



True North Health Advisory Council (TNHAC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 16, 2024 / 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. / Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
Members	Julie Melville (Chair), Liane Mercredi (Vice Chair), Gord Burnell, Rick Cartier, and Nella Fehr
Alberta Health Services (AHS)	Deanna Dament, Angie Mann, Russ Nelson
Regrets	Wilma Cardinal, Darrell Derksen, Shelly Komarnicki, Gina Martens, Crystal McLean, Tracey Stauffer, and Judith Wiebe
Public	16
Welcome & Introductions	Chair, Julie Melville, welcomed all in attendance and provided a land acknowledgment.
Approval of previous minutes	The Council reviewed and approved the September 27, 2023, minutes, by consensus.
STANDING ITEMS	
Action items from the previous meeting	<p>All action items are completed from the September 27, 2023, meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holly Handfield to send Jo the Let's Go Rural – Nursing Careers poster for Jo to share with Council members. • Jo Blakley will update Community Engagement contact lists with the new Chair/ Vice Chair and advise leadership.
Presentation	<p>Russ Nelson, Director North Zone Emergency and Disaster Management Julie Melville, Chair of TNHAC and Deputy Mayor of Rainbow Lake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julie presented 2023 wildfire season statistics. Click here for information. • Russ discussed how the lessons learned from the 2023 wildfire season are improving the 2024 response. He divided the lessons into four areas: incident management, evacuation tools, reception center support and relationships.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He highlighted that all staff need Incident Command Systems training. • Next, he stated the reopening of facilities must improve. AHS’s guides and plans are complex and need refinement. Russ said more Indigenous Wellness Core (IWC) resources are needed at reception centers. • Lastly, staff need to clarify AHS’s responsibilities. Residents assumed AHS addresses non-health-related issues (transportation, housing, general welfare). AHS needs to direct non-AHS requests to the Reception Centre Manager. <p>After the presentation, Julie and Russ added the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, AHS treated High Level evacuees well, but it took too long for mental health staff to arrive. In the future, AHS must deploy mental health support quickly. • AHS is working on the concern that health services (paramedics, ambulances, emergency departments) need to remain on-site to provide support to firefighters and any citizens sheltered in place. • Public Health staff were crucial in reception centers. AHS realizes support to reception centers must be multi-departmental and not only public health. Centers need support from addictions and mental health and the IWC. • Metis Nation of Alberta and the Metis Settlements are working on an Emergency Disaster Management (EDM) committee, and they would like to engage with AHS in its emergency response. AHS recognizes it needs to balance the role of the IWC and the work of the Indigenous Liaison Coordinator with the work of EDM. AHS plans to be in communication with the Metis Nation of Alberta and Metis Settlements.
<p>Action Item</p>	<p>Angie is to take the discussion of services at sites either under critical alters or advisories offline and confer with Emergency Medical Services (EMS) because they need to speak to their programming.</p>
<p>AHS Community Engagement and External Relations Update</p>	<p>Andrea Jackson, Lead for Advisory Councils, Community Engagement and External Relations gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta Health is establishing Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), and AHS’s Health Advisory Councils (HACs) will end Friday, June 28, 2024. • Alberta Health has begun recruitment to its RACs and posted the online application earlier today. • Andrea expressed her gratitude for the work that volunteers, Council and zone leads have committed to AHS HACs.



<p>AHS Zone Update</p>	<p>Angie Mann, Director of Clinical Operations, Allied Health, Acute Care and Seniors for Area 1, North Zone, provided the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Fort Vermillion, long-standing bed closures plagued both hospital sites, however, as of October 31, 2023, all the beds are open and remain open. AHS anticipates six closed medical beds will open in late May in High Level. • Seven internationally educated nurses (IEN) are working in the zone. One is in Fort Vermillion and six are in High Level. Two nurses will arrive the week of April 22, 2024, and then two nurses per month will arrive. Overall, there are 14 to 15 placements. The IENs receive three months of free housing and then AHS staff will help them find housing. • Recently, AHS posted undergraduate nursing positions for all Area One sites. • The Careers, Next Generation Program will proceed. AHS hires high school students for six weeks to job shadow staff in all departments. Many participants go on to study in a healthcare field and return to work in the area. • With the recent changes to nurse licenses, AHS hired five domestic IENs (DIEN). • AHS is busy conducting interactive school tours across the area. Also, it held a Skills Day in High Level on March 26. For more information click here. Lastly, the Career Fair in Rainbow Lake is on April 22. • A physiotherapist arrives in July to fill a long-standing vacant position in area one. • The newest supportive living site in Area One is hiring healthcare staff for various roles.
<p>Action Item</p>	<p>Deanna to contact Lois Ottley and ask about recruitment in High Level for the Region Police and Crisis Team (RPACT).</p>
<p>Physician Recruitment Report</p>	<p>Shauna Wallbank, Physician Resource Planner, provided the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Vermillion – six family medicine physicians (four sharing one role) and one posting is up for a family medicine physician. • High Level – 11 family medicine physicians (nine with additional skills). • La Crete – two family medicine physicians and two postings are up for family medicine physicians. • As of Jan 1, 2024, seven family medicine physicians started working in Area One and four of those are specialists.
<p>Community Partners</p>	<p>Kate Tindall, Rural Community Consultant with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday, April 18 is the Wellspring Cancer Care virtual presentation.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSA) presentation on sponsorship is on Tuesday, April 30. Click here. • RhPAP is accepting applications for the Rural Education Fund for team-based training. Click here. • Rural Health Week is May 27-31. • The 2024 RhPAP Conference Oct 8-10, 2024, in Wainwright. More information at 2024 Conference website.
Voices of the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On behalf of the community, Bobbie and Eric said thank you to everyone in the TNHAC and for supporting the health of the community and for their years of service
Report from Chair	<p>Chair Julie Melville reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health, Martin Long, and others Government of Alberta (GoA) staff met with TNHAC to consult about their work as GoA establishes the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs). • HAC members interested in the RACs are encouraged to apply. Information is on the GoA website.
Report from Advisory Council Coordinator Update	<p>Deanna Dament shared the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday, April 12, 2024, was Jo Blakely, former Advisory Council Coordinator, last day. • National Volunteer Week is April 14-20 and AHS is grateful for all its volunteers. • TNHAC has the option to hold a stand-alone virtual event, over and above the June 4 event planned for all Councils.
Action Item	Deanna to email Council so they can vote to hold a stand-alone TNHAC virtual event.
Council Round Table	<p>Rainbow Lake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julie Melville thanked the Council for the information it has shared over the years and is grateful for all the people she has met. Also, she is thankful to all the presenters who engaged in conversation and responded to Council’s questions and comments.