

Tamarack

2019-20 Annual Report



Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

Alberta Health Services values Advisory Council members as volunteers, leaders and partners in health care 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 health care system – and they advise AHS on our planning, programs and services.



Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn

We had 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.

Sincerely,

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

Message from the Chair, Tamarack Health Advisory Council

Over the year our Council has been working toward work plan objectives including sharing information with our communities about the following:

- The North Zone Indigenous Health Program
- Public Health programs
- AHS mental health resources



Linda West

We are thrilled that the Mayerthorpe Healthcare Centre won RhPAP's Rhapsody Rural Healthcare Heroes award in 2019.

A [Community Conversation](#) was held in Barrhead in December, 2019. Thanks are due to AHS and HAC member Liz Krawiec for facilitating an honest, thoughtful dialogue highlighting rural health issues including accessible transportation, physician retention and community partnerships.

Council meetings were held in Swan Hills, Edson and Westlock. As well, virtual meetings were held in January and March. Thanks to members Debra Hagman for facilitating a working session to identify Council priorities and to Janet Wilkinson, Vice Chair, for her willingness to attend Council duties when I was unavailable.

Respectfully submitted by,

Linda West
Chair, Tamarack Health Advisory Council

Who we are

The Tamarack Health Advisory Council (HAC) is comprised of up to 15 volunteer members who reside in the geographic [region](#) from Westlock in the east through Hinton and Jasper in the West. Visit us online for a full list of [membership](#).



*L-R: Daniel Pritchard, Janet Wilkinson, Debra Hagman, Liz Krawiec and Douglas Heine
Missing: Linda West, Candace Pambrun, Shannon Harris, Sherry Jeffreys, Katherine Steck- Flynn and Jan Chant.*

The AHS North Zone team provides service to a large geographical area with a diverse population. We place a very high value on the information and advice we receive from a broad range of stakeholders in our communities. The HACs give us a regular forum to share ideas, receive input, and refine our ways of working so that our strategies and operational priorities are aligned with provincial and local priorities.

Gregory Cummings
Chief Zone Officer

Highlights

Presentations

- Public Health Services
- Indigenous Health Program
- Mental Health & Addiction
- Alberta Healthy Communities Initiative
- HAC 2.0

North Zone Sector Meeting

- A combined meeting with all six North Zone Health Advisory Councils
- Connection with multiple AHS North Zone leaders
- Members shared top health priorities from their region

Location of Public Meetings

- Swan Hills, Edson, Westlock & virtually
- 13 members of the public attended

Key achievements of 2019-20

Our Council members are well connected to a wide range of communities and networks from which we gather feedback on health care services. We share this feedback with AHS through our meetings and through the Council of Chairs.

We were pleased to participate in a number of events in the area with support of our Zone leadership. Members were recognized and included in the following events:

- We partnered with AHS to host a [Community Conversation](#) in Barrhead in December, where participants learned about Rural Health Professionals Action Plan (RhPAP) work and successes. The event was a good opportunity for networking and sharing health care successes and challenges, as well for consideration of new and existing community partnerships. Input from participants reiterated that access to services, system navigation and travel for appointments remain primary challenges in the area. Highlights of the event were captured by local media in the [Town and Country Today](#) newspaper.
- Three members attended workshops through RhPAP and Campus for Communities of the Future. Two members participated in the 'Mobilizing the Village' workshop and one member attended the 'Rural Community Building' workshop. These workshops help members build skills to work with stakeholder groups to address complex issues and facilitate the social innovation and transformation needed for their organizations and communities.

Throughout the year Council shared our Top Concerns with the AHS Board, for its broad understanding of issues across the province. These include: addiction and mental health (access for rural communities); access to services in rural communities; AHS communication – website navigation, timely responses to community requests for information; transportation from rural communities; and wait times for specialists and surgeries.

This year we recruited new members from Barrhead, Hinton, Sangudo and Westlock. We're excited to be hearing more from these communities and we're still looking for representation from Jasper and Whitecourt to help represent our large geographic region. See page six for information on how to apply.



Community Conversation event in Barrhead

A look ahead

Council has developed a robust work plan for 2020-21. Plans include promoting awareness of the Council, increasing visibility of Council at various events, partnering with AHS and learning more about AHS programs and services.

Council is looking forward to 2020-21. Implementation of the new direction of Health Advisory Councils (HAC 2.0) is expected to begin in the fall, where community events will be embedded into our annual planning cycle. Events will be co-designed with AHS and will be a partnership with Zone leadership. Work is underway to determine the nature of these events. We are also excited about the many large projects AHS has underway.

We have had great attendance at previous information sessions and we plan to build on that momentum in the coming year. We will partner with [Greg's Wings Projects](#) to share information about continuity of care and discuss ideas for improvements to the health system.

Additional plans for the coming year include:

- Partnering with AHS on topics of interest such as learning about the Cardiovascular Health and Stroke Strategic Clinical Network (SCN).
- Supporting AHS addiction and mental health to promote programs and services in the Council area.
- Sharing information about Seniors and Continuing Care programs and services.
- Inviting a presentation about Health Link services across the province, and sharing accurate information with our communities.
- Learning more about the Alberta Healthy Communities Initiative and how we can help promote it in our area.
- Inviting AHS Emergency Management to a meeting to learn more about disaster and emergency preparedness.

A few vacancies on Council remain so we will continue recruitment efforts until they are filled. We look forward to bringing additional diversity in age, gender and culture to better represent our region on Council.



Council working session in Westlock

Advisory Councils act in an advisory capacity to Alberta Health Services (AHS) as we share feedback with AHS leadership from our communities about health services. We hold public meetings at locations throughout our geography and participate in engagement activities that further contribute to health services in Alberta.

Learn more

Visit ahs.ca/advisorycouncils

✉ Tamarack@ahs.ca

☎ 1.877.275.8830

Check us out on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or 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
- Delivering a presentation at a Council meeting on a health area of interest or concern
- Provide input on various health care topics online, at [Together4Health](#)
- Apply to [become a member](#). Members are appointed for three-year terms.



Tamarack
Health Advisory Council

Healthy Albertans.
Healthy Communities.
Together.