

# Lakeland Communities

## 2017/18 Annual Report



Lakeland Communities  
Health Advisory Council

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

## Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

Healthcare is a people business and Alberta Health Services (AHS) alone cannot build a healthier province. Through the work of our Advisory Councils, all Albertans have an opportunity to have a say in what we do at AHS; and that's vitally important to our organization.



*Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn*

Council members bring the voices of Albertans to AHS whether through the geographically located Health Advisory Councils or the program-focused Provincial Advisory Councils and Wisdom Council. They build relationships with Albertans and keep the lines of communication open. They are our partners, and their feedback has helped us make the right decisions on how we care for Albertans and how we deliver health services. Their efforts continue to make a positive difference in people's lives every day.

As Chair of the Community Engagement Committee of the Board, I've had the pleasure to connect with many Council members and see their work evolve and expand over the past year. There are direct links between their efforts and the advancements we've made as a health system overall, and in communities across the province. Here are just a few examples:

- **Connect Care** - members offered insights about the system, and had opportunities to join three different committees to help shape what the system would look like.
- **Zone healthcare planning** - members participated in building Calgary and Central zone healthcare plans, and sharing specific needs for the communities they represent.
- **PCN governance committees** - members have been invited to join zone committees.
- **Continuing care** - through interviews, council chairs provided comments and suggestions to help build continuing care plans and solutions in the zones.
- **AHS Health Plan and Business Plan** - members offered perspectives and suggestions into the plan; their input shaped the goals, objectives and performance measures, particularly in the areas of long term care and mental health. They also actively shared the plan with communities across Alberta.
- **Special engagement meetings for Albertans** - many of the Councils had the opportunity to host engagement activities from Open Houses to forums to information sessions, both in person or by video conference.

Other milestones include adopting a new look and brand, carefully developed work plans, and attending the Annual Advisory Council Fall Forum to engage about healthcare issues and connect with each other.

On behalf of the AHS Board of Directors, our leadership team, and our workforce, thank you for all you do. We look forward to continuing to work with you on improving healthcare for Albertans.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn,  
Vice Chair, Board of Directors  
Chair, Community Engagement Committee of the Board  
AHS

## Message from the Chair Lakeland Communities Health Advisory Council



*Patricia Palechuk*

On behalf of the Lakeland Communities Health Advisory Council (HAC), I would like to provide you with a summary of our Council's activities for the fiscal year of 2017/18.

We hosted meetings in different communities, and gave community members an opportunity to be heard and learn about AHS programs and services. We also increased our knowledge by learning more about their communities.

Most of our meetings have a focused presentation that follows items from our Work Plan, or that result from emerging issues that have been identified by our Council. Some of the areas we learned more about include:

- The referral process to specialists.
- Cultural sensitivity and the AHS Indigenous Health Program.
- Programs provided by Lakeland Primary Care Network (PCN), focused on the navigation role of Social Workers for patients in their area of service.
- The triaging process in rural hospitals.
- The scope of Renal Programs and Clinics, especially due to new the Dialysis unit that was opened in Lac La Biche.

We appreciated the monthly update from representatives of our North Zone leadership team. We also heard regularly from a representative with the Rural Health Professionals Action Plan (RHPAP), as recruitment of physicians and other health professionals is one of our top priorities.

Our Council members especially like to share issues or talk about good news stories in our roundtable discussions. It is here that we learn what is going on in each of our member's communities; our agenda time is always stretched.

Recruitment of new members is essential to sustain our Council, especially from our Indigenous population. We are in need of volunteers who realize the importance of engaging communities and providing two-way communication with AHS.

Thank you to all my fellow Council members for their dedication of time and work to improve healthcare planning and service delivery for the Lakeland communities.

Sincerely,

Patricia Palechuk  
Chair, Lakeland Communities Health Advisory Council

## About our Council

### 2017/2018 Council Members

#### Current Members

Patricia	Palechuk (Chair)	Smoky Lake
Mel	Smith (Vice Chair)	Redwater
David	Beale	Fort Kent
Adriaan	Botha	St. Paul
Robert	Brassard	Cold Lake
Robert	Deresh	Ardmore
Zicki	Eludin	Lac La Biche
Marvin	Fyten	Lac La Biche
DeAnne	Geleta	Athabasca
Ahmad	Qayyum	Lac La Biche
Parrish	Tung	Elk Point



*Back row left to right: Robert Deresh, Ahmad Qayyum, David Beale, Robert Brassard*

*Front row left to right: Mel Smith, Pat Palechuk, Zicki Eludin, Parrish Tung*

*Missing: DeAnne Geleta, Adriaan Botha, Marvin Fyten*

## Priorities for our Council

We identified three priorities of focus in our 2017/18 work plan:

### Transportation

- Council compiled a list of local resources gathered from within each member's community. The information was placed in a chart and shared with members to use when connecting with people in our communities.

### Advise/advocate for the right service at the right place at the right time

- We invited various AHS staff to present about topics such as the referral process to specialists, the triage process in rural hospitals, and about public use of emergency rooms.
- We invited the Lakeland PCN to present about rural service delivery options.
- Information learned was shared by our members on an individual, as-needed basis with people in our communities.

