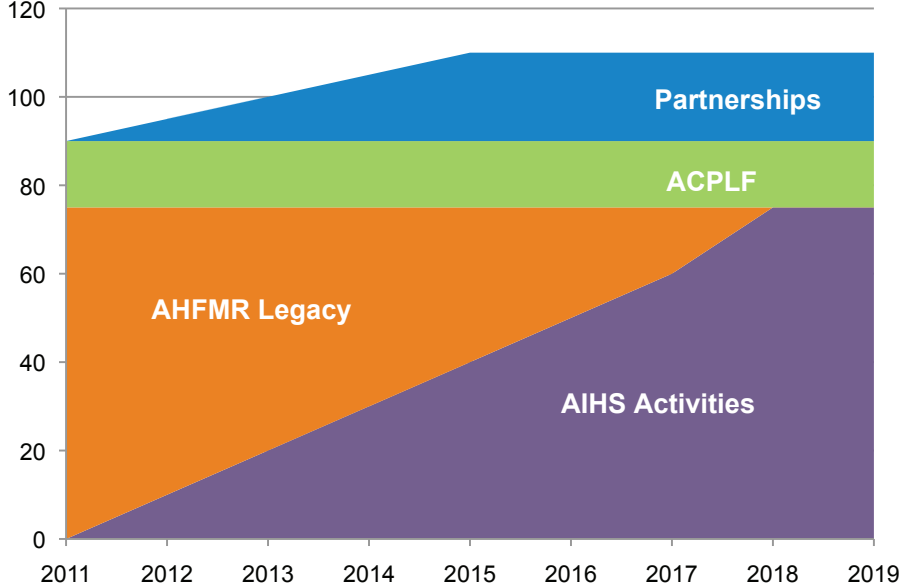
# RESOURCES

■ AIHS intends to organize its operations into three management functions. The figure below shows the three areas and their reporting relationships. The three functions are: **stakeholder relationship, research and innovation programs,** and **corporate affairs** (that is, information technology, finance, and human resources).



**FINANCIAL**

■ AIHS' commitments to legacy programs will decline over the next six years. As the outstanding commitments decline, significant resources will be available for new opportunities and investments. In addition, as AIHS further develops its partnerships and collaborations, our overall financial resources will grow. These reduced cost commitments and increased financial resource base, mean there will be significant opportunity for AIHS to explore new investments.



# IMPACT FRAMEWORK

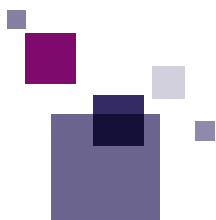
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To meet our mandate, we need to have evidence of meaningful, measurable, and contributable impacts on health and socio-economic outcomes. We will define the expected impacts of funded health research and strive to improve the return on investment. Knowing whether our programs and services are achieving their intended outcomes will enhance our decision-making, which in turn will make our investments more efficient and effective.

The impact framework is the blueprint (and set of tools) we need to monitor and evaluate AIHS' strategies and investments and how they contribute to Alberta's Research and Innovation System and AIHS. AIHS wants to **optimize the health, societal, and economic benefits** from our strategic investments in health research through innovation. AIHS will foster **accountability** and focus on **quality improvement** by integrating an evidence-based performance management and evaluation practice across the organization.

It is a substantial challenge to measure the return on society's investment in research and innovation. However, we have made progress in identifying system-level outcomes, as well as relevant and measurable indicators of progress. AIHS will create a culture of evidence-based decision-making and ensure that everything the organization does is based on evidence of effectiveness.

AIHS has implemented a performance management and evaluation framework across the organization. The framework is based on the payback model of Buxton Hanney and updated by the Canadian Academy of Health Science (CAHS) in a January 2009 report called *Making an Impact: A Preferred Framework and Indicators to Measure Returns on Investment in Health Research*. This is consistent with national and international trends to ensure accountability by collecting, monitoring, and reporting on impacts.



Our impact framework integrates the CAHS research logic model approach (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts) with perspectives from the Balanced Scorecard model (Kaplan, Norton, 1992) (which is the categorization of strategic objectives into stakeholder, internal processes, enablers and financial). **This integrated model results in a matrix that guides the development of a comprehensive, meaningful, and manageable set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and monitoring measures across the organization's broad range of activities.** A key performance indicator is defined for each strategic objective of the organization's strategy map using core outputs and outcome indicators. AIHS will use these KPIs to analyze, interpret, and confirm AIHS' strategic objectives and decisions.

