

Greater Edmonton

2020-21 Annual Report





Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors



Vicki Yellow Old Woman

Since my appointment to the AHS Board in the fall of 2020, it has been my pleasure to become familiar with the work of the Advisory Councils. By all accounts, Councils have persevered through the COVID-19 pandemic and have found success in connecting with stakeholders as they adapted to virtual meetings well through 2021.

Advisory Councils continue to be tremendous partners in health. They have been instrumental as a conduit of information from AHS to local communities, a task of particular importance during an extraordinary period of time. Through innovation and determination, each Council has remained committed to its role of advising AHS, and to bringing forward the voices of their communities.

I look forward to working with Advisory Councils in the years ahead and watching as they continue to evolve. Thank you to each member for your ongoing dedication to improving health services for all Albertans.

Sincerely,

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



Message from the Chair, Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council



Floyd House

Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council (GEHAC) has had a remarkable year as we've all felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We, along with those of you across the province, have had to navigate a changing world. So, what does this mean? We had to adapt to the way we do our business, we continued to work for Albertans on a few different fronts, be we did so in a virtual environment. Unfortunately, we were unable to physically attend events as we normally would, but this did not stall our participation and communication with AHS Zone leadership or the communities.

We heard about the importance of Seniors' care, Mental Health in this COVID world, at-risk and vulnerable populations, and the many shortcomings in these areas, we acknowledge many are carried over concerns from years past but have been re-highlighted during these trying times of a pandemic.

I want you to know we hear this, we see this, and we have been working hard to ensure the voices of the community are heard by the AHS Zone leadership over this past year. We look forward to doing more for Albertans and being their voices as we move forward with our Council activities.

Sincerely,

Floyd House
Chair, Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council



Who we are

The Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council (GEHAC) is comprised of up to 15 volunteer members who reside in the geographic [area](#) including and surrounding the city of Edmonton. Visit us online for a full list of [membership](#).



Top L-R: Fahim Hassan, Floyd House, Harman Kahlon, Jahnavel Schez Noguez, Janice Willier, Kailey Schmidt
Bottom L-R: Nick Polturak, Rume Djebah, Shakib Rahman, Sharon Brintnell, Shirley Munro, Towunmi (Priscilla) Coker
Missing: Nazret Russon



Highlights



Presentations

- Edmonton Zone Healthcare Plan
- Senior’s Health during COVID-19
- New South Edmonton Hospital
- Coping with Social Isolation



Public Participation

- 6 community members attended regular HAC meetings
- 155 community members attended community engagement events



Key achievements of 2020-21

The 2020-21 year was an interesting one for GEHAC as we experienced great change and success. While COVID-19 shifted the way we met, many constructive conversations continued between us, the public, and AHS.



Under the new Health Advisory Council model – HAC 2.0 – Councils co-designed two virtual Community Conversations for their communities on topics of relevance: seniors health and mental health. GEHAC hosted the first ever community event under the new HAC 2.0 model. It was very well received by attendees and proved a great learning opportunity for developing other Council events across the province.



In September we collaborated with AHS to co-host a virtual panel discussion on AHS' Response to Seniors Health during COVID-19 in the Greater Edmonton area. 80 members of the community attended. The event outlined the impact the pandemic has had on the care of seniors at facilities and continuing care sites and included information on current public health orders.



In February we co-hosted our second virtual community conversation on coping with social isolation, where we learned about building resiliency and supporting communities. AHS experts in psychiatry and addictions and mental health presented to 81 community members and AHS representatives. The event provided tools for coping including how to access mental health services that may be beneficial during the pandemic.



Council received ongoing COVID-19 updates throughout the year and we were pleased to attend a virtual COVID-19 Community Conversation for the Edmonton Zone. Here, we discussed experiences with testing sites and received resources for sharing within our networks.



The input provided by Council has helped AHS to better understand community-based perspectives and equipped AHS leaders to provide reassurance to patients and the public, to begin rebuilding confidence where it's needed, and to improve relationships at a grassroots level. GEHAC participated in the following:

- Focus group on facility-based continuing care
- Emergency Medical Services listening session
- Homecare redesign recommendations
- [Naming of a new healthcare building](#) in the Edmonton Zone
- AHS' web team engagement "Finding My Way," to help provide insight on user experience via mock-up designs
- Submitted a letter to the AHS Board regarding concerns with Continuing Care.
- Held seats on the Edmonton Zone Healthcare Planning Core Committee



2020 saw the terms of some original and long-standing members of the Council come to an end. Four new members were appointed in 2020 and bring additional diversity to Council. We were pleased to welcome Harman Kahlon, Kailey Schmidt, Rume Djebah, and Towunmi (Priscilla) Coker.



A look ahead



In the year ahead, Council will focus on connecting with community partners in our Zone as we plan for meetings and engagement events in 2021-22. We will continue encouraging community members to attend and share insights on healthcare services in their community. This will also be an opportunity to hear from health experts and local stakeholders on topics of interest.

Council will co-host two community events in collaboration with AHS. Community stakeholders will be invited to participate and learn more about health initiatives across our Zone.

Plans for the coming year include:

- Focusing on mental health and addiction resources – connecting with various community leaders and organizations to learn their perspectives, understanding gaps in service, promoting programs, and sharing resources. We have a particular interest in connecting with schools, younger adults, and adolescence through a partnership with AHS' Addiction and Mental Health team.
- Sharing information about seniors and continuing care programs and services and learning more about the needs of communities in our area.
- Gaining more insight on racial and cultural minority barriers to health services through engagement opportunities and dialogue with varied stakeholders and communities.
- Continuing to build relationships with other AHS Advisory Councils by sharing information through member involvement at Council meetings and events.

The Edmonton Zone greatly appreciates the contributions of the Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council and its members as our partners in health care planning. The GEHAC consultation with our EZ communities and the thoughtfully planned public meetings offer fantastic opportunities for discussion about health service delivery. The HAC challenges us to continually improve, puts forward thought-provoking questions and they share the AHS story with their communities, their families, and neighbors which fosters a more fulsome understanding of our complex health care system. The support and advice the HAC provides to the EZ on our planning, programs, and services are invaluable. 2020-21 was a challenging year for all of us and we look forward to a better and brighter 2021-22 and our ongoing journey in partnership with the GEHAC.

Carol Anderson

Chief Zone Officer – Edmonton Zone

Dr. David Zygun

Zone Medical Director – Edmonton Zone

Advisory Council members act as advisors to AHS as we share feedback with 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.

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.
- Providing input on various healthcare topics online, at [Together4Health](#).
- Applying to [become a member](#). Members are appointed for three-year terms.

Learn more

Visit ahs.ca/advisorycouncils

✉ greateredmonton@ahs.ca

☎ 1.877.275.8830

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

