

# Addiction and Mental Health

## 2016/17 Annual Report



Addiction & Mental  
Health Provincial  
Advisory Council

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

## Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

The health system belongs to over four million Albertans and, as such, their voices need to be heard — and considered — when Alberta Health Services is planning and making decisions about healthcare delivery. Our Health Advisory Councils, Provincial Advisory Councils and Wisdom Council bring the diverse voices of Albertans to the decision-making table, so health services can meet the unique needs of communities across the province.

Our councils are made up of people who are passionate about understanding what's working and where improvements can be made in how health services are delivered in their communities. Advisory councils demonstrate our true commitment to community engagement — their work is strategic and valued, shaping the future of healthcare and enhancing care in communities.

There was much growth over the past year. It was a year of renewed commitment from Alberta Health Services to ensure councils act as the voices of their communities, supported by extensive recruitment to strengthen the reach and diversity of council members. For the first time, Council Chairs collaborated to share their priorities and identify similar priorities across the province. This approach was valuable and created synergies and linkages between councils across Alberta. At the same time, the collaboration between councils also showed how their priorities clearly aligned with Alberta Health Services' strategic approach and how we are all working towards the same, very important goals.

On behalf of the Alberta Health Services Board of Directors, our leadership team and our workforce, I want to thank you for being our partners. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with councils and the strategic value they offer.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn  
Vice Chair, Board of Directors  
Chair, Community Engagement Committee of the Board  
Alberta Health Services



*Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn*

## About community engagement

Alberta Health Services is committed to meaningful and authentic community engagement. Engaging with Albertans means patients, families and members of the public contribute to healthcare solutions and the betterment of our system. They can benefit by having their needs reflected in planning and decision making. Engagement aligns with the Alberta Health Services culture of caring and listening, which results in more patient-centred care, local decision making and more open and trusting relationships.

## Role of Advisory Councils

Alberta Health Services values advisory council members as volunteers, leaders and partners in healthcare planning. They help build a stronger relationship between the people in their communities and those who work in the health system.

Members of Health Advisory Councils, Provincial Advisory Councils, and Wisdom Council are Albertans who care about health of their communities, and are connected to the public in many different ways. They provide a grassroots perspective and an understanding of their communities' health needs, and they're interested in listening to the people. They also:

- share their communities' priorities with Alberta Health Services
- give advice and help to inform the decision-making process
- host public advisory council meetings, in addition to promoting and participating in activities that enhance Albertans' health
- engage with and share information with the community, and follow up on commitments
- give feedback on public education materials, policies, or discussion topics
- share information on health services with the community and provide feedback and input to Alberta Health Services



Councils attend the annual Advisory Councils' Fall Forum to hear a variety of presentations and network with fellow council members, Alberta Health Services staff and members of the Board of Directors.

The Health Advisory Councils and the Provincial Advisory Councils are supported by the Alberta Health Services Community Engagement department, and report through the Council of Chairs to the Community Engagement Committee of the Alberta Health Services Board of Directors. The Wisdom Council reports to the AHS President and CEO.

## 12 Health Advisory Councils

Bring the voices of Alberta communities to healthcare services.

Each council represents a geographical area within the province.

## 2 Provincial Advisory Councils

Advise on provincewide services and programs for addiction and mental health, and cancer.

## 1 Wisdom Council

Provides guidance and recommendations to ensure Alberta Health Services develops and implements culturally appropriate and innovative health service delivery for Indigenous Peoples.

Albertans are represented by 12 Health Advisory Councils. Areas are determined by population and travel routes, and are detailed on [this map](#).

The two Provincial Advisory Councils and Wisdom Council operate provincially.  
Their membership spans all of Alberta.

[View map of treaty areas and indigenous communities in Alberta](#)

For more information on membership:

[Health Advisory Councils](#)

[Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council](#)

[Cancer Provincial Advisory Council](#)

[Wisdom Council](#)



## Council of Chairs

The Council of Chairs is made up of all advisory council Chairs, who meet five times a year to further the roles, responsibilities, and priorities of councils at a provincial level. The Council of Chairs determines themes or commonalities across different communities to bring forward to Alberta Health Services' leadership and Board of Directors.

