

# Oldman River Health Advisory Council



## *Annual Report 2010–2011*







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## Message from the Chair, Oldman River Health Advisory Council

It is with great pleasure that we provide the Oldman River Health Advisory Council's first Annual Report.

We had our first meeting in January 2010 and embarked upon an interesting and challenging journey. We quickly realized that before we could undertake our given roles with any credibility, we needed to get a basic orientation and understanding of the new provincial health system and the services being provided in our area. Even for council members who have worked in the system before, or who have extensive contact with health care, this new organization is very complex and not easily or readily understood. Our council members come from a variety of backgrounds, not necessarily health related, and with different expectations of our new role. We spent time learning about each other and how to work productively together. The role of a council that is strictly advisory can be frustrating, unless we are all willing to accept its limitations and realize that we can still play a crucial and unique role within the system.

We meet regularly every two months. Our meetings have involved presentations about education programs, formulation of issues and possible solutions for the Alberta Health Services Board and local administration, and communication both, at the local and provincial level. The learning curve has been very steep and rapid, and we are surprised at what we have been able to achieve in our first year. Fortunately, we have been willing to give our time between meetings for informal sessions, which has allowed our regular meetings to be productive. We have learned a lot in this first year and we hope to use this knowledge as we move forward.

As council Chair, I want to thank the members for their support and unfailing willingness to work through the initial, and at times painful, start and their continuing commitment to the council. The Alberta Health Services Board must be thanked for recognizing the need for our Health Advisory Councils. We have both learned to work together over the past year and the improved level of communication between us will make a difference as we move forward.

The efforts of our Community Engagement Officers have been essential to the success we have achieved. Thank you for your assistance, energy, expertise and patience. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Finally, we must also thank our local Alberta Health Services leaders for their willingness to regularly attend our meetings. Their extensive knowledge of the services, both locally and provincially, has certainly been of great value.

We look forward to the next year with commitment and optimism.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara Lacey  
Chair, Oldman River Health Advisory Council



## Message from the Chair, Alberta Health Services Board

Health Advisory Councils are an important link between Alberta Health Services and the people we serve. We can only be genuinely responsive to Albertans if we understand their needs and listen to their concerns, which include hearing directly from councils.

Health Advisory Councils were established to engage local community members to provide feedback on what is working well within the health care system, suggest areas for improvement, and identify local issues and concerns.

The inaugural year for Health Advisory Councils has been highly effective in establishing processes, connecting with Albertans across the province and building foundational relationships both with communities and the Alberta Health Services Board and Leadership. Continually nurturing these connections will enable councils to be better informed and work more effectively in bringing the voice of communities to improve health care across the province.

In the first year of operation, councils have contributed significantly to key Alberta Health Services strategic planning initiatives. Key consultations included the 2010-2015 Health Plan, Alberta Health Act, Accreditation Canada consultation, Provincial Menu, Community and Rural health planning initiatives and the Strategic Scenarios 2030 “Driving Forces Workshops” which centered around health planning for the next 20 years.

Building on these successes over the next year will provide a valuable mechanism for communication and information flow between communities and Alberta Health Services. The Alberta Health Services Board and Leadership are committed to ensuring that Health Advisory Councils are successful in their work now and into the future. Board members will continue to increase engagement opportunities with councils, and attend council meetings, engagement events and community consultations.

In closing, we would like to thank all council members past and present, for the time, effort and expertise they have dedicated to bringing the public perspective forward to improve health care planning across the province.

Sincerely,

Ken Hughes  
Chair, Alberta Health Services Board



# The Year in Review

## Executive Summary

The Oldman River Health Advisory Council is pleased to present this report to the Alberta Health Services Board. The report provides Alberta Health services and communities within the council area with a record of council accomplishments during our foundational year. Since the appointment of council members in December 2009, we have worked collaboratively with Alberta Health Services to develop a foundation upon which our work can take place.

The role of the Oldman River Health Advisory Council is to:

- gather information on public input regarding health, health needs and health services for the residents of the community served by the council;
- provide advice to Alberta Health Services regarding health issues, needs and priorities, access to health services, the promotion of health and other matters requested by Alberta Health Services; and
- promote and participate in activities that enhance the health of residents in the communities served by the council.

The Oldman River Health Advisory Council has successfully created opportunities to obtain feedback from community members by utilizing a variety of strategies; we have participated in several consultation processes with Alberta Health Services and have greatly enhanced the knowledge and awareness amongst our communities of the services and programs that Alberta Health Services delivers to Albertans.

