

# Tamarack

## 2016/17 Annual Report



## Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors

The health system belongs to over four million Albertans and, as such, their voices need to be heard — and considered — when Alberta Health Services is planning and making decisions about healthcare delivery. Our Health Advisory Councils, Provincial Advisory Councils and Wisdom Council bring the diverse voices of Albertans to the decision-making table, so health services can meet the unique needs of communities across the province.

Our councils are made up of people who are passionate about understanding what's working and where improvements can be made in how health services are delivered in their communities. Advisory councils demonstrate our true commitment to community engagement — their work is strategic and valued, shaping the future of healthcare and enhancing care in communities.



*Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn*

There was much growth over the past year. It was a year of renewed commitment from Alberta Health Services to ensure councils act as the voices of their communities, supported by extensive recruitment to strengthen the reach and diversity of council members. For the first time, Council Chairs collaborated to share their priorities and identify similar priorities across the province. This approach was valuable and created synergies and linkages between councils across Alberta. At the same time, the collaboration between councils also showed how their priorities clearly aligned with Alberta Health Services' strategic approach and how we are all working towards the same, very important goals.

On behalf of the Alberta Health Services Board of Directors, our leadership team and our workforce, I want to thank you for being our partners. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with councils and the strategic value they offer.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn  
Vice Chair, Board of Directors  
Chair, Community Engagement Committee of the Board  
Alberta Health Services

## About community engagement

Alberta Health Services is committed to meaningful and authentic community engagement. Engaging with Albertans means patients, families and members of the public contribute to healthcare solutions and the betterment of our system. They can benefit by having their needs reflected in planning and decision making. Engagement aligns with the Alberta Health Services culture of caring and listening, which results in more patient-centred care, local decision making and more open and trusting relationships.

## Role of advisory councils

Alberta Health Services values advisory council members as volunteers, leaders and partners in healthcare planning. They help build a stronger relationship between the people in their communities and those who work in the health system.

Members of Health Advisory Councils, Provincial Advisory Councils, and Wisdom Council are Albertans who care about health of their communities, and are connected to the public in many different ways. They provide a grassroots perspective and an understanding of their communities' health needs, and they're interested in listening to the people. They also:



- share their communities' priorities with Alberta Health Services
- give advice and help to inform the decision-making process
- host public advisory council meetings, in addition to promoting and participating in activities that enhance Albertans' health
- engage with and share information with the community, and follow up on commitments
- give feedback on public education materials, policies, or discussion topics
- share information on health services with the community and provide feedback and input to Alberta Health Services

Councils attend the annual Advisory Councils' Fall Forum to hear a variety of presentations and network with fellow council members, Alberta Health Services staff and members of the Board of Directors.

The Health Advisory Councils and the Provincial Advisory Councils are supported by the Alberta Health Services Community Engagement department, and report through the Council of Chairs to the Community Engagement Committee of the Alberta Health Services Board of Directors. The Wisdom Council reports to the AHS President and CEO.

## **12** Health Advisory Councils

Bring the voices of Alberta communities to healthcare services.  
Each council represents a geographical area within the province.

## **2** Provincial Advisory Councils

Advise on provincewide services and programs for addiction and mental health, and cancer.

## **1** Wisdom Council

Provides guidance and recommendations to ensure Alberta Health Services develops and implements culturally appropriate and innovative health service delivery for Indigenous Peoples.

Albertans are represented by 12 Health Advisory Councils. Areas are determined by population and travel routes, and are detailed on [this map](#).

The two Provincial Advisory Councils and Wisdom Council operate provincially. Their membership spans all of Alberta.

[View map of treaty areas and indigenous communities in Alberta](#)

For more information on membership:

[Health Advisory Councils](#)

[Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council](#)

[Cancer Provincial Advisory Council](#)

[Wisdom Council](#)



## Council of Chairs

The Council of Chairs is made up of all advisory council Chairs, who meet five times a year to further the roles, responsibilities, and priorities of councils at a provincial level. The Council of Chairs determines themes or commonalities across different communities to bring forward to Alberta Health Services' leadership and Board of Directors.

## Including the public voice in Alberta Health Services planning

In early 2016, Alberta Health Services' Strategic Planning Department met with Health Advisory Councils across the province to gather input for the [2017 - 2020 Health and Business Plan](#). Each council was asked to provide feedback on the plan to ensure the priorities of their communities were considered in the development of the strategic goals for the organization.

Members from various Health Advisory Councils participated in the following provincial committees:

- Apple Magazine Editorial Council
- Continuing Care Quality Committee
- [Health Link](#) and [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](#)
- Patient First Steering Committee
- Patient and Family Advisory Council
- Long range planning

## Message from the Chair, Tamarack Health Advisory Council

The Tamarack Health Advisory Council looks for opportunities for community members to provide feedback. As a council we encourage community members to approach their local representative or join a meeting of the council to share their thoughts on healthcare. The community voice and perspective is important to Alberta Health Services and the council is a great channel for sharing that voice.

Members from across council boundaries have engaged with their communities to gather feedback on healthcare service delivery in Alberta. Council members have attended local community events, invited members of the public to attend meetings, and met with community members to share feedback and input with Alberta Health Services.



*Ruth Martin-Williams*

Tamarack Health Advisory Council has gained some new members over the last year and we look forward to the perspective and expertise they bring. Thank you to all of our members for the time you've dedicated to the work of council. Your passion for healthcare and the communities you represent is appreciated and drives the work we do.

