

Lesser Slave Lake

2018-19 Annual Report



Lesser Slave Lake
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 healthcare 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 healthcare system – and they advise AHS on our planning, programs and services.



Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn

We have 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. We hope our departing members will continue to share their advice as members of the public and share their knowledge of the healthcare system.

This year, we added 23 new members to the Advisory Council family, and we also added a new Council. We were pleased to support and nurture the development of the Sexual Orientation Gender Identity & Expression (SOGIE) Provincial Advisory Council.

Members have made many contributions in their local areas, and you'll learn more about them in this report. Here are a few general examples from across the province over the past year:

- **Evolution of the Wisdom Council:** new Terms of Reference will guide the work of the Wisdom Council and includes creation of an Elder Circle which gives an enhanced role to Elders in helping to advise AHS on programs and services to best meet the needs of Indigenous people.
- **Connect Care:** a number of members have joined the patient advisory committees.
- **Supporting more addiction and mental health services:** many Councils held information sessions and highlighted the importance of services; their efforts helped support the development of Edmonton's new Access 24/7 Addiction and Mental Health Clinic and enhance awareness on services and access.
- **Expanding relationships:** connecting with the LGBTQ2S+ community through the new SOGIE PAC, meeting with municipal leaders, and holding meetings at Métis Settlements.
- **Connecting with Albertans through [Community Conversations](#):** Health Advisory Councils partnered with AHS to host 12 events across the province, where Albertans shared their views about challenges and solutions to healthcare issues.
- **Highlighting top concerns:** based on feedback from their communities, all Councils advised us on local concerns. AHS tracks and responds to concerns at each Council meeting.
- **Participation in Community Engagement Committee of the Board meetings:** various Council Chairs joined the conversation and shared ideas.

Member satisfaction is important to us, and it was gratifying to learn through the Annual Satisfaction Survey that our members are feeling generally satisfied in their roles. They've also said there's a need for more clarity on their role, and we're listening. We have begun work on an overarching Health Advisory Council review to address some of the gaps, and to ensure all our members fully understand their role.

On behalf of the AHS Board of Directors, our leadership team, and our workforce, thank you for your passion and time. We look forward to continuing to work with you on improving healthcare for Albertans.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn
Vice Chair, Board of Directors; Chair, AHS Community Engagement Committee of the Board

Message from the Chair Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council



Ernie Grach

This year marks the beginning of some significant changes on our Health Advisory Council. Many of the current members have reached the end of their terms, myself included, and we will have a new group, ready and eager to tackle the healthcare issues throughout our diverse region.

In the past, we have dealt with ways to improve and reduce patient travel time by adding services to our community facilities. While not all of the services are in place, we can expect dialysis to be available in High Prairie in approximately a year. Obstetrics already exists there now as does an MRI service.

We worked to have the number of MRI procedures increased, so fewer residents from High Prairie and its surrounding communities would not have to travel to Grande Prairie and Edmonton.

Wabasca's Ambulance Bay was an important addition to the community, housing the ambulance and emergency staff close to the hospital while helping to reduce emergency response times. AHS staff are currently working with the Town of Slave Lake, to develop adequate housing for its emergency staff and proper bays for the ambulances as well.

We are always kept up to date with doctor recruitment and other issues affecting health services in our area. However, AHS staff along with the Health Advisory Councils (HACs) throughout the province, realized that the connection between the Councils and the public was somewhat inadequate. To address this, AHS staff organized "Community Conversations", where people from the public were invited to meet with their respective HACs to discuss health related issues. These conversations were well attended and well received.

I want to thank AHS staff in our province for the work they do to deliver services to us. I also want to commend the many volunteers who sit on the HACs, as well as on the Provincial Advisory Councils throughout Alberta.

Together, we work hard to continually improve healthcare in this province.

I extend my thanks to all.

Kind Regards,

Ernie Grach,
Chair, Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council

About our Council

2018-2019 Council Members

Current Members

Ernie	Grach (Chair)	Wabasca
Ken	Matthews (Vice Chair)	High Prairie
Dollie	Anderson	Red Earth
Lindsay	Davies	High Prairie
Lindy	Fors	Slave Lake
Laura	Frost	Widewater
Connie	McKee	High Prairie
Brian	Rosche	Widewater
Debbie	Rose	High Prairie
Cody	Twinn	Slave Lake



Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council

Left to right Connie McKee, Ernie Grach, Cody Twinn, Ken Matthews

Missing: Dollie Anderson, Lindsay Davies, Lindy Fors, Laura Frost, Brian Rosche, Debbie Rose

Promoting awareness of our Council

We used a combination of activities this past year to promote awareness of our Council. Some of these activities included:

- Our Council held five public meetings throughout our Council area promoted through newspaper ads, Public Service Announcements, social media and invitations to community stakeholders.
- Our Chair met with the Chief Zone Officer (North) in July, October and January to discuss concerns in the communities and how AHS and the Council can partner to address local needs.
- Our members collaborated with other Health and Provincial Advisory Councils (PAC) across the province. We have one member that is on the Cancer PAC, and another who is part of the Addiction and Mental Health PAC. These members are able to share concerns from our Council area with the PAC as well as bring information from the PAC to us.
- We worked hard to recruit members to our Council. We promoted the Council by reaching out to various stakeholders with information about the Council and encouraged them to apply. We also promoted recruitment at the Community Conversation held in High Prairie. We recruited five new members and continue to recruit.

