

# Oldman River

## 2019-20 Annual Report



Oldman River  
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 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, Community Engagement Committee of the Board

## Message from the Chair, Oldman River Health Advisory Council

I am pleased to present my Chairman's comments from the Oldman River Health Advisory Council (ORHAC) as we come to the end of the 2019-2020 operating year. This has been a year like none other in Council's experience, and a significant number of changes have occurred.



*Brad Gillespie*

We had several of our members complete their terms, including a group of founding members who had been with ORHAC since its inception. Sincerest congratulations and best wishes to Emma Hult, Lorraine Neal, Dick Burnham, Clifford Elle, Wilma Mulder and Fred Bosma. On behalf of Council and on a personal note, I would like to say thank you for your contributions. I would also like to express appreciation and gratitude to other completing members.

Sincerely,

Brad Gillespie  
Chair, Oldman River Health Advisory Council

## Who we are

The Oldman River Health Advisory Council (ORHAC) is comprised of up to 15 volunteer members who reside in the geographic [region](#) surrounding Lethbridge. Visit us online for a full list of [membership](#).



*L-R: Brad Gillespie, Kim Schaaf, Jim Bennett, Doug Thornton, Chad Beck, Fred Bosma, Laura Nelson  
Missing: Brian Hammond, Henry Heinen, Carolyn Simonis*

## Highlights

### Presentations

- Addiction & Mental Health Assessment
- Harm Reduction
- Virtual Health Initiatives
- Seniors Health Quality

### Involvement in Community Groups

- Rotary Club of Raymond
- Parent Advisory Committee for the Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corp Kainai #2384
- Executive Member - Blood Tribe Police Association
- County of Warner
- Hutterite Colonies

### Location of Public Meetings

- Lethbridge, Pincher Creek, Milk River & virtually
- 20 members of the public attended

## Key achievements of 2019-20

The ORHAC accomplished many of the goals outlined in its 2019-2020 Work Plan. We met regularly, with a focus on moving our meetings around the Oldman River region. This allowed members to more fully experience and appreciate operations beyond the City of Lethbridge. It also encouraged greater public participation, welcoming Albertans from across the region, leading to the recruitment of two new members from the communities of Lethbridge and Raymond.

Several members attended the Annual Advisory Council Fall Forum in Edmonton. Here, they provided feedback on the future direction of Health Advisory Councils (HAC 2.0) and participated in diverse information sessions, including a Blanket Ceremony. The Forum gave members the opportunity to network with their counterparts across the province and hear directly from various AHS leaders and Board members.

Council met in Milk River in May and in Pincher Creek in September. Many members of the community attended and provided a local perspective on a number of factors that influence community residents with respect to their health.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Council was introduced to a new means of virtual meeting via the Zoom platform. We provided feedback to the Virtual Health team on improving the users' virtual health experience.

Each of our public meetings includes informative health-related presentations. They provide an opportunity for learning about new initiatives and for sharing within our communities. Insights were provided to our Council on the following topics:

- Addiction and Mental Health – an in-depth synopsis of the types of resources and services in the South Zone
- Harm Reduction Services
- Pincher Creek Mayor, Don Anderberg, provided an overview of the services in Pincher Creek
- Windy Slopes Foundation shared the initiatives the Foundation is working on

We provided feedback from our communities to AHS on many health-related topics. Highlights include:

- Connect Care
- Improving Virtual Health Session Experience
- Home Care, Continuing Care Program for Seniors

Topics that had us talking also had the media asking, 'What does a Health Advisory Council do?' In September, Bridge City News interviewed Council Chair Brad Gillespie, for a story highlighting the work of the Oldman River Health Advisory Council. In addition, public can get to know more about our members by visiting us online at the '[meet our members](#)' page on the AHS website. Former member Chad Beck was featured in February 2020.

## A look ahead

As we strive to meet and engage local residents there will be continued focus on holding meetings around the ORHAC geographic area. We are excited to host two community events, one in January and one in May of 2021. These events will focus on engaging the public on health topics of interest.

Two public HAC meetings are scheduled and will be held in communities in the Oldman River area. This will allow for public attendance and sharing of insights into local health care services. We will also hear from presenters or local stakeholders on topics of interest to the Council and community.

The year ahead will also include:

- Member attendance at local community events to increase awareness of the Health Advisory Council
- Increasing connections with local Indigenous communities – invite to HAC meetings as well as recruitment of Indigenous members to Council
- Increasing public attendance and participation at HAC meetings through connections made at community events, promotion and invitations to local stakeholders
- Continued recruitment to fill vacancies on Council. With a focus on rural areas in and around Lethbridge, we seek new representation from the Vauxhall, Taber, Milk River, Coutts, Blairmore, Coleman, Bellevue, Furman area. See page six for information on how to apply.

Our community partners in health are key stakeholder groups we'll continue building relationships with. These include Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), and local health foundations. In addition, local Mayors and Reeves, Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and other local community groups are welcome to attend our public meetings.

*We rely on our HAC members to keep us informed on what is occurring in our communities that relate to health, and for advice on how to approach health care system challenges that affect our community members. The HAC's are extremely valuable to the health care system.*

Dr. Katherine Chubbs  
Chief Zone Officer, South Zone

Advisory Councils act in an advisory capacity to Alberta Health Services (AHS) as we share feedback with AHS leadership from our communities about health services. We hold public meetings at locations throughout our geography and participate in engagement activities that further contribute to health services in Alberta.

## Learn more

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

✉ [oldmanriver@ahs.ca](mailto:oldmanriver@ahs.ca)

☎ 1.877.275.8830

Check us out on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or 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](https://ahs.ca)
- Delivering a presentation at a Council meeting on a health area of interest or concern
- Provide input on various healthcare topics online, at [Together4Health](#)
- Apply to [become a member](#). Members are appointed for three-year terms.



Oldman River  
Health Advisory Council

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