

Wood Buffalo Health Advisory Council

2022-23 Annual Report



**Alberta Health
Services**

Wood Buffalo
Health Advisory Council

Message from the Official Administrator Dr. John Cowell



It has been a great pleasure to reconnect with Alberta Health Services (AHS) Advisory Councils since I was appointed to the role of AHS Official Administrator in November 2022. Soon after my appointment, I had the opportunity to meet with Council Chairs and our conversation informed the development of my 90-Day Plan to achieve rapid improvements in four priority areas of AHS:

- Improving emergency medical services (EMS) response times.
- Decreasing emergency department wait times.
- Reducing surgery wait times.
- Improving patient flow and continuity of care.

There has been marked improvement in all these areas, not just over my first 90 days as OA, but sustained improvements made possible, in part, by the invaluable advice and perspectives provided by our Councils. Through our partnership with Advisory Councils, we're seeing EMS response times improving despite sustained increases in call volume across the province. Emergency department wait times are also coming down. Fewer people are waiting longer for surgery than clinically recommended. And we're seeing evidence of improved patient flow with the addition of acute care, intensive care and continuing care beds. We need to continue building on this momentum, while also addressing our organization's serious workforce issues. This is all challenging and complex work, and AHS will continue to involve our Advisory Councils as a key stakeholder for advice and real-time feedback on how we're doing in our efforts to serve all Albertans.

I understand and appreciate the value that Advisory Councils bring to AHS, and look forward to expanding and deepening our partnership. I'll continue to reach out to Council Chairs, and meet with Council members throughout the year, including at the 2024 Advisory Council Forum.

I'd like to express my gratitude for the work of all Advisory Council members. Although AHS still has much work ahead, I look to the future with optimism knowing we'll move forward and navigate our challenges with our valued and steadfast Advisory Council partners.

Message from the Chair Todd Hillier, Wood Buffalo Health Advisory Council



I am extremely proud of the work the Wood Buffalo Health Advisory Council (WBHAC) has done this past year, as well as very optimistic about the road ahead for both our area and our province. We are very fortunate to have a group of passionate individuals spread across our vast zone, from Fort Fitzgerald in the north near the border of the Northwest Territories, to our Indigenous communities in the south including Conklin and Janvier. These members are engaged in their respective communities and bring meaningful support for, and feedback to health services.

As we continue to transition out of the COVID-19 pandemic, I look forward to continuing to address the challenges our area faces with healthcare workforce attraction, the growing battle of social media misinformation as well as senior's care and surgical availability. We are committed to working with Alberta Health Services (AHS) as well as the general public to ensure our concerns are addressed and our successes are celebrated. It takes a team working together to succeed.

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

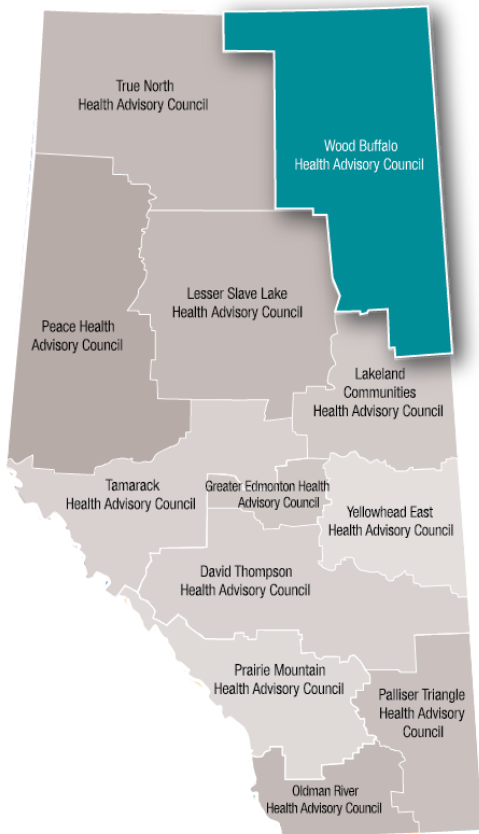


*Top L-R: Todd Hillier (Chair), Christine Alexander, Jennifer Best, Natalie Gentili
Bottom L-R: Ashley Makey, Kenneth Okwonkwo, Melinda Stewart, Breanna Wallace
Missing: Patience Akenbor, Sonia Burke-Smith (Vice Chair), Tinna Ezekie, Natalie Gentili, Sandy Grandison, Evelyn Okoh, Carol Theberge, Beverley Tupper*

“It has been my pleasure to work with many of our North Zone Councils. Our Council members are dedicated, community builders who are committed to healthcare in the North. I am appreciative of the diversity of opinions and experience that our Council members share leading to rich dialogue and discussion on topics that truly matter to those of us living in the North.

Stacy Greening
Chief Zone Officer, North Zone

FACTS AND FIGURES



Council Member Representation

Fort Fitzgerald
Fort McKay
Fort McMurray

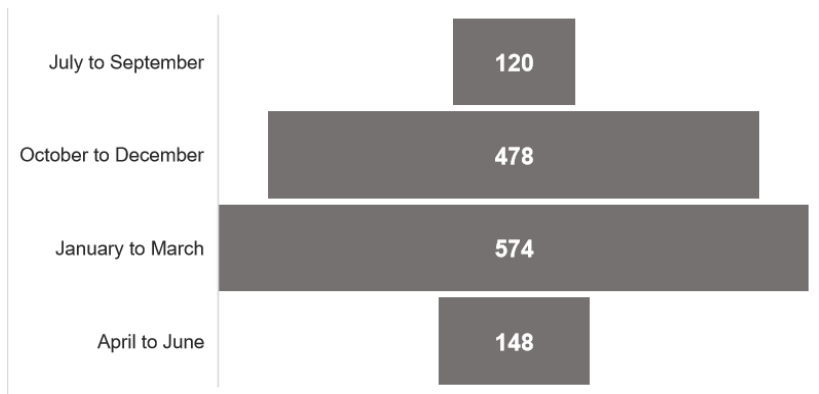


By the numbers

Participation in WBHAC meetings & events:

- 3** public meetings
- 41** public attended
- 1** engagement event
- 25** public attended
- 7** new members

Provincial participation at Advisory Council meetings & events*



*Reflective of the number of public that attended Health and Provincial Advisory Council meetings and events between July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

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.

