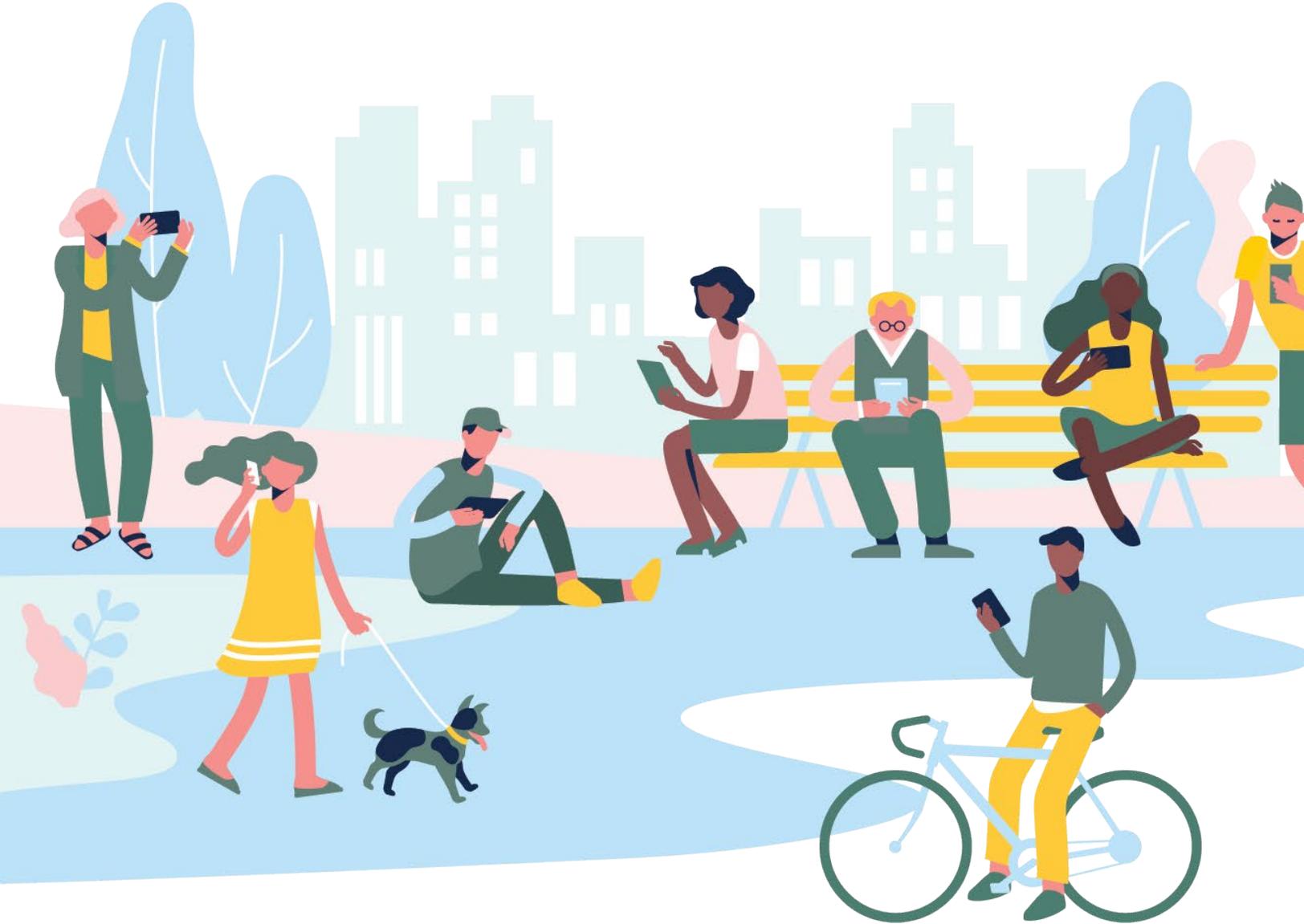


Oldman River

2021-22 Annual Report

(July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)





Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors



Vicki Yellow Old Woman

It's been another remarkable year for health services in Alberta. While the COVID-19 pandemic carried on, vaccines became available which has been monumental in slowing the spread of the virus and preventing severe illness. Through it all, AHS Advisory Councils remained connected with their communities and have demonstrated an incredible spirit of volunteerism through their engagement activities.

Through Advisory Councils, AHS has received feedback on a number of important initiatives which are outlined in each of these reports. We are grateful for the involvement of our Councils in advising AHS on a range of matters of importance to all Albertans.

On behalf of the AHS Board, I extend my sincerest gratitude to all Advisory Council members for continuing to foster relationships with stakeholders across Alberta. These grassroots connections have been vital to AHS' ability to make well-rounded decisions on health services that impact so many of us. Your commitment is greatly appreciated and we look forward to the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Vicki Yellow Old Woman,
Chair, Community Engagement Committee, AHS Board



Message from the Chair, Oldman River Health Advisory Council



Doug Thornton

The Oldman River Health Advisory Council (ORHAC) has completed another successful year hosting meetings with engaging AHS presentations on health-related topics of interest, along with an engagement event that focused on telling the story of [Greg's Wings: Falling Through the Cracks](#).

