



Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2022 / 6:00 pm – 9:00 p.m. / Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
Members	Floyd House (Chair), Donalda Fawerall, Harman Kahlon, Vincent Liu, Shakib Rahman, Nazret Russon
AHS	Carol Anderson, Maya Atallah, Dr. Chester Ho, Lynette Lutes, Dr. Chris Sikora, Selene Tash, Dr. David Zygun
Regrets	Towunmi (Priscilla) Coker, Nicholas Polturak, Jahnavel Sanchez-Noguez, Janice Willier
Welcome & Introductions	Floyd House welcomed all in attendance and went through introductions, and also provided a land acknowledgment.
Approval of previous minutes	September 9, 2021 minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus.
STANDING ITEMS	
Action items from the previous meeting	<p>Action items from the September 9, 2021 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Anderson will connect with the COVID-19 operational task force to present to GEHAC on post-COVID work that is being done. Complete • Maya Atallah will connect with Dr. Silvius for an updated presentation on the work happening with Continuing Care. Pending – presentation will be provided at a later date.
Alberta Health Services Zone Update	<p>Carol Anderson, Chief Zone Officer, Edmonton Zone, Clinical Operations, and Dr. David Zygun, Zone Medical Director, Edmonton Zone shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Edmonton Zone increasing surge capacity update on ICU capacity and new and active cases. • Connect Care Wave 4 launch is now planned for May 28, 2022. Edmonton sites that will be impacted are Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital (GRH), Lois Hole Hospital for Women, Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH), Addictions and Mental Health Addictions and Residential programs & Alberta Precision Labs in the Edmonton Zone including: GRH; RAH; Grey Nuns Hospital; Misericordia Community Hospital. For more information visit the Connect Care website. • Work continues on the Edmonton Zone Healthcare Plan and program prioritization. The plan will guide the zone for the next 10 to 15 years. There has been some adjustment on how community partners will be engaged, but work continues.



- The Edmonton Zone continues to see unprecedented levels of opioid poisonings and EMS activity. The Opioid Response Operations Committee (OROC) has developed an action plan and the roadmap is completed, with focus on three themes – prevention and awareness; screening and treatment; data and collaboration.
- Surgical postponements are required to ensure ICU capacity is available to care for those who need critical, intensive care. AHS continues to perform all emergent and urgent cancer surgeries.
- Major Capital Plans for the Edmonton Zone – a Stollery Children’s Hospital needs assessment is underway. On December 14, 2021, CHOICE South opened. This is a new CHOICE location that offers a restorative program to help clients improve or maintain their health status and independence. The new Edmonton Hospital is now in the planning phase. Construction completion is anticipated by 2030.

Dr. Chris Sikora, Medical Officer of Health, Edmonton Zone, Population, Public and Indigenous Health, provided the following update:

- Immunization eligibility is based on the direction Alberta Health gets from Health Canada, to get information from the vaccine manufacturers.
- Testing at AHS swabbing sites continues to be available for healthcare workers and workers in specific high-risk settings, including those in group homes, disability support, shelter workers, correctional facility staff in provincial/federal facilities, and individuals who provide services in a clinical care setting, including hospitals and seniors congregate care facilities.
- With the change to testing rules, there is less data available on indicators that predict COVID-19 trends.

Council Members asked the following questions:

Q: How will AHS be impacted when the province lifts public health mandates?

A: The operations team uses a proactive approach when considering options required, while following current policies. When preparing for any operations plan AHS thinks of how to best support patient care and staff.

Q: How is AHS preparing for a high volume of senior staff retirements?

A: Human Resources continually work on short-term and long-term recruitment planning. Planning is in place for physicians and frontline staff, particularly for rural sites. The retirement of senior staff is a concern across Canada.



<p>Voices of the Community</p>	<p>No community members were present at the meeting.</p>
<p>Council Round Table</p>	<p>The following was shared by Council members regarding health concerns in their communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients are being diverted from Red Deer to Edmonton or Calgary due to the high volume of COVID-19 cases and staff vacancies. There is worry this will impact local patients' access to care. Dr. Zygun says that diverting patients, though rare, is a standard practice and AHS works as a provincial unit to ensure all patients receive the level of care needed. Many sites do not offer certain services so patients are transferred, or need to go to nearby facilities to seek care, e.g. colonoscopy screening or obstetrics services. • The government has announced that PCR testing for Albertans is only available to those with clinical risk factors for severe outcomes, and those who live and work in high-risk settings. There are concerns that the rapid antigen testing kits are not readily available and there is a lack of supply for those who still would like to be tested and do not qualify. • Emergency departments are not always accessed appropriately. For example, some patients go to emergency when they can't reach their specialist or general practitioner. This causes longer wait times and patients sit for hours. Dr. Zygun shared there are many options for patients, including calling 811/HealthLink. By calling here, patients can be redirected and advised as to the most appropriate pathway. For more information on services offered, visit the 811 HealthLink website. • There is still confusion in the community around masking and the use of surgical vs. N95 masks. • Suggestion: make virtual appointments available for prescription renewal, especially for long-time prescriptions. • There is concern with the number of red alerts, or "code reds." These refer to times when there aren't any ambulances available to respond to calls. <p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council had some follow-up conversation regarding the community event they hosted on December 8, 2021 on the Opioid Response. Members are appreciative for nasal Naloxone kits and understanding barriers that may impact a user from seeking help. Council was also reminded that Supervised Consumption Services are operated provincially, not by AHS. • Gratitude to surgical staff from a local family for a great experience and level of care, especially as wave five challenges persist. Dr. Zygun mentioned Edmonton is doing well with surgery timelines that were previously delayed. He added,



	<p>booking a surgery depends on many factors including the availability of staff and space to ensure the safety and level of care of patients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council members shared the positives of using a CoACT model to help patients, families and care providers communicate and work together, especially in continuing care settings.
NEW BUSINESS	
Presentation(s)	<p>Edmonton Zone Post COVID <i>Selene Tash -Executive Director, Community Health Services - Edmonton Zone</i> <i>Lynette Lutes - Senior Operating Officer, Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital</i> <i>Dr. Chester Ho - Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital</i></p> <p>A presentation was given to provide information on the Edmonton Zone post-COVID situation. Long-COVID prevalence statistics were shared as well as comparisons across the province. The rehabilitation advice line was introduced as a resource, as well as information on integrated medical management, rehabilitation services, mental health and wellness support, self-management education and home health needs. The pathway for post-COVID services was also explained with emphasis that no one pathway is the right pathway. For more information on where to find all post-COVID resources visit COVID-19 Getting Healthy After COVID-19 Alberta Health Services.</p>
Date of Next Meeting	<p>Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2022 – Engagement Event - Know Your Options Time: 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Location: Zoom</p>

Our meetings are open to the public. Dates and locations are [available here](#).
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