



Yellowhead East Meeting Summary

May 20, 2020/ 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. / Zoom

Introducing your Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council members:

In attendance: Cyndy Heslin (Chair), Sarah Hissett (Vice-Chair), Lesley Binning, John Erkelens, Deborah McMann

Alberta Health Services: Sherie Allen, Maya Atallah, Leanne Grant, Deb Okrainetz, Janice Stewart

Regrets: Stephanie Munro, Glenys Reeves, Taneen Rudyk

Community Input

Two community members from Vegreville shared their experience with the Century Park Continuing Care site in Vegreville. There are concerns about staff shortages and the quality of care administered. With the [AHS Review](#) underway it's a good time to consider where improvements can be made. In particular, they referenced recommendation 21 - 'reconsider long-term care (LTC) facility ownership in cases where private delivery may be more efficient and appropriate,' and how this might not be in the best interest of residents.

Colleen Lindholm, Rural Community Consultant with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) shared information on upcoming events. RhPAP is monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic but plans to move forward with its bi-annual conference on October 6-8, 2020. This year's conference, "Put on your Perspectacles: Looking through the rural lens," will focus on rural health provider attraction and retention. More details on conference content, accommodations and registration will be shared during Alberta Rural Health Week, May 25-29, 2020. Colleen shared more on the Alberta Rural Health Week and encouraged Council to visit the RhPAP [website](#) for ideas to show appreciation for all rural health care providers. Council members are encouraged to share any appreciation for local health care providers with the hashtag #RuralHealthMatters.

Action: Sherie Allen and Deb Okrainetz offered to take the Century Park site conversation offline. The community members' contact has been shared with Sherie and Deb to follow up with.

Central Zone Update

Janice Stewart, Chief Zone Officer, Central Zone, shared there continues to be an open discussion between AHS and physicians who have indicated their request to withdraw services from AHS sites. Sundre is the only town physicians have withdrawn services; other physicians in Central Zone are committed to assisting with the COVID-19 response and will make a decision after. AHS is on coverage and recruitment in areas that were underserved before COVID.

Sherie Allen, Senior Operating Officer, North Central Zone, provided the following update:

- Central Zone continues to lead in its COVID-19 response and has the least amount of cases reported.
- There was an outbreak on April 20 at the Pioneer Lodge in Lloydminster. AHS and the Saskatchewan Health Authority have worked great together to ensure the outbreak remains under control.
- All area directors and site managers in Central Zone have ensured beds are ready for COVID-19 patients, as well, are tasked with creating work plans for treating patients in-place while maintaining



care for non-COVID patients, safely. This capacity planning was very well done as the goal was to secure 300 beds and 400 were made vacant.

- 60 long-term care patients were placed into LTC spaces in the community. AHS is monitoring staffing levels at these partner sites since the order on single-site employment for LTC and Designated Supportive Living (DSL) was implemented.
- Red Deer Regional Hospital will see more patients requiring ventilators. To create the needed space programs such as rehabilitation units have been safely moved to other sites in Central Zone. Rehabilitation patients will be moved to Two Hills or Ponoka.

Debora Okrainetz, Area Director, shared the following:

- Surgical services will increase in Central Zone while ensuring all pandemic precautions are followed.
- Vegreville has not fully implemented the single-site employment order since the site is currently experiencing staffing shortages.
- Vermilion is getting a new physician; Two Hills is recruiting for a new physician.
- Work is underway at LTC and DSL sites pertaining to accountability for the provision of quality care. Essential service workers have been hired to ease workload of health aides; they are also informing recruitment. Alberta Health has been reviewing AHS sites and AHS is following up on the recommendations.

Leanne Grant, Area Director, shared the following:

- Viking and Daysland don't have long-term care beds on-site, as a way to protect that high-risk group.
- Endocrinology and day surgeries will be relaunched soon.
- Placement of seniors in hospitals into long-term care sites has been very successful.
- Tofield has a new female physician; Viking is recruiting for a new physician.

Council Member Roundtable & Good News

Sarah Hissett shares that Dr. Beverly Brilz of Wainwright was named the recipient of the 2020 RhPAP Rhapsody Physician Award. She also shared that the Wainwright and District Community Health Foundation has received donations from memorials mostly due to COVID-19. Sarah appreciates the COVID-19 updates and now that they're sent on weekends she suggests including weekend statistics on Mondays.

John Erkelens shares that after the announcement to relaunch opening the province, some people in Lloydminster are behaving as though the pandemic is over. There is concern this behaviour could lead to an increase in COVID-19 cases.

Lesley Binning shares her and Mary Lou Henderson from the Seniors & Continuing Care Provincial Advisory Council presented about the Health Advisory Councils to the Rotary of Camrose in May. There were 27 people in attendance and the connection helped to build more awareness in the community on who the Health Advisory Council is and what it does.



Deborah McMann shares the community of Innisfree has come together during the pandemic and created a community garden. The garden has been a help with folks' physical and mental health.

Cyndy Heslin shares the community of Tofield is excited for its new physician, Dr. Racha Sabha. She also shares the Tofield and Area Health Foundation is not holding its annual thank you BBQ for healthcare providers, due to the pandemic. Instead, it sent baked goods and thank you cards to nurses at local hospitals during Alberta Rural Health Week. On May 14 Tofield and area's fire departments, ambulance, RCMP, and peace officers participated in the Frontline Workers Appreciation Drive-By. Cyndy echoed John's concern that with the relaunch, community members are behaving as though the pandemic is over.

Council is working to recruit new members. Anyone interested in applying can do so through the [AHS website](#). The next meeting of the Yellowhead East HAC is scheduled for October 15, 2020, at 5 p.m. through Zoom. For more information contact community.engagement@ahs.ca or visit the [AHS website](#).

Learn about the four organizational goals of AHS in the [2017-2020 AHS Health Plan and Business Plan](#).

Join us in changing the conversation from [illness to wellness](#).

Our meetings are open to the public. Dates and locations are [available here](#). [Find your Health Advisory Council here](#). Visit the [webpage](#) for more info.

Contact us at: YellowheadEast@ahs.ca
Call: 1-877-275-8830.