Council members participated in several engaging health-related discussions with zone leadership and AHS this past year. One included the shortage of medical doctor's in our area. Through diligent work of leadership and the Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), the area has since seen an uptake in the number of doctors interested in living and working in our beautiful part of the province. As well, EMS service has undergone close scrutiny and we hope changes that have been made, and changes yet to be proposed, will have a positive effect on this very important service for all of us.

ORHAC welcomed new members from the communities of Hill Spring, Milk River and Coutts.

Sincerely,

Doug Thornton
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 [area](#) surrounding Lethbridge. Members of Council in 2021-22 were:

Doug Thornton (Chair)	Lethbridge
Jim Bennett (Vice Chair)	Raymond
David Anderson*	Hill Spring
Colleen Bianchi*	Coutts
Debra Gazeley**	Lethbridge
Brad Gillespie	Lethbridge
Brian Hammond	Pincher Creek
Henry Heinen	Picture Butte
Vicki Koersen	Taber
Stephanie Leavitt	Lethbridge
Betty Ann Little Wolf	Fort MacLeod
Ann Michaelis*	Milk River
Laura Nelson	Raymond
Carolyn Simonis**	Lethbridge
Stuart Wright	Raymond

*Appointed to Council in 2021-22.

**Term completed in 2021-22.

Visit us online for a full list of [membership](#).



*Top L-R: Laura Nelson, Vicky Koersen, Jim Bennett, Stephanie Leavitt
Bottom L-R: David Anderson, Doug Thornton, Colleen Bianchi*



Key achievements of 2021-22

The ORHAC focused their meetings and events this year on the health topics of interest outlined in the councils three year Commitments Plan. Building on the HAC’s public awareness within the community, they hosted three meetings and one community engagement events successfully using virtual engagement tools to interact with the public on health-related issues and concerns, providing them up to date information from the experts. With the addition of three new council members, Council continues to grow its reach into rural communities to ensure the entire zone and the perspectives of the community are well represented.



Community concerns shared with AHS included:

- Access to addictions and mental health supports
- Physician recruitment and retention
- Impacts of COVID-19 on the community
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)



Council engaged with AHS on topics that included:

- AHS South Zone Leadership hosted a welcome to all South Zone Municipal Leaders
- Recruitment Strategy and Rural Engagement
- AHS Ethics & Compliance review and update of AHS’ Code of Conduct
- Virtual Care in AHS: goals of virtual care and ideas for achieving them
- College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) Virtual Regional Tours
- Grateful Patients consultation with AHS Foundation Relations
- The impact of COVID-19 on Alberta family caregivers
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) listening sessions



AHS Community Engagement held its annual Advisory Council Forum in May 2022. The event was held in Edmonton over two days. Themed as [‘Building Bridges’](#), sessions included AHS experts speaking about Opioid Resources, Allyship, Virtual Health, Indigenous Health & the Power of Community Assets.

AHS Presentations

- ❖ Cancer Screenings
- ❖ Together4Health.ca

Public/Community Engagement Presentations

- ❖ Greg’s Wings
- ❖ Wellspring Cancer Services
- ❖ Rural Mental Health Project – Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)



A look ahead

The ORHAC continues to stay focused on raising awareness of who the Council is, while also remaining committed to raising awareness of health-related matters in the south zone.

The Council remains focused on educating community stakeholders and ensuring community questions related to immediate health related concerns are address by zone leadership.

Council is committed to five key areas and will continue to highlight these topics in upcoming meetings and planned engagement events:

- **Seniors Health and Continuing Care:** Council will partner with AHS' Seniors Health to host an engagement event and listen to the needs of the community and gather feedback, while raising awareness of the HAC.
- **Addiction and Mental Health:** In collaboration with partners, Council will learn more about the mental health needs of communities to share with AHS South Zone leadership.
- **Rural Health:** Council will partner with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), and Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to promote local resources. Council will also encourage discussion about available addiction and mental health resources offered in rural areas.
- **Indigenous Health:** Council will strive to ensure Indigenous voices are invited into the healthcare conversation at meetings and engagement events.
- **Virtual Health:** Council will engage the community to understand the benefits and challenges of making virtual health a permanent resource for patients.

Council will continue to value and grow partnerships in health. Partnerships with organizations like RhPAP, Primary Care Networks (PCN), and local health foundations are invaluable.



As our world adjusts to living through a pandemic, our HAC members continue to share the views and perceptions of the residents in the communities they represent. We greatly appreciate the perspective they bring, and their input assists us in addressing concerns, sharing information and shaping the priorities within the communities of the South Zone. The HACs continue to provide valuable input to AHS to support the delivery of healthcare services.

Linda Iwasiw

Chief Zone Officer, South Zone

Dr. Aaron Low

Zone Medical Director, South Zone

Advisory Council members share advice and feedback from their communities with AHS. Councils hold public meetings and engagement activities virtually or in locations throughout their geographic area that further contribute to improving healthcare services in Alberta.

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.
- 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.

Learn more

Visit ahs.ca/advisorycouncils

✉ oldmanriver@ahs.ca

☎ 1.877.275.8830

Check us out on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or by searching AHS Advisory Councils.