Sincerely,

Ruth Martin-Williams, Chair  
Tamarack Health Advisory Council

## About us

### 2016 -2017 Council Members

#### Current Members

Ruth	Martin-Williams (Chair)	Edson
Denise	Lambert (Vice Chair)	Onoway
Gary	Beeson	Swan Hills
Maryann	Chichak	Whitecourt
Debra	Hagman	Mayerthorpe
Douglas	Hein	Hinton
Christie	Homeniuk	Whitecourt
Sherry	Jeffreys	Sangudo
Garry	Lorenz	Westlock
Sheila	McKeand	Hinton
Daniel	Pritchard	Blue Ridge

#### Past Members

Gail	Dunn	Hinton
Roger	Manuel	Barrhead
Randy	Smith	Hinton



*Council members gather with Health Minister and AHS leadership for Edson hospital opening*

#### Topics on the minds of our council and community members:

- Indigenous health services
- Renal dialysis services and accessibility
- Proactive screening and harm-reduction measures
- Capital projects
- Recruitment and retention of medical professionals

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public meetings were held in Jasper, Barrhead, Sandy Beach and Hinton; meetings helped increased visibility and community engagement



## What we are proud of

### Engaging with the public

- Attendance at the spring 2016 Swan Hills Health Fair - we helped raise council awareness, share information on available health services, and connected with local citizens.
- Letter sent on behalf of council to the Kimanow Atoskanow Foundation – the letter was in support of the “In Good Health” project, a joint venture with Northern Alberta Community Alliance, HIV North and a number of the friendship centres across Alberta, and reflects a combined funding model for a variety of services for Indigenous peoples.

### Providing feedback and advice to Alberta Health Services

- May 2016 council meeting – the Quadruple Aim Balanced Scorecard approach was shared by Alberta Health Services North Zone Strategic Planning Department. Council was given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback which was incorporated into the plan.
- In August 2016, Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Carl Amrhein, and Alberta Health Services President and CEO, Dr. Verna Yiu, joined council members on a tour of the new Edson Healthcare Centre while it was still under construction. Our Chair also attended the official opening in November 2016.
- Council was hosted at the Kimamow Atoskanow Foundation in Sandy Beach, and heard an update on the services provided for Indigenous individuals in the community. They shared public feedback and concerns with council and Alberta Health Services leaders.

### Enhancing the health of community members

- 2016 International Aids Conference in Durban South Africa – our Vice-Chair shared experience and learnings with the council and provided information on international prevention and treatment initiatives.
- May 2016 council meeting in Jasper:
  - Alberta Health Services shared a presentation on the steps taken by North Zone Comprehensive Cancer Prevention & Screening Program. The project will focus on the improvement of cancer prevention and screening for major cancers and population groups throughout the north.
  - HIV West Yellowhead shared an update on their organization and the work they do in the community. This non-profit association in Hinton is dedicated to creating supportive environments for those at risk, infected and affected by HIV/ AIDs, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Hepatitis C Virus. Council understands the importance of promoting early detection through proactive screening and increasing community awareness of available services, treatments and support.
- March 2017 meeting in Hinton - council heard an informative presentation from the Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Goals and Employment Society (BRIDGES), and learned about various events and the services offered. This society provides a safe space for everyone in the community of Hinton with a focus on whole person care in the treatment of mental health and the journey to mental wellness.

### Key learnings

- Updates on key initiatives from Alberta Health Services North Zone leaders through the year provided council members an opportunity to share information with communities and bring forward public questions and feedback.
- The in-depth presentation on the North Zone Comprehensive Cancer Prevention and Screening helped increase councils' understanding of the importance of harm reduction, screening and early detection.

## A look ahead

We believe in the impact we have as a council and will continue working with our rural and urban friends, family, neighbours and Alberta Health Services to advise on community health promotion, priorities, and projects.

- Promotion of addiction and mental health services in council area. This includes access to services for community members, access and availability of services for youth and access to programs like mental health first aid.
- Advocating for access to all kinds of care and access to the right service, at the right place, at the right time for the communities in the Tamarack area. Council has started to theme all upcoming meetings around health services and programs relevant to each community's needs.
- Responding to emerging issues in our communities in partnership with Alberta Health Services and zone leadership. Health Advisory Councils often work with Alberta Health Services to address emerging issues in the community by engaging community members to understand concerns, and getting feedback on various aspects of health services and service delivery.
- Recruitment and retention of medical professionals in Tamarack communities. Council hopes to work with the Rural Physician Action Plan (RPAP), Alberta Health Services Talent Management, and Physician Resource personnel to advise on strategies for the recruitment and retention of health professionals. This would include sharing the strengths of Tamarack communities to encourage prospective health professionals to consider the area as a work location.
- Improvement of long term and continuing care services and awareness of the services in Tamarack communities.

# Get involved

Think of the difference you can make to the health and well-being of your family, friends, neighbours and community by sharing your thoughts and ideas with Alberta Health Services. Get involved:

- Attend an upcoming [Health Advisory Council meeting](#).
- [Make a presentation at a council meeting](#) on a health area of interest or concern.
- Think about volunteering your time as a council member. Recruitment drives happen annually. Members are appointed for three-year terms.

Connect with us:

- [Info on Community Engagement](#)
- [tamarack@ahs.ca](mailto:tamarack@ahs.ca)
- [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)