We look forward to continuing to engage with Albertans in order to contribute positively to the planning and delivery of health care that incorporates the values and needs of Albertans.



## Who We Are

The Oldman River Health Advisory Council was established on June 2009 under section 9(4) of the Regional Health Authorities Act (1994). The Oldman River Health Advisory Council was established to enhance engagement between communities and Alberta Health Services. *Please see Appendix 1 for the Provincial Map.*

The Oldman River Council area is anchored by the city of Lethbridge and includes the communities of Vauxhall, Granum, Blairmore, Milk River, Cardston, Coaldale, Crowsnest Pass, Fort Macleod, Pincher Creek, Raymond and Taber. The council area also includes traditional Blackfoot territory. The administrative centre of the Blood Tribe is situated in the community of Stand Off. *Please see Appendix 2 for the Council Map.*

The city of Lethbridge is a commercial hub for the many smaller farming and ranching communities in the surrounding area. The area has a rich historical background that includes two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Head Smashed - in Buffalo Jump Interpretative Centre and Waterton Lakes National Park. The community of Fort Macleod is home to the Fort Museum of the North-West Mounted Police, which commemorates the role of the Northwest (later Royal Canadian) Mounted Police in bringing English authority to the Canadian Plains during the 19th century.

As council members, we aim to provide a voice reflective of our communities, while maintaining a connection to Alberta Health Services.

<b>Current Members</b>	
Mrs. Barbara Lacey (Chair)	Lethbridge
Mr. George Epp (Vice Chair)	Taber
Ms. Angela Best	Lethbridge
Mr. Dick Burnham	Pincher Creek
Ms. Diane Herrick	Lethbridge
Ms. Emma Hulit	Coutts
Ms. Tara Linklater	Fort Macleod
Ms. Robin Little Bear	Lethbridge
Mr. Wayne McGinn	Lethbridge
Ms. Kerry Milder	Lethbridge
<b>Past Members</b>	
Ms. Kathryn Petrunia	Taber
Ms. Sharon Solvey	Taber
Ms. Tanya Pace-Crosschild	Lethbridge
Mr. Bill Martens	Coaldale
Ms. Rojeanne Parker	Lethbridge



## What We Do

The role of the Oldman River Health Advisory Council is to:

- gather information on public input regarding health, health needs and health services for the residents of the community served by the council;
- provide advice to Alberta Health Services regarding health issues, needs and priorities, access to health services, the promotion of health and other matters requested by Alberta Health Services; and
- promote and participate in activities that enhance the health of residents in the communities served by the council.

Oldman River Health Advisory Council members reflect the diversity of the communities they serve and have a broad interest in health issues as well as the health and well-being of the communities they represent.



## How We Are Accountable

Health Advisory Councils were established in June, 2009 under section 9(4) of the Regional Health Authorities Act (1994). The Alberta Health Services Board approved the Bylaw by which the councils were established, which was then approved by the Minister of Health and Wellness. The Alberta Health Services Board appointed members to each council following a provincewide recruitment drive in September 2009. Councils act as an advisory body to Alberta Health Services according to the council Charter and Bylaw. Council members are required to reside within the geographic area of the council to which they are appointed and serve terms of two or three years to a maximum of five years.

Councils act as an advisory body to Alberta Health Services, providing feedback from the public to support the strategic direction of Alberta Health Services. In this role, councils:

- provide feedback about what is working well in the health care system and areas for improvement;
- engage residents by talking to members of the community and advise of what they are saying about health services in their area;
- consider information provided by Alberta Health Services and identify issues or trends from a local perspective;
- provide feedback to Alberta Health Services on matters pertaining to health services and service delivery on an ongoing basis; and
- provide feedback to Alberta Health Services about strategies to further engage the community on health care delivery.



