



CRNA

College of Registered
Nurses of Alberta

2023-2024 Annual Report

Data dated Oct. 1, 2024

The background is a solid teal color. In the upper left quadrant, there is a series of concentric, light teal circles that overlap and fade out towards the right and bottom edges of the frame.

*Excellence in
nursing regulation
for the health of all
Albertans.*

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that the CRNA office is within Treaty 6 Territory, and we recognize our registrants on Treaty 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 and Métis Homelands. The CRNA is dedicated to improving Indigenous health and to supporting culturally safe and appropriate care to Indigenous patients and families in Alberta.

COUNCIL CHAIR AND CEO & REGISTRAR MESSAGE

We are pleased to present the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta's (CRNA) 2023-2024 Annual Report.

Our activities during this time demonstrate the CRNA's commitment to being a reliable and adaptable partner in the health care ecosystem, maintaining the high registrant standards which protect Albertans and evolving our approaches to support the changing needs of Alberta's health care system.

One of the ways in which the CRNA evolved to strengthen health care throughout 2023-2024 and beyond is by adopting a Right-touch relational regulatory philosophy. This means we employ increased compassion and proportionality in our thinking, allowing for greater discretion in low-risk decision-making. This approach ensures our work is proportionate, balanced and transparent, and will continue to be central to the CRNA's role to regulate the profession in the public's interest.

Our commitment to strengthening the health care system extends beyond Alberta's borders and the CRNA has established itself as a trusted partner to other regulators. The CRNA collaborated with the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM), to prioritize the delivery of ethical, safe and competent care for Albertans who were temporarily residing in British Columbia due to wildfire evacuations in Jasper. This collaboration facilitated uninterrupted care for wildfire evacuees.

The past year also saw the implementation of the CRNA's Performance Measurement Program, designed to better identify whether the CRNA is achieving its regulatory mandate while maintaining organizational effectiveness and viability. Approved outcomes and performance metrics for Council and operations enable informed decision making and enhance the reporting of performance related to the CRNA's regulatory mandate.

A legislative change — an amendment to the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) — highlighted the CRNA's importance within Alberta's health care ecosystem. The amendment removed reference to our prior association responsibilities and legally recognized the organization as the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta. This name change represents a significant milestone in our transition to a single-mandate regulatory body, reinforcing our current and future role in protecting Albertans.

Our work throughout 2023-2024 was varied and impactful. On behalf of Council and the entire organization, we are proud to share our accomplishments and initiatives in greater detail through this Annual Report.



Justin Burkett, MN, RN
Council Chair



Joy Peacock BSN, MSc, RN
CEO & Registrar



PUBLIC MEMBER MESSAGE

As public members of the CRNA's Council, we are pleased to see the College's unwavering dedication to reducing the risk of harm to the public through safe, competent and ethical nursing care.

The College's commitment to serving the public and professional excellence has never wavered. Through innovative approaches and a focus on evidence-based practices, the College has successfully navigated recent health care challenges and emerged stronger.

We are confident that our role as "Public Members" has contributed to positive changes that will continue to benefit the public and elevate the nursing profession in Alberta.

For example, in partnership with the CRNA's Regulated Council Members, the CRNA's Public Members approved a safe and respectful system for internationally educated nurses to practise in our province. This initiative has enabled approximately 5,000 nurses to join the Alberta health care workforce from Zama City to Onefour.

This fantastic partnership between public governors, regulated governors, and the CRNA's professional staff has allowed for advancements in the profession while ensuring that Albertans can continue to trust the competence and integrity of Alberta's registered nurse and nurse practitioner professionals.

We, the Public Members who served on the CRNA's Council, take our role and responsibilities seriously and recognize that it is an honour to serve Albertans so that the public can maintain its trust in nursing.

Bonnie Sansregret, Councillor
Kim Ewasechko, Councillor
Peter Obiefuna, Councillor
Scott Garner, Councillor
Steven Armstrong, Councillor
Susan Roskey, Councillor

ABOUT THE CRNA

The CRNA is a regulatory college under the *Health Professions Act (HPA)*.

