

Tamarack

2017/18 Annual Report



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 Tamarack Health Advisory Council

How quickly the past years have flown by since Health Advisory Councils (HACs) formed to be the “Voices of the Communities” for AHS.



Ruth Martin-Williams

Since the formation of the Tamarack HAC, Council members have spoken to community groups and listened to individuals regarding health concerns and opportunities. With an area as large as Tamarack, Council members’ feedback was crucial to understanding the concerns as to what was working well, and areas requiring improvements for healthcare delivery throughout our area. The community voice and perspective is important to AHS and the Council is a great channel for sharing that voice.

In 2018, Tamarack started a new approach to community engagement by hosting a community information session in Edson. We partnered with AHS to share current information about the topics of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID), Enhancing Care in the Community and continuing care. The session was deemed a success and we look forward to holding more sessions in the upcoming year. We will choose relevant topics for two additional communities.

We have representation from the majority of the larger communities in our Council area. Their passion for healthcare and the communities they represent is appreciated. Thank you to all current and past Tamarack HAC members for being the voice of your community. We look forward to recruiting additional members this year to join our engaged group of citizens.

Sincerely,

Ruth Martin-Williams, Chair
Tamarack HAC

About Our Council

2017/2018 Council Members

Current Members

Ruth	Martin-Williams (Chair)	Edson
Denise	Lambert (Vice Chair)	Onoway
Gary	Beeson	Swan Hills
Christie	Homeniuk	Whitecourt
Debra	Hagman	Mayerthorpe
Sherry	Jeffreys	Sangudo
Sheila	McKeand	Hinton
Douglas	Heine	Hinton
Daniel	Pritchard	Blue Ridge
Darlene	Chartrand	Whitecourt
Linda	West	Westlock

Past Members

Garry	Lorenz	Westlock
Maryann	Chichak	Whitecourt



Left to right: Sandi Vanderzee (Director, Northern Alberta Renal Program, AHS), Lana Hataley (Executive Director Acute Care Program & Performance, North Zone, AHS), Ruth Martin-Williamson (Chair, Tamarack HAC), at the opening of the dialysis unit at the Edson Healthcare Centre

Priorities for our Council

- **Mental health**
 - Bring mental health first aid, awareness and education to communities.
 - Increase suicide prevention and awareness.
 - Partner with community groups for transportation services for rural patients.
- **Access to all kinds of care, advise/advocate for right service, right place**
 - Inform/create educational materials about available resources for Tamarack communities.
 - Partner with community groups for transportation services for rural patients.
- **Responding to emerging issues**
 - Host information sessions in response to emerging issues.
- **Recruitment and retention of medical professionals**
 - Provide recommendations to AHS about recruitment and retention of medical professionals.
 - Provide specialty medical services to communities without them.
 - Advocate for full scope of practice for health professionals.
- **Long term and continuing care**
 - Learn about services available for seniors including full spectrum care facilities.

5

Council meetings were held in Westlock, Swan Hills and via video conference.

15

Public members attended regular HAC meetings.

30

Public members attended an information session in Edson.



Engaging the public

Council incorporated our priorities into our meetings and an information session.

Westlock

We had interest from the community about the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) presentation at the regular HAC meeting with Dr. James Silvius, AHS Medical Director of Seniors Health. There were excellent questions and comments from the public members in attendance.

Swan Hills

Council was pleased to hear about the expansion of scope with the Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) as recruitment and retention of staff is a concern in the Council area. The RhPAP mandate has expanded to include the recruitment of allied health professionals and work with communities to attract and retain health professionals.

Edson Information Session

We hosted an Open House on March 13 in Edson for the public. The topics of MAID and Enhancing Care in the Community were presented in person by Dr. James Silvius, AHS Medical Director of Seniors Health. Dr. Silvius was able to provide examples and information about the newly legislated MAID program. Enhancing Care in the Community is a new AHS initiative that expands home care services and focuses on community-based care versus acute or hospital-based care. An overview of the local seniors' and continuing care services was provided by Crystal Brown, Director of Clinical Operations for the Edson area. She provided the audience with an overview of the services available to the seniors in Edson and community. There were 30 members of the public in attendance, and the event helped us achieve one of our work plan priorities – to share information about emerging issues.

