

Lesser Slave Lake

2017/18 Annual Report



Lesser Slave Lake
Health Advisory Council

Healthy Albertans.
Healthy Communities
Together.

Message from Alberta Health Services Board of Directors



Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn

Healthcare is a people business and Alberta Health Services (AHS) alone cannot build a healthier province. Through the work of our Advisory Councils, all Albertans have an opportunity to have a say in what we do at AHS; and that's vitally important to our organization.

Council members bring the voices of Albertans to AHS whether through the geographically located Health Advisory Councils or the program-focused Provincial Advisory Councils and Wisdom Council. They build relationships with Albertans and keep the lines of communication open. They are our partners, and their feedback has helped us make the right decisions on how we care for Albertans and how we deliver health services. Their efforts continue to make a positive difference in people's lives every day.

As Chair of the Community Engagement Committee of the Board, I've had the pleasure to connect with many Council members and see their work evolve and expand over the past year. There are direct links between their efforts and the advancements we've made as a health system overall, and in communities across the province. Here are just a few examples:

- **Connect Care** - members offered insights about the system, and had opportunities to join three different committees to help shape what the system would look like.
- **Zone healthcare planning** - members participated in building Calgary and Central zone healthcare plans, and sharing specific needs for the communities they represent.
- **PCN governance committees** - members have been invited to join zone committees.
- **Continuing care** - through interviews, council chairs provided comments and suggestions to help build continuing care plans and solutions in the zones.
- **AHS Health Plan and Business Plan** - members offered perspectives and suggestions into the plan; their input shaped the goals, objectives and performance measures, particularly in the areas of long term care and mental health. They also actively shared the plan with communities across Alberta.
- **Special engagement meetings for Albertans** - many of the Councils had the opportunity to host engagement activities from Open Houses to forums to information sessions, both in person or by video conference.

Other milestones include adopting a new look and brand, carefully developed work plans, and attending the Annual Advisory Council Fall Forum to engage about healthcare issues and connect with each other.

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

Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn,

Vice Chair, Board of Directors
Chair, Community Engagement Committee of the Board
AHS

Message from the Chair Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council



Ken Matthews

We have had a good year in our Council area. An increase in services in our community helps reduce the travel time and increases safety for our residents so they avoid the drive down the road to access services.

We were pleased to see the new High Prairie Health Complex open. The new facility benefits the public in and around High Prairie by providing a number of services under one roof. Additional services including the new CT scanner reduce the amount of travel by our rural residents.

We were also pleased to have a new Emergency Medical Services building open in Wabasca. The building adequately houses the ambulances plus provides sleeping quarters for the staff.

We are glad to see the increased role of the Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP). The recruitment of professionals, including physicians and specialists, continues to be an issue in the North Zone. We feel it is important to continue to partner with RhPAP as it benefits communities as well as AHS.

We are glad that Northern Alberta Renal Program (NARP) continues to monitor the need for dialysis in the communities across Alberta. We feel the need for dialysis is going to increase and dialysis units may be needed in a number of rural sites. There is a need for dialysis in the High Prairie area.

We hope that the barriers of transportation to the sites in faraway locations, the fear of dialysis amongst our Indigenous elders and the barriers of a sterile environment for home dialysis are all taken into consideration when planning.

I want to thank AHS for all of the hard work they have done to open the new services mentioned above. They are working hard to add additional services into the High Prairie Health Complex. We look forward to the addition of the obstetrical program in the fall of 2018.

Sincerely,

Ken Matthews, Chair
Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council

About Our Council

2017/2018 Council Members

Current Members

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

Past Members

Shahriar	Rozen	Wabasca
Eleonore	Twardzik	Wabasca
Marian	Wolitski	Wabasca



Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council members were pleased with the opening of the new High Prairie Health Complex in May of 2017.

Priorities for our Council

Addiction and mental health

Council followed up on concerns about addiction and mental health services in Wabasca:

- Council heard from Pee Kis Kwe Tan “Let’s Talk” Society in Wabasca. The society, funded by AHS, advised they want to build a post-rehabilitation treatment centre that would provide a healthy and safe environment to return to, and prevent relapses for those individuals who leave the community for addiction treatment. They also advised that suicide and suicide attempts in the community are an issue. Council learned that a staff member from Pee Kis Kwe Tan provides counselling services to the two schools in Wabasca one day per week.
- Council learned the St. Therese School in Wabasca hired a full-time wellness worker. Bigstone Cree First Nation has a mental health worker as well.
- An opioid dependency program will open in High Prairie.