We regulate professionals using the following titles identified in the HPA:

- Registered nurse (RN)
- Nurse practitioner (NP)
- Graduate nurse (GN)
- Graduate nurse practitioner (GNP)
- Certified graduate nurse (CGN)

Our core responsibilities include: maintaining a register of regulated members, providing direction to registrants on regulatory matters and enforcing compliance with the standards of practice and *Code of Ethics*, all in the interest of protecting the public and ensuring that Albertans can expect safe, competent and ethical nursing care.

THE CRNA'S COUNCIL

The CRNA's Council consists of both registrant members, chosen through a rigorous competency-based assessment, and public members appointed by the Government of Alberta.

This balance of representation ensures that CRNA Councillors possess a range of skills and perspectives that enables them to govern effectively and serve the public.

The CRNA extends its gratitude and appreciation to our Council members for their unwavering commitment and dedication to regulating the nursing profession in the interest of the public.

In 2023-2024, the CRNA bade farewell to two registrant Council members whose terms of office expired on Sept. 30, 2024 — Nicole Letourneau and Suzanna Carl. The CRNA is grateful for the leadership and dedication they demonstrated during their terms on Council.

REGISTRANT MEMBERS



Justin Burkett
Council Chair



Aaron Khan
Councillor



Amal Remu
Councillor



Grace Brittain
Councillor



Graham Newton
Councillor



Jennifer Eyford
Councillor



Nicole Letourneau
Councillor



Suzanna Carl
Councillor

THE CRNA'S COMMITTEES

Council and committee members play an important role in fulfilling the CRNA's mandate of regulating in the public interest. Council appoints members of the public and registrant members to its governance and regulatory committees.

Our governance committees, established through our bylaws and governance policies, include:

- Finance and Audit Committee
- Leadership Review and Governance Committee
- Nominating Committee

Our regulatory committees, established under the HPA, the Registered Nurses Profession Regulation, and our bylaws and governance policies, include:

- Appeals Committee
- Competence Committee
- Complaint Review Committees
- Hearing Tribunals
- Registration Committee
- Registration Review Committee

PUBLIC MEMBERS



Bonnie Sansregret
Councillor



Kim Ewasechko
Councillor



Peter Obiefuna
Councillor



Scott Garner
Councillor



Steven Armstrong
Councillor



Susan Roskey
Councillor

THE CRNA REGULATORY SPECTRUM

Discretion, Proportionality and Compassion in Nursing Regulation: Adopting a New Philosophy and Approach

The CRNA has embraced a regulatory philosophy that harmonizes its legislated responsibilities with compassion and proportionality.

This approach, termed the Regulatory Spectrum, emphasizes understanding the broader context of situations, allowing for appropriate interventions that support consistent regulation and ensure that nursing professionals meet the necessary benchmarks for safe, competent and ethical care. By moving beyond a rigid compliance-based approach, the College ensures its decisions are fair, adaptable and reflective of the complexities of health care environments. A solely compliance-focused model risks alienating professionals, oversimplifying nuanced situations and failing to address underlying issues that can enhance public safety and professional growth.

Central to this philosophy is Right-touch relational regulation, which builds upon the principles of Right-touch regulation by permitting greater discretion in low-risk decision making. This method values communication and relationship-building with registrants, the public and the health care ecosystem. By balancing strict compliance with relational understanding, the CRNA fosters trust and accountability while promoting a culture of learning and improvement. This ensures proportionate, reasonable decisions that uphold public safety without creating unnecessary barriers for nursing professionals, ultimately benefiting Alberta's health care system through a more empathetic and efficient regulatory framework.



INCREASING DISCRETION

Compliance

Focus: Statutes & rules

Mindset: Compliance with standards of practice and expected behaviours

Degrees of Discretion:
Non-discretionary

Regulatory Response:

- Restrict scope of practice (conditions)
- Sanction (conditions)
- Remove permit
- Reactive

Right-touch Regulation

Focus: Outcomes & principles

Mindset: Minimize the use of regulation and establish problem clarity before developing a solution

Degrees of Discretion:
Proportional to risk of harm

Regulatory Response:

- Considerations of circumstances and impacts
- Outcome focused
- Responsive and agile

Right-touch Relational Regulation

Focus: Social norms & relationships

Mindset: Maximize regulatory outcomes through connection and collaboration with the broader regulatory environment

Degrees of Discretion:
Discretionary

Regulatory Response:

- Compliance to social norms is voluntary
- Increased compassion
- Share knowledge
- Proactive/preventative



Scan to learn more about the
CRNA Regulatory Spectrum.

