



## David Thompson Meeting Summary

May 14, 2020 / 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. / Zoom

### Introducing your David Thompson Health Advisory Council members:

**In attendance:** Carole Tkach (Chair), Deryl Comeau (Vice-Chair), Marie Cornelson, Geraldine Greschner, Gerald Johnston, Selena Redel

**Alberta Health Services:** Sherie Allen, Maya Atallah, Leanne Grant, Allan Sinclair, Janice Stewart, Valerie Thompson

**Regrets:** Melanie Hassett, Dawn Konelsky, Phyllis Loewen, Peggy Makofka, Shelagh Slater

### Community Input

Lara Harris and Colleen Lindholm, Rural Community Consultants with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), shared information on upcoming events. RhPAP is monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic but plans to move forward with its bi-annual conference on October 6-8, 2020. This year's conference, "Put on your Perspectacles: Looking through the rural lens," will focus on rural health provider attraction and retention. More details on conference content, accommodations and registration will be shared during Alberta Rural Health Week, May 25-29, 2020. Lara shared more on the Alberta Rural Health Week and encouraged the Council to visit the RhPAP [website](#) for ideas to show appreciation for all rural health care providers. Council members are encouraged to share any appreciation for local health care providers with the hashtag #RuralHealthMatters.

### Central Zone Update

The following information was shared with the Council:

Janice Stewart, Chief Zone Officer, Central Zone, shared there continues to be an open discussion between AHS and physicians who have indicated their request to withdraw services from AHS sites. Sundre is the only town physicians have withdrawn services; other physicians in Central Zone are committed to assisting with the COVID-19 response and will make a decision after. AHS is on coverage and recruitment in areas that were underserved before COVID.

Allan Sinclair, Senior Operating Officer, Central and South Central Zone, provided the following update:

- Central Zone has been fortunate in having very few cases of COVID-19. Great work was done by the Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC) and all teams in ensuring proper communications were circulated to staff and sites, including continuing care facilities in the Zone.
- In April, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw put in place an order of single-site employment for Long-Term Care and Designated Supportive Living (LTC/DSL) sites. The necessary planning and determination of staff assignments with all LTC/DSL operators across the province are well underway. Implementation is proceeding in a phased approach. AHS is ready to implement the order with some local operators (including AHS sites) in North and Central Zones and continue to work on planning with other operators and other zones.



- AHS will resume some scheduled day surgeries beginning in May. Urgent and emergency surgery as well as oncology and scheduled cesarean procedures, will continue.
- The Government of Alberta announced plans for Stage 1 relaunch. The plan places safety first and outlines a gradual lift of restrictions. There are new guidelines in place for all to maintain physical distancing to the extent possible. The next stages will be determined on many factors including ensuring AHS can handle the anticipated surge in patients related to COVID-19.
- Limitations to visitor and family presence are continuously reevaluated at LTC and DSL sites based on the risk of COVID-19 and in consideration of patients/residents, families, and health care providers. The staff has been using iPads to help residents fill the void of missing loved ones during this time.
- Alberta Precision Laboratories is in the final stage of validating multiple serology tests in Alberta to detect COVID-19 antibodies.

Valerie Thompson, Area Director, Central Zone, provided operational updates for the towns of Lacombe, Sundre, Innisfail, Rimbey, Ponoka, and Sylvan Lake.

Leanne Grant, Area Director, Central Zone, provided operational updates for Drayton Valley and Wetaskiwin.

#### Questions and comments from Council: (Allan Sinclair and Janice Stewart responded)

**Q:** Are there any surgeons who withdrew their services in the City of Wetaskiwin?

**A:** Currently, no surgeons have withdrawn their services in Wetaskiwin.

**Q:** What is the update on planning for the Red Deer Hospital expansion?

**A:** Due to the successful control of COVID-19 in Central Zone there is a capacity to reinstate work on the development and expansion of the Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre. Meetings begin next week to work on the next steps.

**Q:** What is the status of the work on the AHS Review?

**A:** It has been put on hold while AHS prioritizes the response to COVID-19. The committee for AHS Review implementation will be re-engaging soon to look at the recommendations and to develop a response by August 13, 2020.

**Q:** How are COVID cases in Lloydminster reported?

**A:** If a person has an Alberta residence they are counted on the Alberta side. If they are a resident of Saskatchewan they are reported on the Saskatchewan side. Alberta is working collaboratively with Saskatchewan to manage outbreaks that do happen.

## Council Member Roundtable & Good News

**Council Chair, Carole Tkach**, shared that the continuing care sites in the Coronation area are following very strict guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Central Zone has not seen many cases so members have mixed feelings about the severity of it. Carole expressed appreciation to AHS for the daily COVID-19 updates.

**Deryl Comeau** shared a concern from Sylvan Lake regarding the cost of medication as well as medication being out of stock at local pharmacies. This is affecting seniors who need to pay the dispensing fee each time. Deryl asked if there is going to be a review on pharmacy practices? Janice replied that pharmacies are



privately run in small communities and Alberta Health as well as Alberta Blue Cross are the organizations responsible for those facilities. Derly shared that community members have expressed great satisfaction with the use of virtual health for physician appointments as well as visiting with family in continuing care sites.

**Selena Redel** expressed that community members in Consort were very anxious when the Consort Hospital and Care Centre Emergency Department closed temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic. The community has since settled and members have increased their use of virtual health visits with their physician.

**Geraldine Greschner** shared community members in Sundre are concerned with the level of care they will receive if physicians in Sundre withdraw services from the hospital. She also shares the Health Professional Attraction and Retention Committee has been focusing on appreciation activities for front line workers. The Committee will soon help support clinics to attract physicians into Sundre to replace those who will be withdrawing services. The committee has also purchased iPads to help with visitation at some continuing care sites. The iPads help seniors to visit virtually with family as well as take care of financial records. Once COVID is over the iPads will be used for kids in the emergency department as they wait. Finally, Geraldine says community members are concerned with the number of visitors the area in the West Country is getting due to the possible spread of COVID-19, as well as pressure on the Sundre emergency department.

**Marie Cornelson** shared community members in Drayton Valley are concerned with the increase of campers in the area. Also, she is curious about the relaunch and the decision to open certain businesses and not others. All-in-all the community has been doing well in following COVID-19 protocols.

Follow up from the March 19, 2020 meeting:

- Maura Beaton, Lead of Advisory Council Relations, will connect Geraldine with the name of a possible presenter for the mental health symposium. **Complete.**

The next meeting of the David Thompson HAC is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2020, at 5 p.m.

Learn about the four organizational goals of AHS in the [2017-2020 AHS Health Plan and Business Plan](#).

Join us in changing the conversation from [illness to wellness](#).

Our meetings are open to the public. Dates and locations are [available here](#).  
[Find your Health Advisory Council here](#). Visit the [webpage](#) for more info.

Contact us at: [DavidThompson@ahs.ca](mailto:DavidThompson@ahs.ca)  
Call: 1-877-275-8830.