

Tamarack Health Advisory Council

2022-23 Annual Report



**Alberta Health
Services**

Tamarack
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 (Former) Donna Kristiansen, Tamarack Health Advisory Council



This past year we had an increased opportunity to gather in person for meetings with the option of attending virtually. We were successful in providing several training and information sharing opportunities both virtually and in person. In addition, new members have joined our Council, which enhances the distinct community perspective.

As local community representatives, our Council has continued to bring health challenges and successes to the attention of AHS – both through AHS North Zone leadership and the Community Engagement team. As well, our members have provided updated information on new initiatives from AHS into their respective communities.

I would like to thank all our Council members and AHS staff who have been so giving of their time and energy in reaching out in our communities and attending the meetings.

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS



*Top L-R: Tara Baker (Chair), Lorianne Edwards (Vice Chair), Karen Gariepy, Jeff Goebel
Middle L-R: Donna Kristiansen, Linda Prokott, Margo Sanders
Bottom L-R: Maureen Schnirer, Rob Stafford, Janet Wilkinson
Missing: Janet Jabush and Wendy Scinski*

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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

Barrhead
Busby
Edson
Gunn
Mayerthorpe
Swan Hills
Westlock
Whitecourt

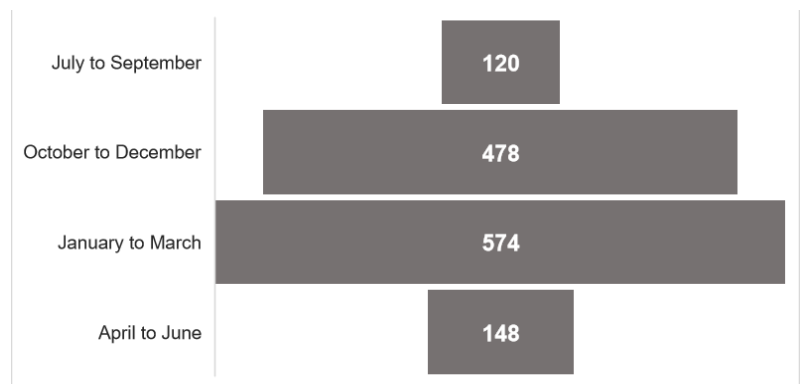


By the numbers

Participation in THAC meetings & events:

- 3** public meetings
- 15** public attended
- 1** engagement event
- 25** public attended
- 5** 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.

- ✓ THAC held three public meetings during the year. Presentation topics included an overview of Northwest Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Network. Participants learned the network provides community-based FASD assessment and diagnostic services and intervention planning for youth and adults prenatally affected by exposure to alcohol. The network builds capacity in local communities in the areas of awareness and prevention, support services and training and education.
- ✓ We hosted a joint virtual engagement event with Lakeland Communities and Wood Buffalo Health Advisory Councils where we learned about services and resources of Health Link 811, and an overview of lab services with *DynaLIFE*.
- ✓ Council attended a session with Dr. Cowell, AHS Official Administrator (OA), where he reviewed findings from his 90-Day Report, which outlined progress in the health system from his first 90 days as OA. We also had our Chair attend the bi-annual Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP) conference in Drayton Valley.
- ✓ **Hot topics of discussion included:**
 - Workforce recruitment (shortages)
 - COVID-19 – cost of testing and vaccination clinics; swabbing centres across the North Zone to manage the fall increase in respiratory illness and COVID 19 cases;
 - Addiction resources are limited and waitlists for treatment programs are 3-6 months

OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE INPUT (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 province-wide campaign that informed Albertans about the flu shot.