REGULATORY HIGHLIGHTS



Regulatory Policy Improvements

As part of the CRNA's commitment to continuous improvement, and in consultation with partners in Alberta's health care ecosystem, adjustments were made to improve the following registration requirements:

Currency of Practice

As of Apr. 15, 2024, the currency of practice requirement was standardized across all applicant categories. Applicants now require 250 hours of professional nursing services to meet this requirement.

English Language Proficiency

Effective Oct. 1, 2024, the English language proficiency policy was updated. It now includes approved English language tests, graduation from an English speaking university program and other options as possible ways to meet English language proficiency requirement.



Awards

The CRNA's commitment to customer service, innovation and excellence in regulation garnered an international accolade in 2024. The CRNA was recognized with a Globee® Award for Customer Excellence: Team Adaptability and Resilience - for our collective efforts to restructure the application process and reduce barriers for applicants, while simultaneously navigating the resulting surge in volume and improving the quality of our customer service.

The CRNA was also a finalist in the 2024 Business Transformation & Operational Excellence Awards, in the category of Best Achievement in Operational Excellence to Deliver Business Transformation, for our achievements in digital transformation using technology as a strategic lever to improve our processes and bring more value to our registrants, staff and the health care ecosystem in Alberta.



Continuing Competence Program

The CRNA's Continuing Competence Program (CCP) enables registrants to continually grow their skills, knowledge and competence as their careers evolve. This program ensures the College achieves its legislated mandate and provides a framework for registrants to maintain competence and enhance the provision of nursing professional services.

This year the CRNA has introduced a new *Continuing Competence Program Framework*, which clearly outlines the goals and activities of the CCP.

As part of the new CCP framework, the CRNA also introduced a new *Continuing Competence Program Worksheet*, designed to make it easier for registrants to document their self-directed learning plans and identify their goals and learnings.



Practice Guidance

The CRNA has implemented a new *Practice Guidance Framework*. Practice guidance both helps registrants apply the standards of practice, *Code of Ethics*, continuing competence requirements and registration requirements to their nursing practice.

The CRNA completed

1,306
practice consultations
in the 2023-2024
practice year.

At any time, registrants and the public can seek guidance from the CRNA on the following topics:

- The CRNA's Standards of Practice
- The *Code of Ethics*
- Continuing Competence Program requirements
- Registration requirements and policies

The new practice guidance framework not only benefits registrants but also helps the public understand what they can expect from RNs and NPs in Alberta.



NEPA Framework

The CRNA has introduced a new *Nursing Education Program Approval (NEPA) Framework*. The purpose of NEPA is so the CRNA can validate that a post-secondary institute's curriculum aligns with the entry-level competencies (ELCs). This alignment ensures that graduates of these programs are eligible for registration in Alberta.

The new framework reduces the complexity of the CRNA's program approval processes while maintaining the appropriate regulatory oversight and accountability of nursing education programs. Programs will now need to apply for reapproval every seven years, instead of receiving an indefinite approval, which will allow the programs to regularly be compared against the ELCs.



Nurse Practitioner Primary Care Program

The CRNA is pleased with the opportunities the Government of Alberta's Nurse Practitioner Primary Care Program provides to NPs. We are committed to working with the province, our health partners and our registrants to make this new program a success.

As the regulatory body responsible for regulating NPs and RNs in Alberta, the CRNA has a duty to ensure NPs participating in the program have the regulatory support, direction and guidance to provide safe and competent care to their patients. Development of new standards of practice to support NPs is in progress, and the CRNA has a dedicated resource containing FAQs available to the public.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

The Entry-level Competencies for Nurse Practitioners

The *Entry-level Competencies for Nurse Practitioners* was approved by Council in December 2023. The document is based on the Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators' (CCRNRR) revised *Entry-level Competencies for Nurse Practitioners*, reflecting inter-jurisdictional consistency to support the workforce mobility requirements of the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*.