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Primary presentation topics at our meetings:

- Cannabis Legislation
- RhPAP
- Area 6 updates
- Slave Lake Campus, Northern Lakes College
- EMS Services



We held our meetings at the High Prairie Healthcare Centre, the Slave Lake Lakeland Centre and via Telehealth



Listening to our communities

Our Council members shared feedback at each meeting and welcomed input from the public. The Community Engagement Committee of the AHS Board expressed an interest in understanding the top health-related concerns from across the province. Our Council identified the following:

- Services at the High Prairie Health Complex including obstetrics, dialysis and the expanded hours of use of the CT Scanner
- EMS garage upgrade in Slave Lake
- Access to Addiction and Mental Health services
- Dialysis
- Access to specialty services
- Transportation
- Homelessness

Some work has been done to address the above mentioned concerns, including:

- Obstetrics in High Prairie had a soft-launch in January and welcomed a New Year's baby on January 7th, 2019
- The government announced funding for a dialysis unit in High Prairie
- There was an increase of allocation for CT scans in High Prairie

Recruitment and retention of physicians remains a top concern for our area. The AHS North Zone Physician Resource planner attended each of our meetings to advise us on the status of recruitment of various positions in our Council area. A member of the Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) is also a regular attendee at our meetings and provides updates on the work it is doing for the attraction and retention of healthcare professionals to our area.

We also welcomed key stakeholders to our meetings to share information and/or concerns with us. Key stakeholders we heard from, are:

- The Dean of Health at the Slave Lake Campus of Northern Lakes College shared information about available health programs, including:
 - Community Health Promotion
 - Practical Nurse
 - Health Care Aide
 - Emergency Medical Responder
 - Primary Care Paramedic
 - Advanced Care Paramedic
- Pee Kis Kwe Tan (Let's Talk Society) of Wabasca provided an overview of its addiction and mental health services. They identified successes they've had with helping people in the area in partnership with other community organizations.

Working with AHS to share information with communities

AHS leadership participates in each Council meeting and provides our Council with a regular report on workforce recruitment, capital projects, innovation and new programs or services.

When our Council has questions or requires information on specific topics, we invite members of AHS to present. Our Council received information on the following topics:

- Cannabis Legislation
- Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP)
- Presentation about services for the High Prairie Health Complex
- North Zone updates at each meeting
- Seniors and Continuing Care programs and services
- Emergency Medical Services
- Enhancing Care in the Community

We co-hosted a [Community Conversation in High Prairie](#) in March 2019 to listen to the community and support AHS to share information. 23 people from the Lesser Slave Lake Council area participated, in addition to representation from local government, Indigenous and Métis groups, the school division, housing, health, Rural Health Professions Action Plan, and Family and Community Support Services.

Participants discussed healthcare challenges and possible partnerships that could be formed to address them. The event was also an opportunity for us to promote the Council and encourage community members to become involved. Key themes from this event included:

- Exercise and nutrition: availability of indoor exercise is critical to help communities increase wellness
- Skills development: a variety of skills are needed to support health and wellness including life skills, parenting and budgeting
- Transportation: community members are travelling to receive health services. This is challenging with fewer transportation options available

Some of the key challenges identified by residents in the area, include:

- Lack of health services and specialized staff in the area and difficulty travelling to receive health services
- Difficulty in recruiting and retaining healthcare staff, specialists and physicians
- Lack of connection and alignment across ministries/agencies providing similar or overlapping services

Attendees also identified health services/initiatives they are thankful for: health clinics, home care, hospital, CT scan, mental health, testing and screening, emergency services and ambulance, dental care, seniors lodge, community health, dialysis services, healthcare professionals, physiotherapy and chiropractors and Pee Kis Kwe Tan (Let's Talk Society).

A look ahead

We look forward to the year ahead and are excited to welcome five new members.

We will continue acknowledging concerns and sharing information with the public through presentations from AHS staff and leadership at our five annual meetings. We will also continue holding meetings at various communities throughout the Council area.

We hope to increase public attendance at our meetings by building our presence on social media. We will continue to reach out to community members and partners while brainstorming new ideas to encourage public attendance.

We will continue to represent the diversity of our Council area through our membership. We look forward to engaging more with Indigenous communities by reaching out and partnering with local leaders, and working closely with our new Council members.

We plan to engage with communities in the Council area at local community events, and will gather feedback from the public. Some events we plan to attend, include:

- The High Prairie Annual Gun & Sportsman Show
- The Slave Lake Annual Spring Trade Show
- The Wabasca Trade Show

We look forward to continuing to build relationships with other Health and Provincial Advisory Councils (PACs) through participation at the annual Fall Forum and sharing information with them.

We say goodbye to several members who have served many years volunteering on our Council. We wish them the very best and hope they will continue providing feedback as members of the public. As well, we welcome several new members and look forward to hearing their feedback and sharing of opportunities and concerns with AHS. We know that by recruiting new members we are increasing perspectives and opportunities to learn from one another.

We look forward to our continued partnership with AHS and the opportunities to progress together.

Learn more

- Visit ahs.ca/advisorycouncils
- Email lesserslavelake@ahs.ca
- Check out our Twitter and Facebook accounts, 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
- Delivering a presentation at a Council meeting on a health area of interest or concern.
- Volunteering your time as a Council member.

For more information about Health Advisory Councils, [visit ahs.ca](https://ahs.ca)



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