

# Addiction & Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council 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, Addiction & Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council

For half of our Council this report marks eight years of devoted volunteer service. We can say much positive change has occurred during this period, some of which included Council's input and recommendations. While there is still much to be done, we are pleased it is now more acceptable to talk about health issues that affect our communities, families, friends or ourselves. Recognizing and acknowledging problems is a precursor to finding meaningful solutions.



*Dr. Geoff Tagg*

We are encouraged by the calibre of new Council members bringing forth new perspectives, ideas and approaches. To Council members, AHS staff, presenters and public who have contributed, a heartfelt thank you – we could not have done it without you.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as Chair for the past eight years. I will follow Council's progress with keen anticipation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Geoff Tagg  
Chair, Addiction & Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council

## Who we are

The Addiction & Mental Health (AMH) Provincial Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of 15 volunteer members with lived addiction and mental health care system experience who are passionate about improving service quality, access and availability for Albertans experiencing mental health challenges and addiction. Visit us online for a full list of our [membership](#).

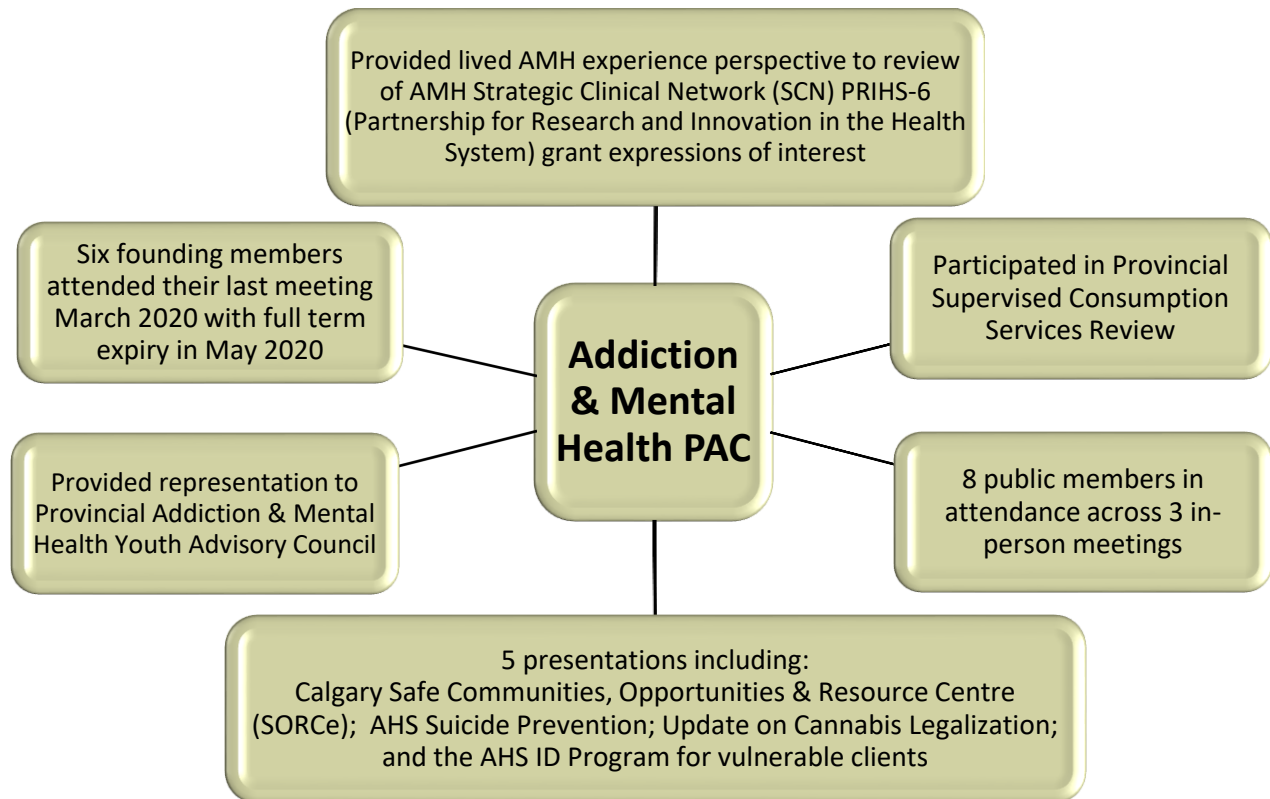


*L-R Back: Dr. Austin Mardon, Dr. Geoff Tagg*

*L-R Front: Kaj Korvela, Bavie Sara, Emily Macphail, Candice Horne, Terry O’Riordan*

