

# Peace

## 2018-19 Annual Report



Peace  
Health Advisory Council

Healthy Albertans.  
Healthy Communities.  
**Together.**

## Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

Alberta Health Services values Advisory Council members as volunteers, leaders and partners in healthcare planning. With every year that passes, I see how our Councils continue to grow and expand. They challenge us and ask really great questions, they share the AHS story with their communities, their families and neighbours – helping Albertans everywhere to better understand our complex healthcare system – and they advise AHS on our planning, programs and services.



*Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn*

We have a number of long-time members leaving Councils in 2019-20 and we would like to acknowledge their hard work, dedication and passion. While we will miss them, we also know it's important for new voices to join the conversation and we look forward to building new partnerships, relationships and connections. We hope our departing members will continue to share their advice as members of the public and share their knowledge of the healthcare system.

This year, we added 23 new members to the Advisory Council family, and we also added a new Council. We were pleased to support and nurture the development of the Sexual Orientation Gender Identity & Expression (SOGIE) Provincial Advisory Council.

Members have made many contributions in their local areas, and you'll learn more about them in this report. Here are a few general examples from across the province over the past year:

- **Evolution of the Wisdom Council:** new Terms of Reference will guide the work of the Wisdom Council and includes creation of an Elder Circle which gives an enhanced role to Elders in helping to advise AHS on programs and services to best meet the needs of Indigenous people.
- **Connect Care:** a number of members have joined the patient advisory committees.
- **Supporting more addiction and mental health services:** many Councils held information sessions and highlighted the importance of services; their efforts helped support the development of Edmonton's new Access 24/7 Addiction and Mental Health Clinic and enhance awareness on services and access.
- **Expanding relationships:** connecting with the LGBTQ2S+ community through the new SOGIE PAC, meeting with municipal leaders, and holding meetings at Métis Settlements.
- **Connecting with Albertans through [Community Conversations](#):** Health Advisory Councils partnered with AHS to host 12 events across the province, where Albertans shared their views about challenges and solutions to healthcare issues.
- **Highlighting top concerns:** based on feedback from their communities, all Councils advised us on local concerns. AHS tracks and responds to concerns at each Council meeting.
- **Participation in Community Engagement Committee of the Board meetings:** various Council Chairs joined the conversation and shared ideas.

Member satisfaction is important to us, and it was gratifying to learn through the Annual Satisfaction Survey that our members are feeling generally satisfied in their roles. They've also said there's a need for more clarity on their role, and we're listening. We have begun work on an overarching Health Advisory Council review to address some of the gaps, and to ensure all our members fully understand their role.

On behalf of the AHS Board of Directors, our leadership team, and our workforce, thank you for your passion and time. We look forward to continuing to work with you on improving healthcare for Albertans.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn  
Vice Chair, Board of Directors; Chair, AHS Community Engagement Committee of the Board

## Message from the Chair Peace Health Advisory Council

I send warm greetings to you from the Peace Health Advisory Council. We've had an interesting year and have made great progress on our work plan for the year ahead.



*Lucille Partington*

As always, our primary focus is providing feedback to Alberta Health Services on programs and services, particularly those involving mental health, home care and hospital-to-home transitions because we have identified these as extremely important in rural communities.

Our working relationship with AHS' knowledgeable leader, Dr. Verna Yiu, is strong. She attends our Advisory Council of Chair's meetings, shares important updates then engages in meaningful dialogue with us. We appreciate Dr. Yiu's vision for the best care for all Albertans, and at efforts made to reduce management and overhead so resources are allocated to frontline services. Many of the initiatives she's brought forward are leading the way in Canada.

After successful recruitment we've been able to fill our Council with 15 members who represent communities across our region in the Northwest. We look forward to visiting these communities as we host meetings in different locations and learn what's important to each.

Transportation remains a big issue in our region. We are optimistic the new system of engaging patients in discharge planning will help those receiving care in large cities, as they plan for their return home to rural areas. As well, we will continue to support the need for reducing unnecessary appointments with specialists, opting instead for a phone call, Telehealth meeting, or having tests done locally to save travel to the city. For those in our area, a day is required to get to Calgary or Edmonton, often accompanied by an overnight stay and associated costs.

In closing, we would be happy to meet you! I encourage you to attend any of our meetings as we meet in communities across our region. This is an opportunity to share your feedback directly with our Council and with AHS. To find out when and where our upcoming meetings are, please visit us [online](#) and look for Peace Health Advisory Council.

Thank you for caring about health and working with our Council to contribute to a strong healthcare system.

Sincerely,

Lucille Partington  
Chair, Peace Health Advisory Council

## About our Council

### 2018-2019 Council Members

#### Current Members

Lucille	Partington (Chair)	Sexsmith
Yvonne	Rempel (Vice Chair)	Grande Cache
Cindy	Park	Grande Prairie
Sandra (Sandy)	Baker	Hythe
Gloria	Robertson	Peace River
Alison	Cormack	Grande Prairie
Laura	Hancharuk	Grande Prairie
Judy	Brown	Spirit River
Penny	Stone	Manning
Krista	Schuett	Grande Prairie
Mary	Wilson	Valleyview



*Back row left to right: Lucille Partington, Laura Hancharuk, Cindy Park, Yvonne Rempel, Gloria Robertson  
Front row left to right: Penny Stone, Sandy Baker, Judy Brown, Helen Neufeld (former member), Alison Cormack  
Missing: Kishor Ojha (former member), Krista Schuett, Mary Wilson*



## Promoting awareness of our Council

Our Council worked well together to focus on our priorities and engage with local communities.