Standards Rewrite Project and New Framework

The CRNA launched a Standards of Practice Rewrite Project in June 2024. The project aims to modernize all standards of practice, guidelines, scopes of practice, *Code of Ethics* and competency documents utilizing a Right-touch relational approach to ensure registrants and the public have a clear understanding of the accountabilities and responsibilities for registrants of the CRNA to provide safe, competent and ethical care.

At the September 2024 Council meeting, the CRNA Council approved the *Standards Framework*. The *Standards Framework* outlines the purpose, principles, decision making and development process of standards of practice to ensure the standards are clear, comprehensive, enforceable, evidence-based and align with legislative requirements.

COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS HEALTH

This year, College staff attended sharing circles to better understand how we can continue to improve the work we do in protecting the public. The CRNA's Indigenous Cultural Advisor & Diversity Specialist was also invited to join the Better Together Knowledge Circle for the Treaty 8 Area.

The CRNA's course *Stronger Together: Learning Through Indigenous Perspectives* continues to be freely available to registrants. College staff participated in a multi-session workshop focused on the *Stronger Together* course in order to learn more about Indigenous perspectives and culturally safe care.

INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY

As part of the CRNA's ongoing commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA), the CRNA has hired an external vendor to help guide our work and develop an action plan. This includes finding our baseline and moving forward. To better understand our baseline, we conducted one-on-one interviews and four focus groups with both staff and Council, and have also been reviewing policies and procedures. After discussions, we are excited to continue to move forward by engaging staff on developing an IDEA framework.

REGISTRANT DATA & YEARLY TRENDS



In 2023-2024 the CRNA had:

1 RN in the Emergency subcategory

1 NP in the Virtual Care subcategory



51,303 RNs and GNs



1,018 NPs and GNPs



4 CGNs

Certified graduate nurse (CGN) is a legacy title and no new nurses can be registered in this category as per legislation.



Additionally, the CRNA had **3,320** individuals without active permits registered on the non-practising register.

2023-2024 APPLICATION DATA

9,710 | new applications

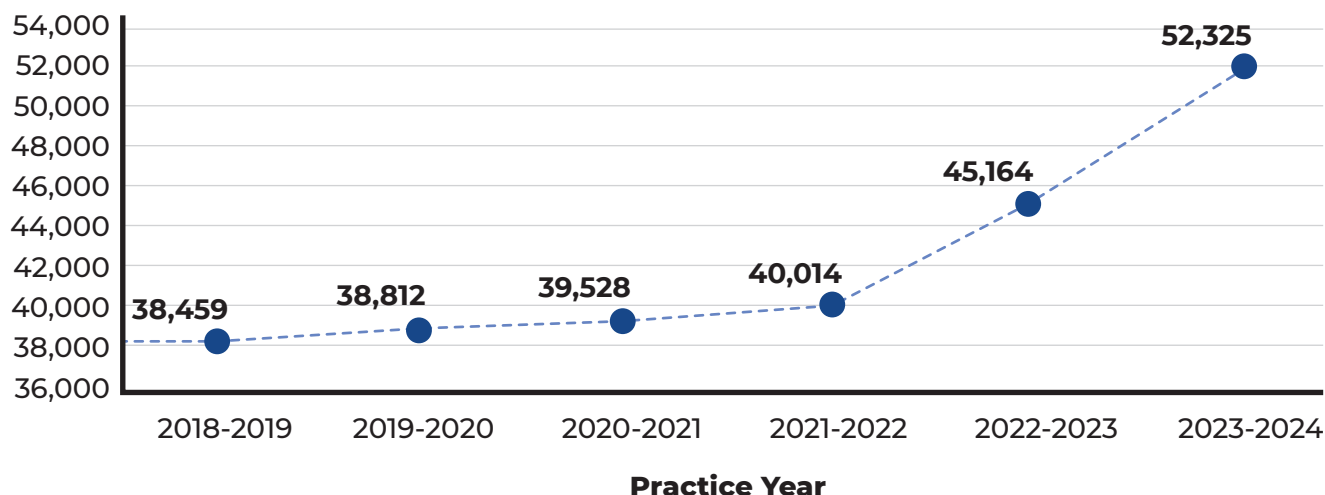
2,429 | permits cancelled for non-renewal