## Including the public voice in Alberta Health Services planning

In early 2016, Alberta Health Services' Strategic Planning Department met with Health Advisory Councils across the province to gather input for the [2017 - 2020 Health and Business Plan](#). Each council was asked to provide feedback on the plan to ensure the priorities of their communities were considered in the development of the strategic goals for the organization.

Members from various Health Advisory Councils participated in the following provincial committees:

- Apple Magazine Editorial Council
- Continuing Care Quality Committee
- [Health Link](#) and [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](#)
- Patient First Steering Committee
- Patient and Family Advisory Council
- Long range planning

## Message from the Chair, Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council

If one was asked to sum up the past year for the Provincial Advisory Council on Addiction and Mental Health, one might use the phrase, “Together, We Can.”

We believe this year to have been a good one, largely due to the way we have been able to share and collaborate with others who work diligently to make a real difference in the lives of Albertans who suffer with addiction and mental health issues, often under challenging circumstances. We are particularly encouraged by the way we are working together with the Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network (SCN), with our colleagues throughout Alberta Health Services, and several other agencies across the province.



*Dr. Geoff Tagg*

When we reflect on how much meaningful input volunteer bodies such as ourselves can have, we are encouraged by what we see as real progress on several fronts, and welcome the opportunities we have, to work together to make a difference.

In the past year, in addition to our four quarterly meetings, we have been afforded the opportunity to offer input as a Council or as representatives of Council on a number of critical initiatives also included in this report. Indeed, it is fair to see that the requests for input from our members often exceeds our capacity to respond – but we never turn down a challenge!

Nowhere is our growing involvement reflected more than in the makeup of the Council itself. We lost some highly valued members of Council this year, namely Ms. Patti Fisher and Ms. Kathryn Wiebe. However, we were excited to discover that the quantity and quality of those seeking to volunteer for Council is growing. Two new Council members bring an extraordinary blend of lived experiences to Council, which we look forward to putting to good use. I cannot thank Council members highly enough for their dedication and commitment, recognizing that, “Together We Can.”

The ongoing support of our Alberta Health Services and Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) support staff at all Council meetings is valued enormously. Regular members, who we consider as full members of Council, include Mr. David O’Brien, Senior Program Officer, Community Seniors Addiction and Mental Health (CSAMH); Mr. Barry Andres, Executive Director Provincial Addiction and Mental Health, CSAMH; Ms. Allison Bichel, Senior Provincial Director Addiction and Mental Health SCN, and Dr. Nick Mitchell, Senior Medical Director Addiction and Mental Health SCN and CSAMH. In this way, we can have direct and immediate contact

with each other on issues of common interest. As a member of the Council of Chairs, we have enjoyed great support from the province's Health Advisory Councils, as we share information on addiction and mental health concerns from every corner of the province. Add to that the invaluable support of Patient Engagement, and of the provincial Board, and "Together We Can" becomes even more of a reality.

We are excited about the opportunities presented by the Valuing Mental Health Advisory Committee, on which we are directly represented. Here is a real opportunity to work together with wonderful people seeking ways to implement many of the recommendations of the highly acclaimed government report authored by Dr. Swan *et al.*

Finally, so much of our work depends on competent and reliable support. We simply could not do all we seek to do without our tireless Council Secretary Crystal Stewart. There are no words to thank her enough.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this challenging, yet so rewarding role. Please feel free to contact us at any time should you wish to do so.

Sincerely,

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

## About us

### 2016 -2017 Council Members

#### Current Members

Dr. Geoffrey	Tagg (Chair)	Red Deer, Chair
Karen	Andresen	Red Deer
Lindy	Fors	Slave Lake
Ariel	Haubrich	Wainwright
Candice	Horne	Calgary
Denise	Lambert	Onoway
Diane	MacNaughton	Medicine Hat
Monique	Maisonneuve	Guy
Emily	Macphail	Calgary
Dr. Austin	Mardon	Edmonton
Barbara	Murray	Picture Butte
Timena	Osborne	Calgary
Tanya	Richer	Calgary
Bavie	Sara	Edmonton

#### Permanent Resources

Permanent resource persons are appointed to Council by the Board by virtue of the roles they play within their organization and are members without voting rights. They are subject matter experts and leaders in the area of addiction and mental health who assist, inform, and guide Council to achieve its objectives.

