

# Lakeland Communities

## 2018 -19 Annual Report



Lakeland Communities  
Health Advisory Council

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

## Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

Alberta Health Services values Advisory Council members as volunteers, leaders and partners in healthcare 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 healthcare system – and they advise AHS on our planning, programs and services.



*Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn*

We have 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. We hope our departing members will continue to share their advice as members of the public and share their knowledge of the healthcare system.

This year, we added 23 new members to the Advisory Council family, and we also added a new Council. We were pleased to support and nurture the development of the Sexual Orientation Gender Identity & Expression (SOGIE) Provincial Advisory Council.

Members have made many contributions in their local areas, and you'll learn more about them in this report. Here are a few general examples from across the province over the past year:

- **Evolution of the Wisdom Council:** new Terms of Reference will guide the work of the Wisdom Council and includes creation of an Elder Circle which gives an enhanced role to Elders in helping to advise AHS on programs and services to best meet the needs of Indigenous people.
- **Connect Care:** a number of members have joined the patient advisory committees.
- **Supporting more addiction and mental health services:** many Councils held information sessions and highlighted the importance of services; their efforts helped support the development of Edmonton's new Access 24/7 Addiction and Mental Health Clinic and enhance awareness on services and access.
- **Expanding relationships:** connecting with the LGBTQ2S+ community through the new SOGIE PAC, meeting with municipal leaders, and holding meetings at Métis Settlements.
- **Connecting with Albertans through [Community Conversations](#):** Health Advisory Councils partnered with AHS to host 12 events across the province, where Albertans shared their views about challenges and solutions to healthcare issues.
- **Highlighting top concerns:** based on feedback from their communities, all Councils advised us on local concerns. AHS tracks and responds to concerns at each Council meeting.
- **Participation in Community Engagement Committee of the Board meetings:** various Council Chairs joined the conversation and shared ideas.

Member satisfaction is important to us, and it was gratifying to learn through the Annual Satisfaction Survey that our members are feeling generally satisfied in their roles. They've also said there's a need for more clarity on their role, and we're listening. We have begun work on an overarching Health Advisory Council review to address some of the gaps, and to ensure all our members fully understand their role.

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

Sincerely,

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

## Message from the Chair Lakeland Communities Health Advisory Council

On behalf of the Lakeland Communities Health Advisory Council I would like to provide you with a report of our 2018-2019 activities.

Our Council held five meetings in four communities – St. Paul, Athabasca, Smoky Lake, Elizabeth Métis Settlement and one meeting by Telehealth. We hosted two Municipal Leaders Forums in April 2018; one in Smoky Lake and one in Bonnyville, where we received lots of feedback from local community leaders on how we can help address gaps in services across Lakeland Communities region. We also partnered with Community Engagement to cohost a Community Conversation in Smoky Lake in January 2019. Here we heard what our community considers a success for healthcare in our area, and where they feel there is room for improvement.



*Patricia Palechuk*

We are quite active in our Council area and would like to ensure all our communities know their voices are being heard by Alberta Health Services. We are aware of the difficulties of recruiting health professionals to our rural areas. We're connected with AHS medical affairs who provide regular physician recruitment updates at our meetings, and several of our members are on local physician attraction and retention committees.

Council has put a lot of effort into a transportation resource list for our area as transportation remains a big concern for rural communities. We also heard from our communities that what services are available aren't well known to community members so we are working with AHS to raise awareness of several programs available in each community.

I would like to thank all our Council members for their efforts in helping improve the health of our communities. The work they do isn't always well-known so I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for everything they do! This includes reaching out to communities, attending meetings and events throughout the year, engaging with community leaders and organizations, all so we can help improve healthcare for everyone in Alberta. I would also like to thank AHS leadership who support our council continuously and all the great work they do to bring important updates to our area.