9,410 | new permits issued

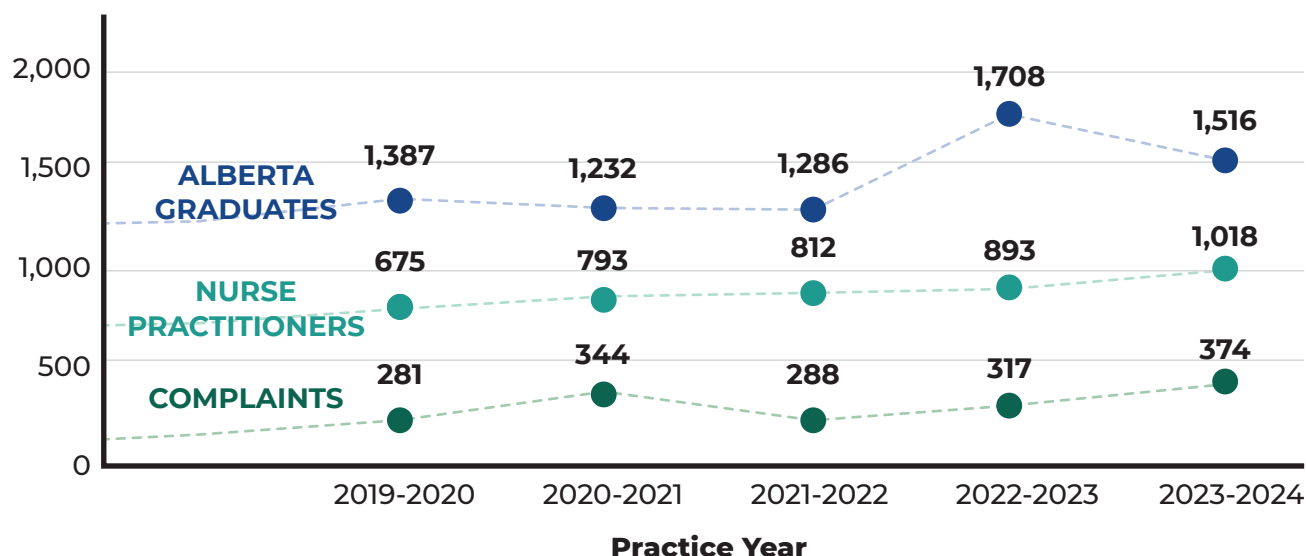
0 | permits denied

7,862 | permits not renewed

TOTAL REGISTRANTS BY PRACTICE YEAR



YEARLY TRENDS



Register: the total number of RNs and NPs registered in Alberta continues to increase. For the third consecutive year we have seen a record number of registrants.

Alberta Graduates: the total number of Alberta graduates decreased slightly over the previous year. The overall volume of Alberta graduates is consistent and previous spikes in volume represent studies that were interrupted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nurse Practitioners: the number of NPs registered with the CRNA increased to a new record high as well, partly due to growing demand and a growing emphasis on the role of NPs in Alberta's health care ecosystem.

Complaints: the number of complaints received increased 18% from the previous reporting period.

COMPLAINTS DATA

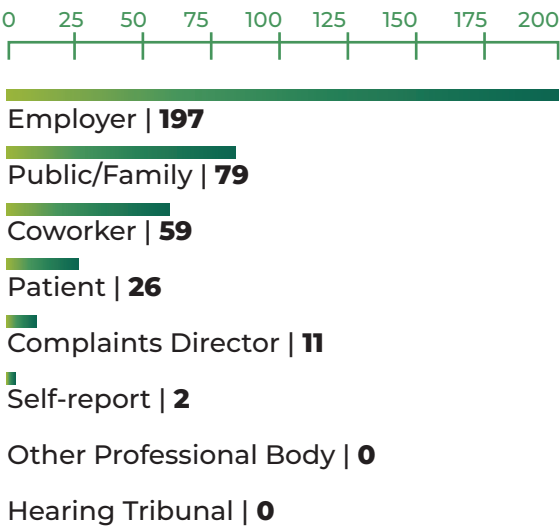
The CRNA has a thorough complaints process in place to ensure that its registrants, who are in a position of trust, meet high standards of competence and professionalism. This is one of the many ways our work protects Albertans and provides them a voice in the delivery of care.