## What We Have Accomplished

### Engagement of the Public

Members of the Oldman River Health Advisory Council recognize the importance of connecting with the communities it represents and gathering feedback on health issues that are significant to them. Throughout the year, council members used a variety of informal and formal methods to connect with the public:

- Council hosted community consultation sessions led by Mr. Fred Horne, MLA Edmonton-Rutherford, Parliamentary Assistant to Health and Wellness and member of the Standing Committee on Health, during summer 2010. Council participation in the event provided an opportunity to increase awareness about our role to those in attendance.
- Open community meetings were held in the communities of Fort Macleod and Vauxhall. Attendance by the public was low, which resulted in an opportunity for us to engage in small group discussions regarding areas of concern and what was working well in both communities.
- The council Chair met with seniors at both senior centres in Lethbridge to provide an overview of the council role and to hear from those in attendance about issues that were of relevance to them.
- A meeting of the South West Alberta Mayor and Reeves was attended by the council Chair to increase awareness of the council.
- A council member attended two community consultation sessions hosted by Alberta Health Services' leadership in Milk River to discuss the health planning process and validate community data with respect to planning for future health needs.
- Council members used formal and informal networks to promote the spring 2011 council recruitment process; and
- Representatives of the Lethbridge Seniors Community Forum made a presentation at a regular council meeting.

Council has provided information collected during community engagement activities regarding areas of concerns to the Alberta Health Services Board and leadership for consideration and action.

### **Provide Feedback and Advice to Alberta Health Services**

By participating in consultation activities, or by representation of council at forums or workshops, council provided feedback to Alberta Health Services on the following topics:

- Provincial Menu: council was kept informed regarding the implementation and subsequent external review of the Provincial Menu by Heather Truber, Manager, Nutrition and Food Services.
- Building a Primary Care Foundation and Primary Care Model Development: two presentations were made to council.
- Open Spaces Forum on Primary Care in Alberta: council was represented by Dr. Barbara Lacey who provided input on the development of a strategic plan for Primary Care.
- Community and Rural Health Planning: Jo-Anne Dyok, Director, Community and Rural Health Planning presented information to council.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS): council was asked to provide feedback on the proposed performance indicators being considered for contract service providers of Emergency Medical Services in Alberta.
- Driving Forces - Strategic Health Needs Assessment & Service Design to 2030: Dr. Barbara Lacey attended the consultation session in Lethbridge.
- Game Changing Health Innovations – Institute of Health Economics and Alberta Health Services: Kerry Milder attended the session in February 2011.
- Chronic Care: Dr. Barbara Lacey attended a meeting to contribute to the development of Chronic Care strategies.
- College of Physicians and Surgeons Strategic Plan: Dr. Barbara Lacey responded to the document on council's behalf.

## Promote and Participate in Activities that Enhance the Health of Residents

Council members promoted, among their networks, registration of Lethbridge and area community members with the Tomorrow Project.

A request for a presentation supporting the fluoridation of public water supplies at a public meeting was forwarded to the council area's Medical Officer of Health.

Council members were asked to promote the availability of the flu vaccine among their networks and families.



## What We Have Learned

The first year of council activity has resulted in the development of processes that will support council initiatives in the years to come. As a result of the foundational work that has occurred, council has a clearer understanding of their role and will continue to connect regularly with Alberta Health Services.

Members have increased their knowledge regarding many aspects of health services through presentations by Alberta Health Services staff on the following topics:

- Population Health in the council area;
- Seniors Health Model and Levels of Care;
- Aboriginal Health, Primary Care and Primary Care Networks in the council area;
- Nutrition and Food Services Provincial Menu; and
- Emergency Department Over Capacity Protocols hosted by the South Zone senior leadership.

Council's increased knowledge has enabled members to promote factual information to our communities.

Regular teleconference meetings between all council Chairs, members of the Alberta Health Services Board and leadership has been an effective strategy to identify common issues and concerns, and to provide opportunities to share learning and successes.

A provincewide council meeting was held in June 2010, which provided a networking and learning opportunity for the members in attendance.

There has been an ongoing effort to increase the council profile within the area; the availability of resources to support awareness of the council will be beneficial. Council has been provided with a display, bookmarks and business

cards to assist in the process of increasing awareness about our work and role. Council has successfully created relationships with the local media in Lethbridge, which has resulted in media coverage of events that council has been involved with.

## Looking Forward

### 2011-2012

Engaging with communities will represent a significant part of council work in the next year. There have been challenges associated with public attendance at community meetings, which may result in council revisiting the ways in which we choose to connect with communities. Members have recognized that it is necessary to use a variety of strategies to connect with community members across the large council area.

The development of a Work Plan for the 2011-2012 year will assist in the identification of council priorities and provide guidance for council activities for the coming year.