We promoted awareness of our Council at the following events:

- Hosted five Council meetings, one addiction and mental health community event and one [Community Conversation](#).
- Welcomed many community members to participate in our regular meetings and special events.
- Partnered with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) and the South Peace Physician Attraction and Retention Committee (SPPARC) to co-nominate the Hythe Continuing Care Centre for the Rhapsody Health-care Heroes Award.
- Attendance at:
  - Health Quality Council of Alberta tea in Hythe
  - Growing the North Conference
  - KAIROS Blanket Exercise
  - Grande Prairie Regional Hospital Engagement
  - Opioid Community Response presentations

We are pleased to have members that participate on AHS committees including the provincial Continuing Care Quality Committee and a Patient and Family Committee.

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Presentations were given by a variety of groups on different topics including:

- Cannabis Legislation
- Hythe Continuing Care Centre – information about an award
- Handwashing and Influenza
- Cancer Provincial Advisory Council
- Seniors and Continuing Care
- Peace River Primary Care Network
- Medical clinic in Peace River
- Grande Prairie Regional College mental health programming

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Public meetings total were held in the communities of Fairview, Hythe, Grande Prairie, Peace River and one via teleconference.



## Listening to our communities and sharing feedback with AHS

Throughout the year we move our meetings to different communities so we can hear a range of feedback from the diverse communities in our Council area. This year we held meetings in Peace River, Grande Prairie, Fairview and Hythe.

We heard from communities that are using video conference (Telehealth) for access to specialists and they are very pleased with the results. It reduces travel, time away from work as well as costs. We hope more specialists will participate.

Our Council members shared feedback at each meeting and welcomed input from the public. The Community Engagement Committee of the AHS Board expressed an interest in understanding the top health-related concerns from across the province. Our Council identified the following:

- Transportation
- Indigenous supports
- Availability of specialists and access to specialized care
- Health accountability
- Health Navigators
- Mental health services
- Opioid crisis
- Seniors and Continuing Care services

Council listened to these concerns and noted a gap in information provided to the public around addiction and mental health services. We determined that we wanted to support building awareness of AHS addiction and mental health services by providing a public information session.

We partnered with Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) to support creating awareness of their new addiction and mental health counseling program. The event took place at GPRC in Grande Prairie in September and we shared the event with the Fairview College campus via video conference.

We co-hosted a [Community Conversation](#) with AHS on December 4 in Grande Prairie. About 17 members of the public attended and we were able to feature the work of the Sexsmith Wellness Coalition.

## Working with AHS to share information with our communities

AHS leaders attended our meetings and provided information to us as follows:

- Cannabis Legislation
- Hythe Continuing Care Centre – information about an award
- Handwashing and influenza
- Cancer Provincial Advisory Council
- Seniors and Continuing Care

Other organizations that shared presentations with us were:

- The Peace River Primary Care Network shared their concerns of recruitment in the area and the work they are doing around a patient's medical home.
- The County of Northern Lights in partnership with the Town of Peace River, MD of Peace, and Northern Sunrise County will fund and build a medical clinic in Peace River. AHS will take ownership of the building and work with local physicians to provide services to residents in the area.
- GPRC shared information on their new mental health programming. Students are currently able to access counselling and they are able to use these services as long as they are a student at the college.
- GPRC would like to build a relationship with AHS. The relationship will allow information to be shared, with student consent, to insure students continue to receive support after accessing mental health services through AHS.

At all of our meetings, we look forward to receiving North Zone updates. Information about the new regional hospital in Grande Prairie that is currently under construction was and will continue to be shared at every meeting. It remains a top-of-mind topic in the Council area.

Recruitment and retention of physicians remains a top concern for our area. The AHS North Zone Physician Resource planner attended each of our meetings to advise us on the status of recruitment to various positions in our Council area.

A representative from RhPAP regularly attended our meetings and provided updates on the work it is doing for the attraction and retention of healthcare professionals to our area. There was an RhPAP skills weekend held in September of 2018 in Peace River, where Council members attended and shared information with the public. AHS and RhPAP are utilizing many strategies to attract health professionals to the rural North.

## A look ahead

We will have many new members on Council this next year and look forward to listening to new perspectives and ideas, as well as involving members in planned activities.

We believe promotion of our Council is still very important. We plan to:

- Continue reaching out regularly to our community partners, sharing information about the Council and AHS.
- Use new methods to encourage the public to attend meetings, including increasing our presence on social media.
- Host five meetings in the coming year. We will travel to various communities and partner with AHS and community partners to provide timely information to the public through presentations and discussion.
- Continue attending community events to engage the public and share information about our Council. We will use these events as an opportunity to speak with members of our community and gather feedback.

We have a number of activities planned. We look forward to:

- Partnering with AHS to hold another addiction and mental health community event in a community outside of Grande Prairie.
- Brainstorming ideas on engaging seniors and looking for solutions to help address loneliness. We may host a community event for seniors.
- Continuing to build relationships with other Health and Provincial Advisory Councils through participation at the annual Fall Forum and sharing information with them. We have invited the Wisdom Council to share the work they do at one of our upcoming meetings.
- Regular reports about the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital and involvement in various areas.



# Learn more

- Visit [ahs.ca/advisorycouncils](https://ahs.ca/advisorycouncils)
- Email [peace@ahs.ca](mailto:peace@ahs.ca)
- Check out our Twitter and Facebook accounts, by searching AHS Advisory Councils

# Get involved

You can make a difference to the health and well-being of your family, friends, neighbours and community by sharing your thoughts and ideas with AHS. You can get involved by:

- Attending an upcoming meeting. Agendas and notices are posted on the Advisory Council webpage: [ahs.ca](https://ahs.ca)
- Delivering a presentation at a Council meeting on a health area of interest or concern.
- Volunteering your time as a Council member.

For more information about Health Advisory Councils, [visit ahs.ca](https://ahs.ca)



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