

# True North Health Advisory Council

2022-23 Annual Report



**Alberta Health  
Services**

True North  
Health Advisory Council

## Message from the Official Administrator Dr. John Cowell



It has been a great pleasure to reconnect with Alberta Health Services (AHS) Advisory Councils since I was appointed to the role of AHS Official Administrator in November 2022. Soon after my appointment, I had the opportunity to meet with Council Chairs and our conversation informed the development of my 90-Day Plan to achieve rapid improvements in four priority areas of AHS:

- Improving emergency medical services (EMS) response times.
- Decreasing emergency department wait times.
- Reducing surgery wait times.
- Improving patient flow and continuity of care.

There has been marked improvement in all these areas, not just over my first 90 days as OA, but sustained improvements made possible, in part, by the invaluable advice and perspectives provided by our Councils.

Through our partnership with Advisory Councils, we're seeing EMS response times improving despite sustained increases in call volume across the province. Emergency department wait times are also coming down. Fewer people are waiting longer for surgery than clinically recommended. And we're seeing evidence of improved patient flow with the addition of acute care, intensive care and continuing care beds. We need to continue building on this momentum, while also addressing our organization's serious workforce issues. This is all challenging and complex work, and AHS will continue to involve our Advisory Councils as a key stakeholder for advice and real-time feedback on how we're doing in our efforts to serve all Albertans.

I understand and appreciate the value that Advisory Councils bring to AHS, and look forward to expanding and deepening our partnership. I'll continue to reach out to Council Chairs, and meet with Council members throughout the year, including at the 2024 Advisory Council Forum.

I'd like to express my gratitude for the work of all Advisory Council members. Although AHS still has much work ahead, I look to the future with optimism knowing we'll move forward and navigate our challenges with our valued and steadfast Advisory Council partners.

## Message from the Chair Nella Fehr, True North Health Advisory Council



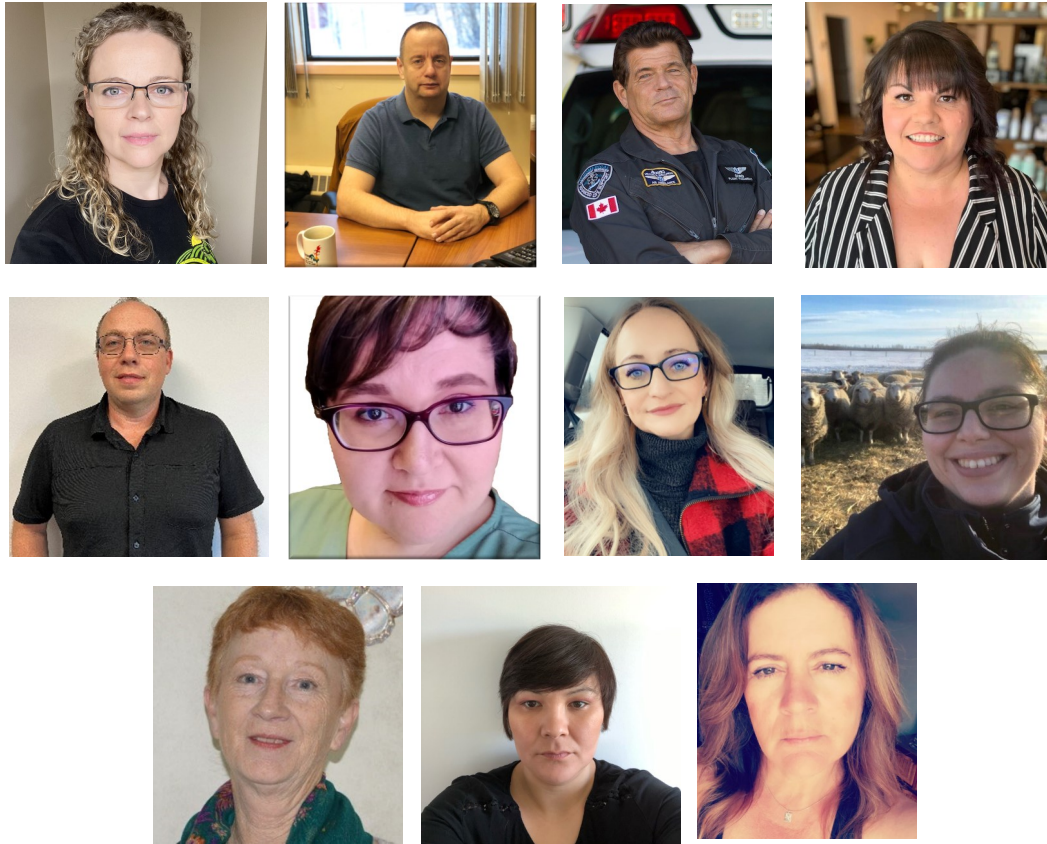
On behalf of the True North Health Advisory Council (TNHAC), I am pleased to submit our annual report for 2022-23.