Barry	Andres	Executive Director Addiction and Mental Health Community Seniors Addiction and Mental Health
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Marni	Bercov	Executive Director Addiction and Mental Health SCN
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Allison	Bichel	Senior Provincial Director Addiction and Mental Health SCN
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Dr. Nick	Mitchell	Senior Medical Director Addiction and Mental Health Addiction and Mental Health SCN Community Seniors Addiction and Mental Health
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David	O'Brien	Senior Program Officer Community Seniors Addiction and Mental Health
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## Quick facts:

- Council members represent each of the five Alberta Health Services zones.
- They have direct experience with addiction and/or mental health services in Alberta either as a patient, or through the experience of a family member or close associate.
- The Council considers addiction and mental health issues and/or concerns from communities across Alberta when developing recommendations to Alberta Health Services regarding addiction/mental health programs for development; opportunities to improve existing provincial service delivery; and enhancement of program design.
- Council may make recommendations to provincial government or program offices; federal government or program offices; and/or external stakeholder organizations as appropriate or required.

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meetings were held in  
Calgary and Edmonton



*Council members gather in Calgary for regular meeting*

## 2016/17 work plan priorities:

- Reduce stigma around addiction and mental health.
- Lobby for increased access to addiction and mental health services with a goal toward 24/7 support availability.
- Promote importance and increase awareness of mental health in children and youth, including prevention, early recognition and proactive intervention in advance of crisis.
- Lobby for specialized training for new and existing personnel to improve interactions with clients with mental illness.
- Recommend adequate staffing models to ensure treatment and aftercare is available for all Alberta Addiction and Mental Health patients.

These areas of focus were addressed through presentations from a number of persons and organizations across the province to both inform letters of recommendation, as well as for Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council members to share to respective communities.

## What we are proud of

- In June 2016, our Chair Dr. G. Tagg was named to the Valuing Mental Health Advisory Committee, following submission of a letter to the Alberta Health Services Board in April. Our members are available to the Board, Alberta Health Deputy Minister Dr. C. Amrhein, and/or the cross-ministry leadership group being established to assist in responding to the recommendations contained in the Valuing Mental Health – Report of the Alberta Mental Health Review Committee.
- Following a presentation to Council on the Inner City Health and Wellness/Addictions Recovery and Community Health (ARCH) program at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton, we submitted a letter of support for research funding to the Alberta Health Services Board in May 2016 with funding confirmed in June 2016.
- We put forward a letter to the Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Secretariat in October 2016 with the impending legalization/decriminalization of marijuana for recreational use. As a council, we expressed support for decriminalization, legalization and use for medical purposes of marijuana, but urged caution and careful consideration for potential harms to youth accessing for recreational use.

## A look ahead

- For the upcoming year, our focus will remain on addiction and mental health stigma reduction and increased awareness of prevention, early recognition, and proactive intervention for children and youth with potential mental health issues.
- We recognize the importance of flexibility and adaptability to enable responsiveness to address addiction and mental health issues as they emerge.
- We will continue to receive information and make recommendations on issues of importance to the mental health and addiction community, and suggest opportunities for system-level service delivery improvement.

# Get involved

Think of the difference you can make to the health and well-being of your family, friends, neighbours and community by sharing your thoughts and ideas with Alberta Health Services. Get involved:

- Attend an upcoming [Health Advisory Council meeting](#).
- [Make a presentation at a council meeting](#) on a health area of interest or concern.
- Think about volunteering your time as a council member. Recruitment drives happen annually. Members are appointed for three-year terms.

Connect with us:

- [Info on Community Engagement](#)
- [pac.amh@ahs.ca](mailto:pac.amh@ahs.ca)
- [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

