

# True North

## 2020-21 Annual Report





## Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

Since my appointment to the AHS Board in the fall of 2020, it has been my pleasure to become familiar with the work of the Advisory Councils. By all accounts, Councils have persevered through the COVID-19 pandemic and have found success in connecting with stakeholders as they adapted to virtual meetings well through 2021.



*Vicki Yellow Old Woman*

Advisory Councils continue to be tremendous partners in health. They have been instrumental as a conduit of information from AHS to local communities, a task of particular importance during an extraordinary period of time. Through innovation and determination, each Council has remained committed to its role of advising AHS, and to bringing forward the voices of their communities.

I look forward to working with Advisory Councils in the years ahead and watching as they continue to evolve. Thank you to each member for your ongoing dedication to improving health services for all Albertans.

Sincerely,

Vicki Yellow Old Woman,  
Chair, Community Engagement Committee, AHS Board



## Message from the Chair, True North Health Advisory Council

One word that comes to mind, after the years I've served on the True North Health Advisory Council (TNHAC), is 'resilience'. We have had more than our share of challenges and disasters, some local and some global. Through it all, I have developed a greater respect for community, community service, and those I work with on Council.



*Rick Cartier*

With Zoom meetings and social distancing being the 'new normal,' it has changed the personal touch of meetings. Still, we've been fortunate to reach a larger audience with technology and once public health restrictions are lifted we look forward to continuing to host and support community meetings that blend in-person with virtual technology.

Mental health services have always been important to TNHAC. It's been inspiring to see AHS address the development and deployment of mental health strategies in the North with increased online support, training, and inspiring content. We wish for all our communities to stay resilient and strong, and continue to support those around them.

I look forward to a positive and productive year ahead with the TNHAC.

Sincerely,

Rick Cartier  
Vice Chair, True North Health Advisory Council



# Who we are

The True North Health Advisory Council (TNHAC) is comprised of up to 15 volunteer members who reside in the geographic [area](#) near Rainbow Lake and Paddle Prairie. Visit us online for a full list of [membership](#).

Liane Mercredi (Chair)	High Level
Richard Cartier (Vice Chair)	Rainbow Lake
Pam Boese	Fort Vermilion
Wilma Cardinal	Paddle Prairie
George Fehr	La Crete
Nella Fehr	La Crete
Jessica Juneau	Rainbow Lake
Ray Toews	Fort Vermilion
Jan Welke	High Level
Judith Wiebe	La Crete



Nella Fehr, Member



Liane Mercredi, Chair



Richard Cartier, Vice Chair



Ray Toews, Member

*Over the past year, Alberta’s six North Zone Health Advisory Councils have been instrumental in helping us get critical COVID-19 information out to our communities and in informing our pandemic response. In addition, they have shifted to a virtual model and engaged hundreds of local Albertans through their community events. The HACs are deeply connected to their local areas and work closely with AHS North Zone leaders. We are grateful for their advice and collaboration. We look forward to continuing to partner with the True North, Wood Buffalo, Peace, Lesser Slave Lake, Lakeland Communities, and Tamarack Health Advisory Councils.*

**Gregory Cummings**  
Chief Zone Officer, North Zone



# Key achievements of 2020-21

2020-21 was a year of change. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we successfully increased awareness of the Council and saw 56 community members attend our events.



In November, we co-hosted a virtual Psychological First Aid session with AHS. This AHS initiative provides training to assist people in coping through disasters, emergencies and crisis events. The event was particularly timely given recent floods and fires in the North Zone. The session introduced participants to tools focused on stress reduction, stress management, self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, and emotional literacy.



In February, we heard from AHS experts on co-designing an improved system to support family caregivers. This informative session outlined the Family Caregivers Program in Alberta, why it is important, the effects of the pandemic on caregivers and how to support them to maintain their health. We also learned about a caregiver competency-based education module.



Council hosted its second engagement event in April where we partnered with Wellspring to share information about their organization and services with our communities. Through a partnership with the Alberta Cancer Foundation, Wellspring Edmonton focuses on expanding its programs and services to better support individuals living with cancer in northern Alberta.



Over the year, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was a topic of interest among Albertans across the province. TNHAC participated in an EMS Listening Session in April where we, and local community members, engaged in dialogue about concerns with recent EMS service changes within our communities. We appreciated the opportunity and look forward to providing feedback in any way we can in the future.



#### Presentations:

- Virtual Psychological First Aid initiative
- Supports for Family Caregivers
- Wellspring



#### Public Participation:

- 56 community members attended community engagement events





## A look ahead

In the year ahead, Council will focus on connecting with communities in the Council area. Council will continue to encourage community members to attend meetings and share their insights on health care issues arising in their community. This will also be an opportunity to hear from health experts or local stakeholders on topics of interest.

Council will co-host two more community events in collaboration with AHS, invite community stakeholders to participate, and learn more about health initiatives across the region.

Plans for the coming year include:

- Focusing on mental health and addiction resources by connecting with various community leaders and organizations to learn their perspectives and share resources.
- Hosting or participating in an education session on Indigenous health to become better informed on how to become an ally.
- Ongoing work with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) to learn about rural community needs, and to promote stronger attraction and retention of healthcare practitioners in the North Zone.
- Continuing to build relationships with other AHS Advisory Councils.

Council membership is diverse and includes representatives from various local communities. We plan to enhance that diversity through recruitment efforts to fill Council vacancies.

Advisory Council members share advice and feedback from their communities with AHS. Councils hold public meetings and engagement activities virtually or in locations throughout their geographic area that further contribute to improving healthcare services in Alberta.



## 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/advisorycouncils](https://ahs.ca/advisorycouncils).
- Delivering a presentation at a Council meeting on a health area of interest.
- Providing input on various healthcare topics online, at [Together4Health](#).
- Applying to [become a member](#). Members are appointed for three-year terms.



## Learn more

Visit [ahs.ca/advisorycouncils](https://ahs.ca/advisorycouncils)

✉ [truenorth@ahs.ca](mailto:truenorth@ahs.ca)

☎ 1.877.275.8830

Check us out on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or by searching AHS Advisory Councils.