### Support for addiction and mental health treatment

- Council will continue to work on support for addiction and mental health through our 2018/19 work plan.

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Presentations were given by a variety of groups on different topics including:

- Métis Settlement Health Board
- Wisdom Council
- RhPAP
- Northern Alberta Renal Program (NARP)
- Primary care navigation
- Triage process in rural hospitals
- Indigenous Health Program

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Public meetings were held at the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement, Redwater, Cold Lake, Buffalo Métis Settlement and via teleconference.

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Organizations regularly connected with us at meetings: RhPAP, Lakeland PCN, AHS Wisdom Council, AHS Indigenous Health Program, NARP, and the Métis Settlement Board.



## Engaging the public

- We attended a Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) meeting in Smoky Lake where we had the opportunity to share information about our Council, our work plan priorities for the year and how to connect with us.
- We attended the Grey Matters Conference in Hinton and learned about seniors' health and wellness.
- Our members were part of the Bonnyville FCSS team that organized a workshop in the community on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID). The event was well attended and well-received by guests.
- We hosted two stakeholder engagements in St. Paul and Cold Lake. Representatives from the HAC, AHS zone leadership and AHS Community Engagement met with local Mayors and Chief Administrative Officers to discuss healthcare priorities and AHS' plans for the future.
- We worked with local RhPAP representatives to discuss the formation of an attraction and retention committee in Lac La Biche.
- We attended the Alberta Healthy Community Symposium co-hosted by Communities ChooseWell and AHS' Alberta Cancer Prevention Legacy Fund. This year's theme was Creating Communities for Everyone.

*For more information about Health Advisory Councils, visit [ahs.ca](https://ahs.ca)*

## Providing feedback and advice to AHS

We recommended healthcare providers become more familiar and comfortable using video conferencing (Telehealth) with the intention of using it for appointments where hands-on examinations are not required, helping to reduce travel for patients.

We provided input to:

- AHS' Ethical Framework via an engagement session with AHS' Clinical Ethics team and the Community Engagement department.
- A storytelling engagement session with AHS Web Communications and the Community Engagement department.



## Topics on the minds of our Council and community members

### **Indigenous health and awareness**

- We continue to seek better understanding and connections with the Indigenous communities in our geographic area. We heard presentations about AHS' Wisdom Council and Indigenous Health Program with a goal to increase our understanding of the unique health needs our Indigenous people encounter. We hope that by hosting our meetings at two of the Métis Settlements, it will help to bridge the lines of communication and forge better working relationships.

### **Mental health**

- We are interested in Mental Health First Aid training as mental health affects many people in our communities.

### **Transportation services**

- This remains an important focus for our Council. After creating our own list of local community organizations providing transportation to medical appointments, the need for services remains in our area. We are committed to learning more about service options and opportunities to provide our input.

### **Council profile**

- We continue to build the profile of the HAC through our members within our communities, and partner with our AHS North Zone leaders and Community Engagement department.

### **Top issues identified in our region**

- We shared the top health concerns and opportunities within our Council area with the AHS Board, including:
  - seniors' health
  - addiction services
  - increasing security at rural sites
  - lack of physicians to meet the needs of the community
  - acute bed availability
  - enhanced care for rural communities
  - transportation
  - more prevention programs
  - wait times

## A look ahead

We look forward to ensuring our communities know who to contact when they have feedback about the health system, concerns and opportunities. To ensure this, we have been working to promote awareness of our Council.

One of our strategies is to hold a municipal leaders forum in the coming year, in the communities of Bonnyville and Smoky Lake. Local municipal leaders will be invited to meet with us and learn what we do, meet with local AHS zone representatives, learn about the AHS Health Plan and Business Plan, and about operational initiatives relative to the council area.

We would also like to use social media more to share awareness about our Council. We believe that the more of us that share information about meetings and events, the more people will become aware and interested in the role of our Council.

The AHS Board has asked for a prioritized list of challenges and opportunities in our area. We look forward to validating the list we developed this year to ensure it reflects the larger public perspectives. One of the key areas is access to addiction and mental health services. We look forward to working closely with AHS to gather the information and share it with the public in our Council area. Another priority we feel strongly about is that our community members must take accountability for their health. We want to work with AHS to gather key messages, data and stories that people can relate to so we can help them continue to develop healthy habits.

We look forward to learning more about Enhancing Care in the Community and the new rural transportation pilot project. We will be able to provide feedback to these initiatives from a community perspective. We know our communities well and can advise what will work and what may not.

We have a busy year ahead of us and we look forward to working closely with AHS. Together we can move mountains.

# Learn more

- Visit [ahs.ca](http://ahs.ca) and search Advisory Councils
- Email [lakelandcommunities@ahs.ca](mailto:lakelandcommunities@ahs.ca)
- Check out our Twitter and Facebook accounts, by searching AHS Advisory Councils

# 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](http://ahs.ca).
- Delivering a presentation at a Council meeting on a health area of interest or concern.
- Volunteering your time as a Council member. Recruitment drives happen annually. Members are appointed for three-year terms.



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