Sincerely,

Patricia Palechuk  
Chair, Lakeland Communities Health Advisory Council



## About Our Council

### 2018-2019 Council Members

#### Current Members

Patricia	Palechuk (Chair)	Smoky Lake
Robert	Deresh (Vice Chair)	Ardmore
David	Beale	Fort Kent
Glenn	Andersen	St. Paul
Brydon	Ward	Lac La Biche
Zicki	Eludin	Lac La Biche
DeAnne	Geleta	Athabasca
Parrish	Tung	Elk Point

#### Past Members

Mel	Smith	Redwater
Marvin	Fyten	Lac La Biche
Ahmad	Qayyum	Lac La Biche
Robert	Brassard	Cold Lake
Adriaan	Botha	St. Paul



*Back row left to right: Robert Deresh, Brydon Ward, Glenn Andersen*

*Front row left to right: Zicki Eludin, DeAnne Geleta, Pat Palechuk, Cindy Harmata (AHS)*

*Missing: David Beale, Parrish Tung*

## Promoting awareness of our Council

In working together to achieve the objectives in our work plan, we:

- Increased awareness of the Council among community leaders by hosting two municipal leaders meetings.
- Increased the awareness of the Council among community members by Council and our Chair attending numerous events in communities across the Council area.
- Increased visibility on social media.
- Added Indigenous representation on our Council through recruitment of a member from the Elizabeth Métis Settlement.
- Were invited to, and participated in, many community meetings and events including:
  - April 4: Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) meeting Smoky Lake
  - April 11/12: Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) Conference in Brooks
  - April 13: Teleconference with North Zone Health Advisory Council (HAC) Chairs
  - April 16: Municipal Leaders Forum in Smoky Lake, hosted by our Council
  - April 23: Municipal Leaders Forum in Bonnyville hosted by our Council
  - May 2: Alberta Council on Aging Annual General meeting
  - Oct 17: Bonnyville Seniors Wellness Fair
  - Oct 26: Meeting with North Zone leadership in Edmonton

We had representation from our Council Chair at the following events:

- June 21: North Zone Executive and Health Advisory Councils meeting in High Prairie
- September 27: Points West Living Opening in Lac La Biche
- October 1 – 3: Healthcare Volunteers Conference in Edmonton
- October 12: Bar V Nook Supportive Living Opening in Smoky Lake
- December 13: Council of Chairs meeting in Edmonton
- December 14: Wild Rose Villa Opening in Boyle



50

Municipal leaders attended the two municipal leader meetings hosted by Lakeland Communities Health Advisory Council in partnership with AHS North Zone Executive.

14

Number of events where our Council members participated

20

Members of the public attended our five Council meetings



## Listening to our communities and sharing information with AHS

We had a busy year with meetings, engagement activities, and municipal forums:

- We partnered with North Zone leadership and held two municipal leader forums in:
  - *Smoky Lake April 16 - 27* municipal leaders attended from the west half of the Council area. Our Chair shared information about Council and AHS North Zone Executive shared the priorities from the Health Plan and Business Plan. Municipal leaders raised the following questions about security at rural hospitals, EMS routes, primary care, dialysis, patient safety, use of telehealth to access specialists, Nurse Practitioners, and capacity at the psychiatry unit in St. Paul.
  - *Bonnyville April 23* – the event had 23 municipal leaders attend from municipalities located in the east half of the Council area. A similar format of the HAC and North Zone Executive sharing information was used. Municipal leaders raised the following: youth mental health navigator program, funding for transient populations, physician recruitment and retention, infrastructure, CT scanner hours in Cold Lake, use of ambulances, and the lack of Indigenous



- We held five public meetings. Some of the topics raised by community stakeholders included cannabis legislation, lab services at St. Paul seniors lodge, Connect Care, the Rural Transportation Pilot project, the AHS patient feedback line and re-establishing diagnostics in Vilna.
- Our members participate in other committees, including the Lac La Biche Health Foundation, Better Health, and the North Zone Primary Care Governance Committee.
- The Community Engagement Committee of the AHS Board expressed an interest in understanding the top health-related concerns from across the province. Our Council identified the following:
  - Availability and understanding of seniors health services in the area
  - More services for addictions required rurally
  - The lack of physical security for staff at rural and remote sites
  - The lack of physicians and specialists rurally increases wait times or travel
  - Acute bed availability reduce by long term care patients in the acute beds
  - A lack of understanding of Enhanced Care in the Community
  - A lack of transportation and a barrier to access to health services
  - A lack of physical therapy services in small communities
  - A need for increased access to mental health services
  - More Indigenous representation on Council