*Missing: Denise Lambert, Lindy Fors, Monique Maisonneuve, Ariel Haubrich, Karen Andresen, Timena Osborne, Barbara Murray, Diane MacNaughton*

## Highlights



## Key achievements of 2019-20

The AMH PAC, in an advisory capacity, considers existing and emerging issues from the addiction and mental health community service-user's perspective. We make recommendations to the AHS Board, CEO and Executive Leadership on system-level opportunities to improve AMH service provision and access for all Albertans. We strive to capture lived patient experience and ensure patients and families are at the centre of all health care activities, decisions and teams. We participated in the following events:

- AHS Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) review of PRIHS-5 grant application expressions of interest
  - Ranking research applications from the system-user perspective provides feedback on how addiction and mental health research will benefit the service delivery recipient.
- Supported *Engaging people with lived experience in the grant review process: an example in addiction and mental health* abstract presentation to the 2019 Alberta Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) Support Unit Summer Institute 2019 Impact & Opportunities session in May 2019. This abstract received exceptional reviews and was selected to be featured in the Highlighted Oral Presentation Series.
  - The abstract submitted outlined the AMH PAC member participation in the PRIHS 5 Grant Application Expressions of Interest review process, and the value the partnership brought.
- Attended *AHS Review Recommendations and Next Steps* for Addiction & Mental Health and Seniors & Continuing Care PACs
- Received presentations
  - Safe Communities Opportunities & Resource Centre (SORCe) Calgary
  - AMH SCN Peer Support in Emergency Department Research Project, Phase One
  - AMH SCN Key Performance Indicator Project
  - Alberta Addiction Education Sessions: Livestream Initiative
  - AHS Suicide Prevention Programs, Activities and Resources
  - Cannabis: One Year after Recreational Legalization
  - AHS ID Program
- Represented addiction mental health system-access perspective on:
  - AHS AMH Policy Working Group on Residential and Addiction Services
  - AHS AMH Harm Reduction Policy Advisory Group
  - AHS AMH Strategic Clinical Network Core Committee
  - AHS Addictions Recovery and Community Health (ARCH) at Peter Lougheed Centre (PLC) Calgary Working Group
  - Ad hoc groups participation as requested/required



## A look ahead

Through 2019 we supported AHS activities to expand community-based services for Albertans affected by addiction and mental health. We undertook activities focused on better understanding of the impacts of social determinants of health related to addiction and mental health.

In early 2020 the AHS Addiction & Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council will say goodbye to seven of its founding members, each of whom will have reached their respective full Council member term. The coming year promises to be one of learning, with seven new members at the table. These new members each bring their own new and different perspectives and priorities that will lead Council into new discussions, considerations and directions.

In 2020 Council will endeavour to grow virtual meeting skills and work to develop new and varied ways to connect and to build relationships.



Anyone interested in applying to the **AHS Addiction & Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council** can do so through the [AHS website](#).

*The Addiction & Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council provides Alberta Health Services with a forum to receive lived experience advice on addiction and mental health issues in the best interest of Albertans throughout the province.*

Allison Bichel, Senior Program Officer,  
Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Services

# About the Addiction & Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council

## Quick Facts

- 15 volunteers with lived experience with addiction and mental health
- Meets quarterly
- Represents perspectives of urban and rural Albertans
- Studies issues related to the addiction and mental health community
- Responds to requests for stakeholder input and feedback from the system access perspective related to addiction and mental health
- Recommends opportunities to improve quality, access and sustainability of publicly-funded addiction and mental health services in Alberta

## Get Involved

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

✉ [pac.amh@ahs.ca](mailto:pac.amh@ahs.ca)

☎ 1.877.275.8830

Check us out on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