This last year has been a great year. One of our goals from last year was the recruitment of new members. Since September 2022, six new members have joined, increasing our Council to a total of 13 members. Last fall we had the opportunity to virtually bring our communities The Power of Community, with Dr. Richard Lewanczuk. This presentation was a great success as we learned about the social determinants of health and how coordinating health and wellness resources available at the community level benefits everyone.

Due to the northern wildfires, it has been challenging to meet as most people are busy helping evacuees or people who have lost their homes. It's wonderful to see the communities come together and help each other out. With help from the community, all health services were still provided.

We wish for all our communities to stay strong and continue to support everyone around them. I look forward to a positive and productive year ahead with the TNHAC.

# OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS



*Top L-R: Nella Fehr (Chair), Rick Cartier (Vice Chair), Gord Burnell, Wilma Cardinal  
Middle L-R: Darrell Derksen, Oxana Kabardina, Shelly Komarnicki, Gina Martens  
Bottom L-R: Julie Melville, Liane Mercredi, Tracey Stauffer  
Missing: Crystal McLean and Judith Weibe*

**“It** has been my pleasure to work with many of our North Zone Councils. Our Council members are dedicated, community builders who are committed to healthcare in the North. I am appreciative of the diversity of opinions and experience that our Council members share leading to rich dialogue and discussion on topics that truly matter to those of us living in the North.

**Stacy Greening**  
Chief Zone Officer, North Zone

# FACTS AND FIGURES



## Council Member Representation

Fort Vermilion  
High Level  
La Crete  
Paddle Prairie  
Rainbow Lake



### By the numbers

Participation in TNHAC meetings & events:

**3** public meetings

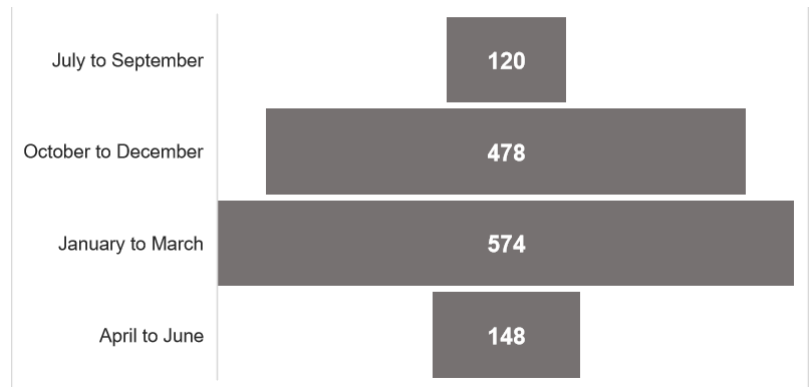
**10** public attended

**1** engagement event

**60** public attended

**6** new members

## Provincial participation at Advisory Council meetings & events\*



\*Reflective of the number of public that attended Health and Provincial Advisory Council meetings and events, between July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023.

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

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.

- ✓ Council hosted presentations at our public meetings about a variety of timely healthcare topics. We learned about [Cancer Screening in Alberta](#), the North Zone [Indigenous Health Program](#), including the innovative [Indigenous Support Line](#). We also heard a local [EMS](#) update for Mackenzie County, including an overview of the [AHS EMS 10-Point Plan](#) and the [EMS/811 Shared Response](#).
- ✓ Council continued building relationships through regular strategic planning meetings between the Chair, Vice Chair, AHS North Zone leadership and the Council Coordinator. These crucial touchpoints ensured consistent and open dialogue between AHS and Council, improving feedback to communities.
- ✓ In November, public from across the province attend a virtual Community Conversation about The Power of Community Assets, with Dr. Richard Lewanczuk. Dr. Lewanczuk presented about the social determinants of health, factors outside of the healthcare system that contribute to wellness. Participants learned how coordinating the health and wellness resources available at the community level benefits everyone.
- ✓ Together with the Lesser Slave Lake and Peace Health Advisory Councils, and in partnership with Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP), TNHAC hosted a joint virtual moderated panel discussion highlighting how rural and remote northern Alberta communities can grow the next generation of healthcare providers.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE INPUT (FOR ALL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS)



### Newcomer Engagement Patient & Experience

AHS sought input on how AHS can communicate, support, and enable Albertans to become active partners in their care.