Our annual Work Plan will be available to view on the Alberta Health Services website [www.albertahealthservices.ca/1820.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/1820.asp)



## Contact Information 2011-2012

We welcome the opportunity to hear your voice. Please contact us at:

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Telephone: 403-328-5462  
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Sheena Taggart, Community Engagement Officer  
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Community Engagement Department:  
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Email: [community.engagement@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:community.engagement@albertahealthservices.ca)

Council Web Page:  
[www.albertahealthservices.ca/1820.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/1820.asp)

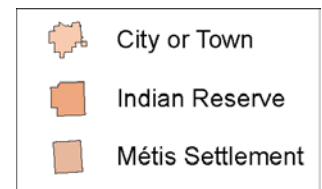
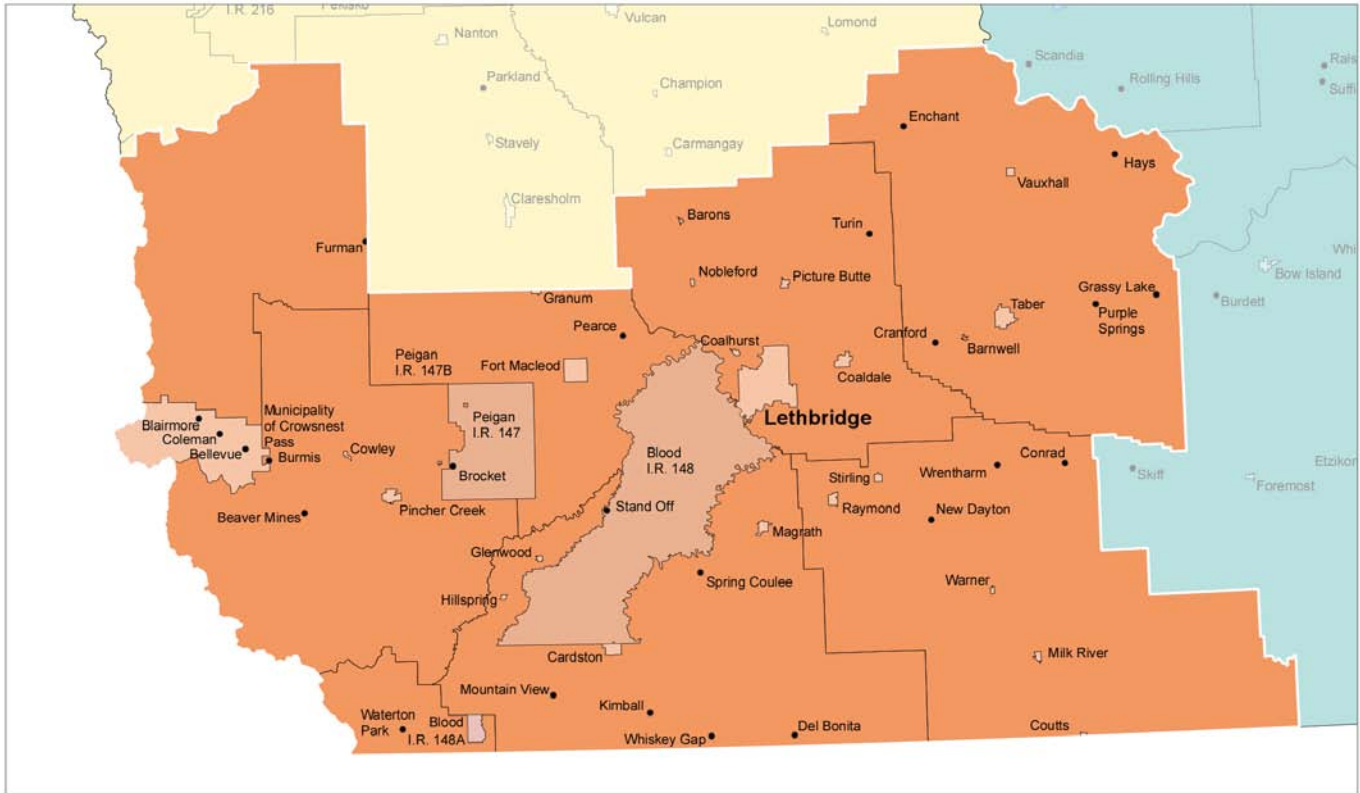
Council Email:  
[oldmanriver@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:oldmanriver@albertahealthservices.ca)

 **Appendix 1 – Provincial Map**



# Appendix 2 – Council Map

## Oldman River Health Advisory Council Map



*Bringing the voice of  
communities to build  
a better health system*