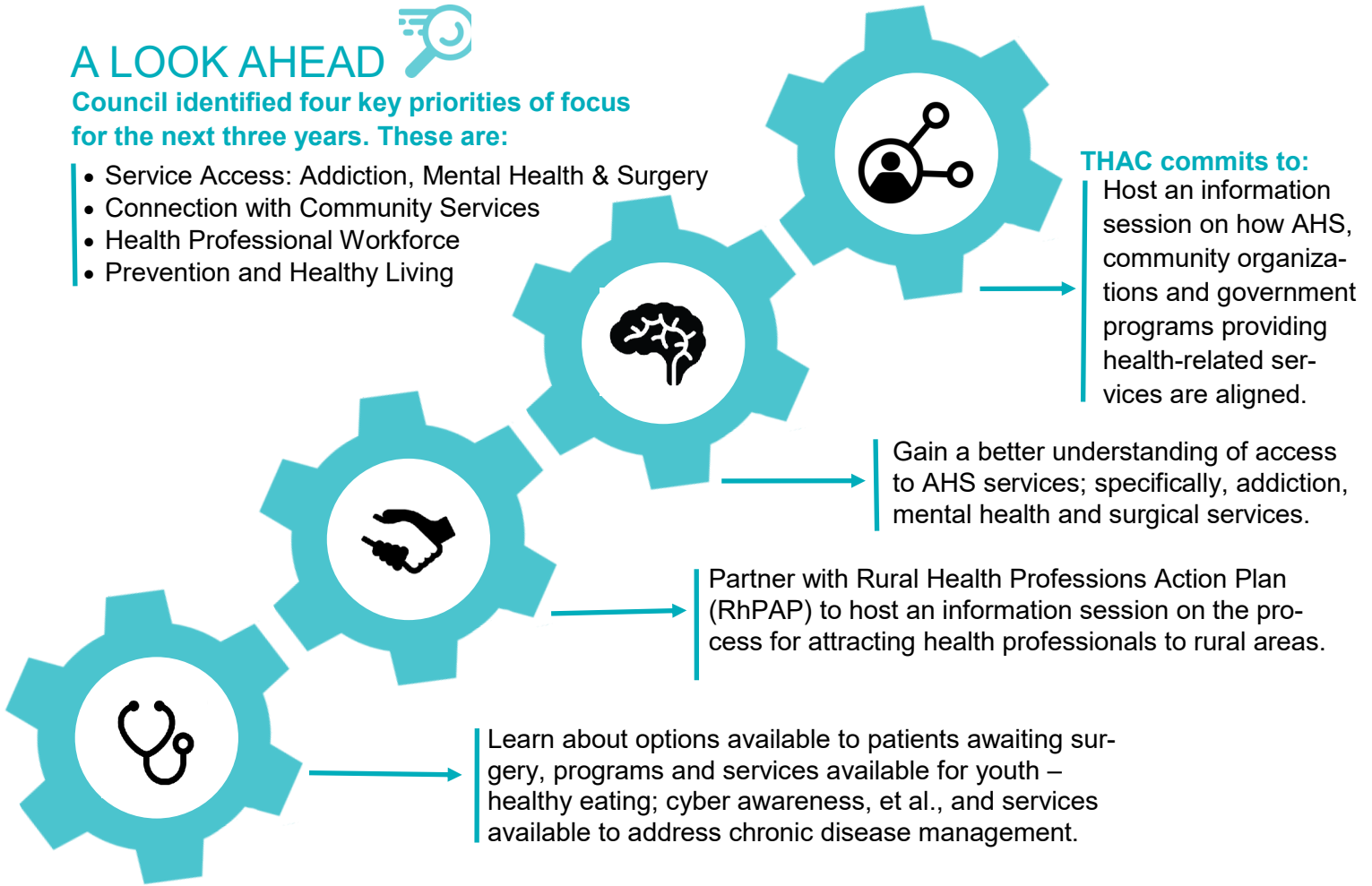
Spiritual Care Policy

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

A LOOK AHEAD

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

- Service Access: Addiction, Mental Health & Surgery
- Connection with Community Services
- Health Professional Workforce
- Prevention and Healthy Living



GET INVOLVED

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

- Email: tamarack@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