### 2022-23 Influenza Immunization Campaign

Members reviewed draft AHS influenza campaign materials and provided input toward the provincewide campaign that informed Albertans about the flu shot.



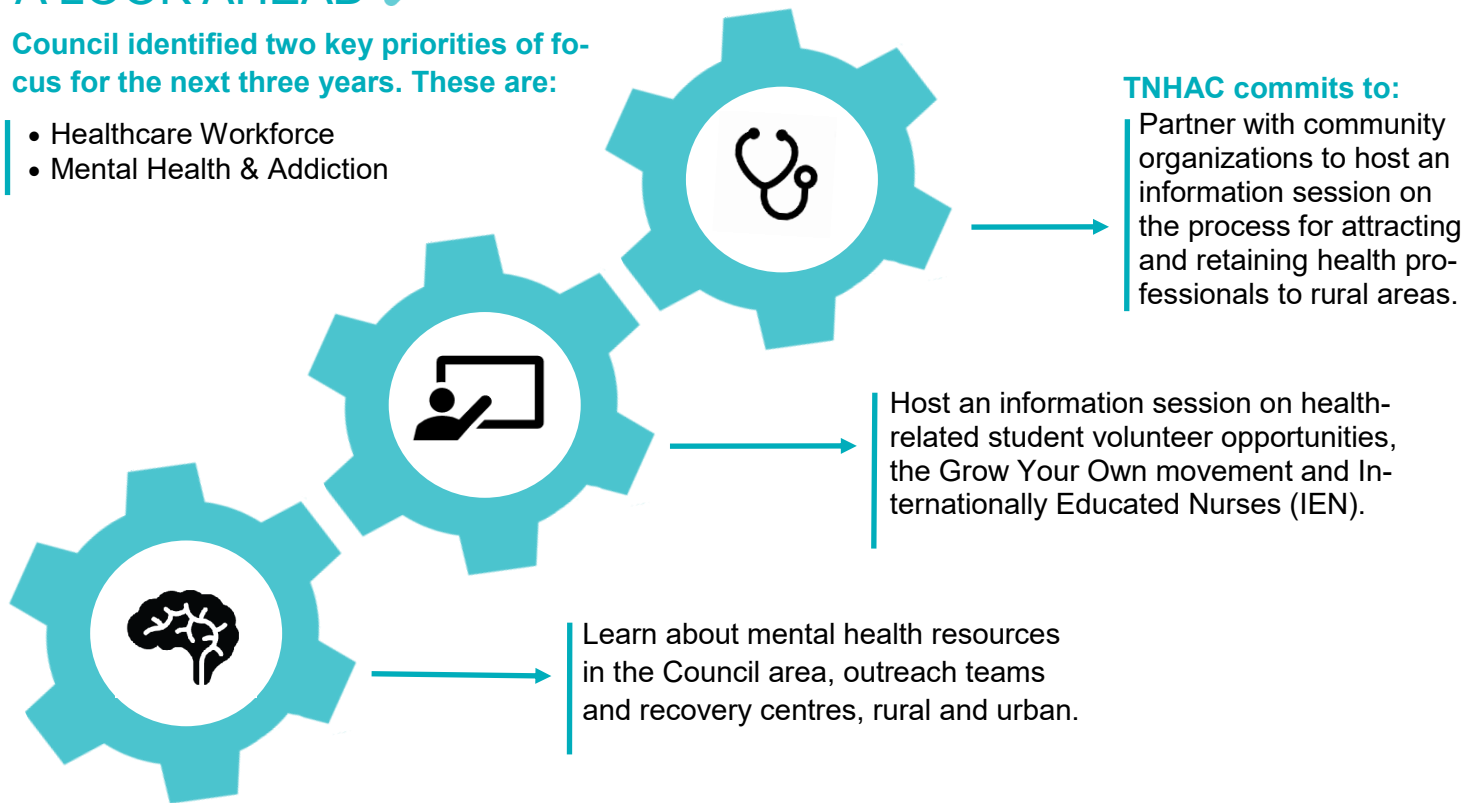
### Spiritual Care Policy

Councils were invited to provide feedback to the AHS Community Spiritual and Religious Care Providers Access Policy.

## A LOOK AHEAD

Council identified two key priorities of focus for the next three years. These are:

- Healthcare Workforce
- Mental Health & Addiction



## GET INVOLVED

Make a difference to the health and well-being of your community by sharing your thoughts and ideas with AHS.

- Email: [truenorth@ahs.ca](mailto:truenorth@ahs.ca)
- Phone: 1.877.275.8830
- Attend an [upcoming meeting](#)
- Provide input on various healthcare topics online, at [Together4Health](#)
- Apply to join an Advisory Council:

**APPLY**

