

Yellowhead East

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, Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council



Cyndy Heslin

We have had a full year with many successes and learning curves. We have enjoyed public engagement sessions on Caregiver-Centred Care, Mental Health and Wellness, and Greg's Wings, with good public participation and much feedback.

Over the past year, we have increased awareness of who and what the Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council (YEHAC) is, how to connect with us, and how we can help. We strove to educate our communities on seniors and continuing care, mental health, physician referrals, and Primary Care Networks (PCN), to name a few.

As a result of our efforts, we have thankfully seen new faces added to our team as well as more members of local communities engaging in our sessions. We have happily continued to hold co-designed engagement sessions with other HACs with great success, and the outcome of working together. Of course, with COVID-19 entering its second year we have continued our format of virtual meetings to accommodate social distancing. We look forward to seeing our colleagues face-to-face as soon as it is safe.

Sincerely,

Cyndy Heslin
Chair, Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council



Who we are

The Yellowhead East Health Advisory Council (YEHAC) is comprised of up to 15 volunteer members who reside in the geographic [area](#) from Provost in the east to Camrose in the west. Visit us online for a full list of [membership](#).



Top L-R: Agnes Hoveland, Cyndy Heslin, Deborah McMann, Glenys Reeves, John Erkelens, Leah Taylor
Bottom L-R: Lesley Hansen, Maya Rathnavalu, Sarah Hissett, Stephanie Munro, Taneen Rudyk



Highlights



Presentations

- AHS COVID-19 Psychosocial Supports
- Wellness Fair
- Supports for Family Caregivers
- Greg’s Wings



Public Participation

- 5 community members attended regular HAC meetings
- 116 community members attended community engagement events



Key achievements of 2020-21

This has been an extraordinary year that has challenged us all personally and as a Council. Despite in-person engagement sessions moving virtually, we are extremely proud of the incredible efforts and accomplishments we were able to achieve through the year of the pandemic.



Hosted a virtual wellness fair that looked at the six dimensions of wellness, including social, environmental, spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual. 85 community members joined us for some positivity and a chance to connect.



Hosted a screening of [Greg's Wings, Falling Through the Cracks](#), followed by a moving discussion with 31 community participants on how to improve the public healthcare system, together. AHS and Council have been working with the family of Greg Price to share his health journey and support a dialogue for patients and their families.



We were grateful to receive ongoing COVID-19 updates throughout the year and to attend virtual COVID-19 Community Conversations for the Central Zone. Here, we engaged in dialogue about our experiences with COVID-19 testing sites, had the opportunity to ask questions, and received information resources to share among our networks.



Outside of general meetings and engagement events, YEHAC members provided feedback to AHS initiatives, including:

- Participation in an Alberta Health Facility-based Continuing Care focus group.
- Participation in a facilitated conversation on Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Dispatch Consolidation with HAC members residing in impacted communities and EMS leadership.
- A seat on a bi-provincial committee with AHS leaders and representatives of the Saskatchewan Health Authority where we review and discuss the planning of strategic health priorities for the border city of Lloydminster.



Many of our members belong to their local Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) Attraction and Retention Committee, whose objective is to attract healthcare professionals to rural sites in the area. Our members also helped organize appreciation events in their respective communities to acknowledge all the hardworking healthcare professionals for their amazing work during the pandemic.



Lastly, YEHAC was pleased to welcome three new members in 2020. Agnes Hoveland, Leah Taylor, and Maya Rathnavalu each bring a unique expertise and community connection to our Council table and we look forward to their contributions in the years to come.

A look ahead

Meetings in the coming year will continue to focus on bringing community voices of healthcare service delivery to AHS. These voices are essential to ensuring broad perspective and representation from within the Zone.

We will also continue promoting public attendance at our meetings so information shared by AHS can be disseminated more broadly into our communities. It will be equally important to grow the diversity of our Council by recruiting members from the communities of Two Hills, Vermilion, Bashaw, Hardisty, and Provost, to ensure broader demographic representation.

Plans for the coming year include:

- Focusing on mental health and addictions resources by connecting with various community leaders and organizations to learn their perspectives, understand gaps in service, promote programs, and share resources. Council has a particular interest in connecting with schools, younger adults, and adolescents through a partnership with AHS' Addiction and Mental Health team.
- Continued work with health partners, such as RhPAP, Primary Care Networks (PCN), and Family and Community Support Services (FCSS).
- Sharing of information about seniors and continuing Care programs and services, and learning of the needs of communities in the Council area.
- Collaboration with neighboring Central Zone HAC, David Thompson, and other Advisory Councils on health topics impacting Albertans.

As Alberta shifts to the next phase of the pandemic, YEHAC will be a resource to its local communities in sharing reliable information from AHS about current and next steps. We also plan to incorporate messages of wellness into each of our meetings, to inspire hope and encourage self-care. We will continue building relationships with community health partners and provide communities with information on access to health services.



“2020-21 has been an extraordinary year. As we all had to make adjustments to our lives through the pandemic, I would like to thank all my staff and the Health Advisory Council for their help promoting safety. It is through your support in AHS and commitment to ensuring the voice of your communities is heard that we can move through the pandemic. I look forward to more discussions about healthcare in the Zone and meeting soon, face-to-face.”

Janice Stewart

Chief Zone Officer, Central Zone

Advisory Council members share advice and feedback from their communities with AHS. Councils hold public meetings and engagement activities virtually or in locations throughout their geographic area that further contribute to improving healthcare 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

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☎ 1.877.275.8830

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