Council Input

Major themes derived from Council member feedback include:

- The terrific philanthropy in the communities of Edson and Swan Hills.
- The purchase of the Good Samaritan Society Continuing Care facility in Hinton.
- Transportation to medical appointments by seniors.
- Capacity of and wait times for ambulances.

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

Providing feedback and advice to AHS

Council advised that the best methods to promote meetings are community newsletters, posters at libraries and recreation facilities, newspaper, radio ads and word of mouth.

Council advised they wanted more information about the upcoming cannabis legislation.

Council requested more information about restorative care beds in long term care settings.

Areas of feedback for the Addiction and Mental Health portfolio include mental health needs of those who are isolated, access for youth, and services for seniors.

Local residents should be made aware of the increased staffing in communities resulting from the Enhancing Care in the Community initiative (community members in Swan Hills were surprised by the extra staffing).



Left to right: Ruth Martin-Williams, Chair; Dr. James Silvius, Provincial Medical Director, Community, Seniors and Addiction & Mental Health, AHS; Darlene Chartrand, Council member, at the information session on MAID in Edson hosted by Council.

Topics on the minds of our Council and community members

Council developed the following list based on information from Council members, and submitted it to the AHS Board:

- Elder care.
- More staff for home care services.
- Access to services, rurally:
 - Mental health services, and other health services
 - Rural physiotherapy
 - Video conference options
- Wait lists for children and adult mental health counselling.
- Opportunity for more public members to participate in Mental Health First Aid courses.
- Lack of local specialists and surgeons.
- Issues with ease of availability of drugs.
 - Currently lots of methamphetamine, fentanyl and carfentanyl are available.
- Rural health planning.
 - Provide information on AHS' plans for our towns and our people in the coming year.
- Lack of transportation in rural areas.
- Sexual health prevention education.
 - Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infections framework development.
- Lack of diagnostic services.
 - Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Computed Tomography (CT) capabilities.
- Lack of educational information in schools.
 - This would help assist teaching staff about how to deal with children who have Type 1 Diabetes.

A look ahead

Our Council had a very busy year. We wish to reflect on our accomplishments before we look to the future. We had presentations from and/or we were able to provide feedback to:

- MAID
- RhPAP
- Alberta Healthy Communities Approach pilot project
- Continuing care in the Tamarack area
- Northern Alberta Renal Program
- Addiction and Mental Health

We were pleased with the resolution for dialysis in the Council area. A dialysis centre was opened in the new Edson Healthcare Centre and small dialysis units were opened in Hinton and Whitecourt.

Restorative beds were implemented at the Mayerthorpe Healthcare Centre. These beds are occupied for those citizens needing rehabilitation before they can return home. We look forward to updates about the success of this initiative.

We are pleased that AHS partners with the RhPAP to address and resolve physician and staff recruitment in communities across Alberta. RhPAP held a Skills Weekend in Swan Hills and it was such a great opportunity to showcase the community. The community has struggled continually to recruit physicians and other health professionals.

We were truly proud of the event we held at Edson. It gave us an opportunity to highlight the role of Council plus share important information about MAID, Enhancing Care in the Community, seniors and continuing information. We look forward to repeating the same information session in Westlock in May.

We feel that we are very knowledgeable of some great programs and new initiatives available with AHS and we want to share this with the public. We will look at various ways to share the great work.

Our work plan for this next year will be simplified. We want to build more awareness of the Council's roles and responsibilities. We want to group what we hear from the public into themes and work with AHS to share that information with our communities. We also look forward to providing input into new programs, services and emerging initiatives.

Learn more

- Visit ahs.ca and search Advisory Councils
- Email Tamarack@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.



Tamarack
Health Advisory Council

Healthy Albertans.
Healthy Communities
Together.