Enhanced non-urgent transportation options for citizens

- The concern about transportation for people who need to go to urban centres from rural communities has been a barrier to access since Greyhound removed their passenger routes. The concern was brought forward by the Council of Chairs to Dr. Yiu and she took it forward to the government. A pilot project for transportation from rural to urban communities was announced by the Minister of Transportation on March 21, 2018.

Advocate for right services, right place

Council learned more about services available in the Council area:

- The new High Prairie Health Complex opened in May 2017 with a state-of-the-art emergency department, an acute care clinical building, a continuing care centre and the High Prairie Community Health and Wellness clinic. Other services include outpatient services, Indigenous health, addiction and mental health and home care. The clinic provides chronic disease management, early childhood development and health promotion.



Priorities for our Council continued

Advocate for right services, right place (continued)

- Slave Lake Family Care Centre provided information about “walk in” for appointments at the clinic; governance of the clinic; and how to share feedback on issues.
- NARP provided an overview of the various services; the number of patients at dialysis in Slave Lake; and the number of patients being monitored in the High Prairie area.
- Diabetes Wellness Initiative reported to council that they engaged with 11 First Nations and three Métis Settlements and communities in the High Prairie area.

Availability of obstetrical services

The availability of obstetrical services has been a concern in recent years for the Council area. Services are available in the following communities:

- High-risk obstetrical services have been available at the Slave Lake Healthcare Centre for the past few years. The Council area was without obstetrical services for a period of time in the past.
- At the new High Prairie Health Complex, staff members are in training and physicians are being recruited with an aim to provide high-risk obstetrical services in the fall of 2018.

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Council meetings were held in Wabasca, High Prairie, and via Telehealth.



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

Providing feedback and advice to AHS

Council provided advice to North Zone senior leadership about additional services that could be added to the new High Prairie Health Complex. This included obstetrics and dialysis.

Council recommended to North Zone senior leadership that an ambulance garage in Wabasca was needed, including a residence to free up space in the Wabasca Healthcare Centre. The EMS ambulance garage opened in October of 2017.



EMS opening in Wabasca

From left to right: Blaine Barody, Marcel Auger, Marian Wolitski, Colin Piquette, Ernie Grach, Rob Barone, Gregory Cummings, Dr. Kevin Worry, Darren Longstaff

Topics on the minds of our Council and community members

- Food quality in the High Prairie Health Complex and long term care.
- Dialysis in High Prairie.
- Lack of Indigenous members on Council.
- Need for a Nurse Practitioner for the communities of Red Earth Creek, Trout and Peerless.
- Access to speciality services.
- Access to addiction and mental health services.
- Transportation from rural to urban centres.

A look ahead

We were very pleased with the openings of the new facilities in High Prairie and Wabasca in 2017. These facilities are very important to the communities, and we were pleased to have been a part of engagement for both facilities.

The new High Prairie Health Complex, which opened in May of 2017, houses 25 acute beds, an adjoining 67 bed continuing care centre plus the High Prairie Health and Wellness Clinic.

The new facility in Wabasca, an ambulance garage with living quarters, opened in October of 2017. EMS staff will no longer have to reside in the Wabasca Healthcare Centre and there is now room enough for both ambulances on site.

We believe more funding and staff must be added to the addiction and mental health portfolio. There is a high need in our communities for counselling and resources.

We believe additional services should be available in our area including speciality services to reduce the amount of travel for our residents. One such service is dialysis in the community of High Prairie.

We know we have to build awareness of our Council. We will advertise and send invitations to our meetings. We want to encourage the public to bring forth feedback as well as hear what is going on with AHS. We move our meetings around from community to community and we look forward to getting more of the public out to these meetings. We want to hear from the public to ensure we are providing an avenue for AHS to address their concerns.

We know to be successful we need to listen to the needs of each community in our Council area. We have 11 First Nations and three Métis Settlements in the Council area. We look forward to building relationships with the Indigenous communities in our area and encourage applications.

We also look forward to working closely with the North Zone leadership and partnering to develop solutions for the concerns in our communities.

Learn more

- Visit ahs.ca and search Advisory Councils
- 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. Recruitment drives happen annually. Members are appointed for three-year terms.



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