Overview

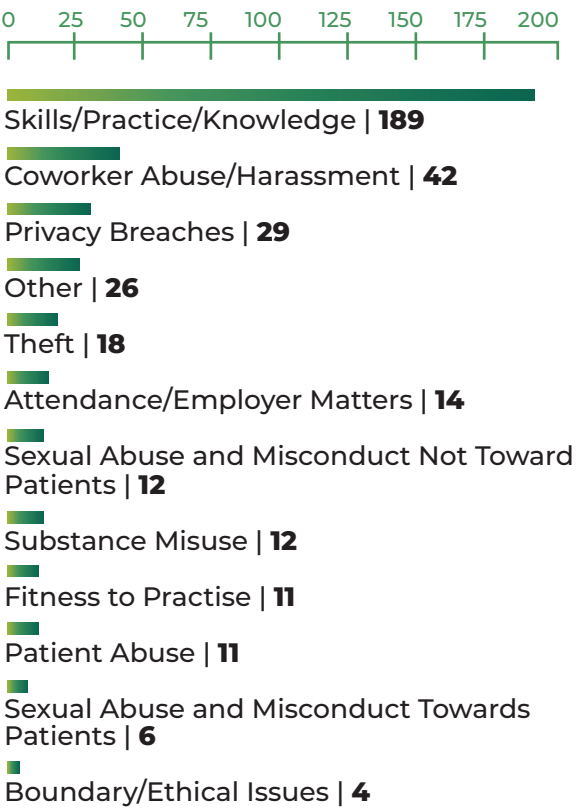
This year's distribution of complaints is consistent with previous years. Anyone can file a complaint expressing concern about patient care by a registrant of the CRNA. After an initial review, the complaint may become the subject of a formal investigation, dismissed if found to be without merit, or if the complainant agrees, it may be directly resolved through an agreement between the CRNA and the registrant.

In the 2023-2024 practice year, the CRNA received **374** complaints.

Source of the Complaint



Nature of the Complaint



Sexual Abuse/Misconduct

During the 2023-2024 reporting period, the College received 18 complaints where the conduct was characterized as sexual abuse or sexual misconduct. Complaints of this nature may come from patients, patients' families, colleagues and other health care providers. The course, *Protecting Patients from Sexual Abuse and Misconduct* continues to be readily available to all registrants.

Patient Relations Program

The CRNA increased funding to its Patient Relations Program, which supports patients who come forward with complaints of sexual abuse or misconduct. When a complaint is submitted, the patient receives immediate access to funds for therapy or counseling services. The investigation's findings determine whether funding remains available to the patient going forward.

Regulatory Response: Cases Resolved in the 2023-2024 Practice Year

Investigations



Dismissed After Investigation | **64**

Investigations Completed | **62**

Complaints Withdrawn | **49**

Investigations in Progress | **33**

Dismissed Prior to Investigation | **1**

Hearings



Hearings Held | **5**

Referred to Hearing | **8**

Hearings Closed to the Public | **0**

Appeals | **0**

Resolutions



Resolved Via Expedited/Alternative Resolution (EAR) | **148**

Resolved Prior to Investigation | **151**

Matters With a Pending Resolution | **81**

Cases Sent to Complaint Review Committee | **9**

Cases included in these counts may have carried over from previous practice years.

FINANCES

Demonstrating our commitment to fiscal responsibility in our regulatory role, the College continues to balance responsible planning and allocation of resources with strategic investment in initiatives and technology that advance our work and serve the public interest.

The following 2023-2024 activities and results exemplify this approach:

- Maintaining the registrant permit fee structure and rates from the previous year, providing predictability and stability for registrants.
- Continued focus on performance measurement, process improvements, risk management and business transformation.
- Implementation of Sage Intacct, a cloud-based financial management software which has proven to be transformative and innovative to our practices.

The 2023-2024 financial statements support that the College maintained a healthy financial position and alignment with the operating budget, and capital and intangible asset plan.



CRNA

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Nurses of Alberta

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