## Working with AHS to share information with our communities

North Zone leadership participated in our Council meetings, and provided us with timely and topical information on the workforce, capital projects, major events and initiatives. We appreciated receiving the written report each month so we could share factual information with our communities. A few examples of the information shared were:

- A Social Worker position was approved for Cold Lake
- Lab renovations were completed in Elk Point
- Bar V Nook supportive living complex opened in Smoky Lake
- The St. Paul Hospital Foundation Gala raised over \$80,000 for equipment
- Designs and plans continued for placement of a CT Scanner at Lac La Biche
- Three new Health Care Aide positions were created for Thorhild/Redwater area
- Planning for the 2018/2019 influenza immunization campaign was shared
- Two Edmonton psychiatrists began providing a Children and Adolescent Tele-Psychiatry program in November 2018 to the North Zone
- Mental health workshops were offered in St. Paul for a 10 week period
- A security upgrade to the Athabasca Healthcare Centre was completed

We also requested presentations on topics of interest to the Council and our communities throughout the year, including:

- Physical Therapy
- Bonnyville Opioid Dependency Program
- The role of cancer navigators
- Enhancing Care in the Community
- Emergency Medical Services
- A tour of the inpatient psychiatry unit in St. Paul to receive accurate information about capacity, which was shared with the public

### Community Conversation January 21 - Smoky Lake

45 people attended the event representing government, municipalities, school divisions, First Nations, Métis Settlements and Family and Community Support Services offices in our Council area. Participants discussed healthcare successes, identified top healthcare challenges and considered existing and new community partnerships to address the challenges. Key suggestions included more partnerships with industry, schools and governments; more collaboration between ministries; and sharing resources. Evaluations indicated there was an increased understanding of AHS' focus on wellness, prevention and community care. A report was shared back with attendees and with North Zone leadership for review and consideration in their operational plan.



## A look ahead

We have developed a robust work plan for 2019/2020. We plan to promote awareness of the Council by increasing visibility at various events, partnering with AHS and learning more about AHS programs and services.

We plan to improve the number of public attendance at our meetings by:

- Hosting our meetings in a different community each time, asking our members in those communities to work hard at spreading the word about our meeting. We want the public and stakeholders with interest in health to come out and share feedback with us.
- Continuing to invite community stakeholders to the meetings including the municipal governments, local First Nations, Family and Community Health Services (FCSS), Chambers of Commerce, Healthcare Auxiliaries and Foundations.
- Promoting our meetings each time through the use of traditional media and social media. We will hold one of our meetings at a Métis Settlement and encourage local residents to attend.

We also want to learn more from the Lakeland Primary Care Network. We plan to invite them to a meeting to learn more about rural health service delivery options.

We had a good turnout for our municipal leaders meetings last year; however, we would like to target the general public this year with information sessions. We heard some great information from Dr. Lewanczuk this past year about Enhancing Care in the Community (ECC) that supports more community-based health services. We want to partner with AHS to share information about ECC as we feel it is important for communities to hear about it. We want to play a role in promoting people to stay in their home longer and for organizations in communities to work together to make this happen. We want to host two sessions this year – in Lac La Biche and in another community.

We want to:

- Partner with AHS on other topics of interest, like learning more about the Opioid Dependency Program in Bonnyville.
- Support AHS public health to promote and increase the number of immunizations in the Council area.
- Help share information out to the communities about Seniors' and Continuing Care programs and services.
- Have a presentation about security upgrades at the facilities in our Council area, and share accurate information about it with our communities.
- Hear more about the Children and Adolescent Tele-Psychiatry program that began in November 2018 to the North Zone that is hoped to fill a void in service delivery.
- Invite Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to a meeting to learn more about non urgent transportation as one component of the ongoing concern with rural transportation.
- Hear regular updates at Council of Chairs about the Ministry of Transportation rural transportation pilot project. With transportation being a barrier to health, we hope the issue of the lack of transportation across rural Alberta can be resolved.

We look forward to the upcoming year and accomplishing the plans we have in place.

# Learn more

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

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



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