- ✓ WBHAC held three public meetings during the year. Presentation topics included one from Alberta Healthy Living Program (AHLP) where we learned that they provide free workshops to help Albertans manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart and stroke education, weight management, stress management, chronic pain or chronic conditions management, supervised exercise and COPD education.
- ✓ We hosted a joint virtual engagement event with Lakeland Communities and Tamarack Health Advisory Councils where we learned about services and resources of Health Link 811, and an overview of lab services with *DynaLIFE*.
- ✓ Council attended a session with Dr. Cowell, AHS Official Administrator (OA), where he reviewed findings from his 90-Day Report, which outlined progress in the health system from his first 90 days as OA.
- ✓ Hot topics of discussion included:
 - Workforce recruitment (shortages)
 - Surgery wait times
 - Ideas for connecting with people who experience technological or internet barriers
 - Ideas for building partnerships with Indigenous groups
 - Need for increased supports/services for people with addictions and mental health.

OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE INPUT (ALL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS)



Newcomer Engagement Patient & Experience

AHS sought input on how AHS can communicate, support, and enable Albertans to become active partners in their care.



2022-23 Influenza Immunization Campaign

Members reviewed draft AHS influenza campaign materials and provided input toward the province-wide campaign that informed Albertans about the flu shot.



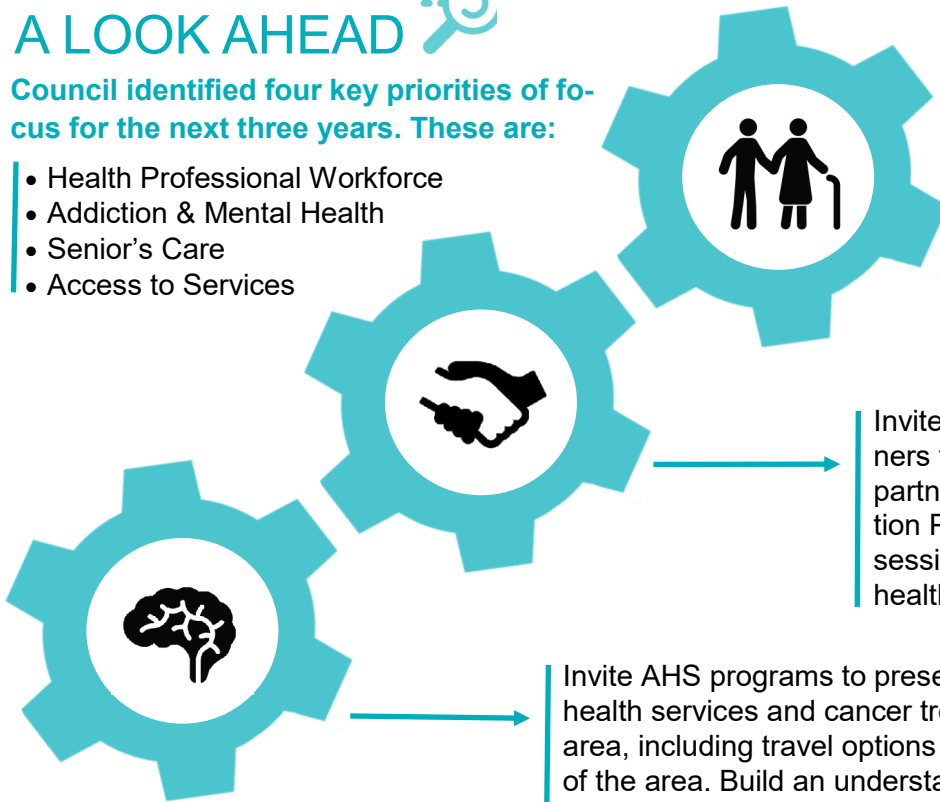
Spiritual Care Policy

Councils were invited to provide feedback to the AHS Community Spiritual and Religious Care Providers Access Policy.

A LOOK AHEAD

Council identified four key priorities of focus for the next three years. These are:

- Health Professional Workforce
- Addiction & Mental Health
- Senior's Care
- Access to Services



WBHAC commits to:

Increase its awareness of available senior's resources and supports by inviting AHS and community groups to present on barriers to accessing some services.

Invite AHS physician recruitment planners to a regular public meeting, and partner with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) to host an information session on the process of attracting health professionals to rural areas.

Invite AHS programs to present on addictions and mental health services and cancer treatment services in the HAC area, including travel options to attend appointments out of the area. Build an understanding of differences between services available in rural vs. urban centres.

GET INVOLVED

Make a difference to the health and well-being of your community by sharing your thoughts and ideas with AHS.

- Email: woodbuffalo@ahs.ca
- Phone: 1.877.275.8830
- Attend an [upcoming meeting](#)
- Provide input on various healthcare topics online, at [Together4Health](#)
- Apply to join an Advisory Council:

APPLY

