

# Tamarack Health Advisory Council



## *Annual Report 2010–2011*







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## Message from the Chair, Tamarack Health Advisory Council

This past year, Tamarack Health Advisory Council found it challenging for all members to meet at one time due to the distance between towns and cities located in northwest Alberta. Council members travelled from Jasper, Westlock, and all points in between, to meet where Health Care Centres are located. Our council also participates in meetings via video conference.

In our first year as a council, we achieved the following:

- We named ourselves the Tamarack Health Advisory Council. Like Aspen Health, we followed the symbolism of the tree because of our economic strength and our natural beauty, never mind the pine beetle! We continue to debate the value of having the word “Wellness” added to the title because we spent a lot of time discussing this dimension of our responsibilities.
- We had excellent Alberta Health Services speakers at each of our meetings who provided input regarding the goal of providing superior health services to Albertans. These resource people have provided insight into how the system works and where we fit in. We strive to bring forward feedback from patients and their families who have recently utilized Alberta Health Services programs.
- Value has been added to our meetings by touring the facilities that exist within our council area. Apart from the opportunity to view the physical plants, we have been exposed to the unique health services that each Health Care Centre provides.
- In Jasper, we outlined our goals and objectives, as well as timelines for completion. Jasper was an excellent choice of venue for this project. As a council we are still implementing the stated goals, but once again, the vast area makes it hard to maintain majority involvement from all the council members. Travel can be costly as well as time-consuming.
- As Chair, I have been able to take advantage of the telephone conferences, with Alberta Health Services Board and executive representatives. These are an excellent way to communicate with Alberta Health Services staff. We had numerous council members attend the June 2010 Provincewide Council meeting in Edmonton, which was very valuable. We began to understand and implement the Alberta Health Services and the Minister’s approach to delivery of health care for Alberta.

I want to sincerely thank Brad Cardinal for his outstanding work as our Community Engagement Officer, he has supported us on a day-to-day basis with

our council's work. Also, Amy Williams with the Community Engagement department, Calgary, has proven to be a splendid liaison with her diligent and informative emails. Having Shelly Pusch, Vice President, and Kate Butler, Executive Director, Community and Rural Hospitals, at our meetings has been a great resource as well, they have kept us on track in learning our role and fulfilling our mandate as a Health Advisory Council within the Alberta Health Services system.

Sincerely,

Doug McDermid  
Chair, Tamarack 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

This was the first year for Health Advisory Council 6, which was officially named the Tamarack Health Advisory Council mid-year. The Tamarack Health Advisory Council Annual Report reflects on the inaugural year and reviews the accomplishments that have been achieved.

Health Advisory Councils were developed by the Alberta Health Services Board. The role of councils is to engage the public and relay information, questions or concerns to Alberta Health Services. Councils also provide feedback to Alberta Health Services about the effectiveness of the health programs and services and promote and participate in activities that enhance the health of residents.

The Tamarack Health Advisory Council is geographically located in the central - western part of the province. The council area is diverse which includes various towns, villages, summer villages and First Nations communities.

Council membership and recruitment has been a struggle and fluctuated between eight and ten members throughout the first year.

Council received an orientation and then spent time on the development of annual processes for the council. Council established regular meeting dates, and developed a Work Plan and a method for engagement in the council area.

Each council meeting was held in a different community with the intent to engage the residents in the various communities. We listened and provided feedback on presentations made by Alberta Health Services. We received information regarding various health programs and services from various Alberta Health Services leads within our council area.

Tamarack Health Advisory Council recognizes and embraces the importance and value of community engagement. The council looks forward to continuing to work with the Board of Alberta Health Services to provide community perspective to the planning of health programs and services.

*“Tamarack Health Advisory Council recognizes and embraces the importance and value of community engagement”*

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## Who We Are

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

The Tamarack Health Advisory Council was established on June 30, 2009 under section 9(4) of the Regional Health Authorities Act (1994). The Tamarack Health Advisory Council was established to enhance engagement between communities and Alberta Health Services. *Please see Appendix 1 for the Provincial Map.*

The Tamarack Health Advisory Council area stretches from Whitecourt in the north to Jasper in the west, continuing eastward to Westlock, and southward to Onaway. *Please see Appendix 2 for the Council Map.*

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

Current Members	
Mr. Douglas McDermid (Chair)	Mayerthorpe
Ms. Ruth Martin-Williams (Vice Chair)	Edson
Ms. Peggy Carty	Barrhead
Mr. Douglas Heine	Hinton
Mr. Andrew Hendricks	Jasper
Ms. Christie Homeniuk	Whitecourt
Mr. Daniel Leis	Hinton
Ms. Marie-France Miron	Jasper
Mr. Daniel Pritchard	Blue Ridge
Mr. Trevor Thain	Whitecourt
Mr. George Turk	Sangudo
Past Members	
Mr. Douglas Fleming	Westlock
Ms. Barbara Wilson	Westlock



## What We Do

The role of the Tamarack 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.

Tamarack 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 on June 30, 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

The Tamarack Health Advisory Council began the consideration for engaging with the public by developing a Work Plan. Strategies and actions from the Work Plan helped to guide the council in engaging the residents in the council area.

Upon review of the council Bylaw, the council decided to hold six meetings per year in various communities within the Tamarack Health Advisory Council area. Each council meeting was held in a different community within the council area as council felt it was important to garner input directly from each community.

The annual Work Plan highlighted community engagement and methods to share information from the Tamarack Health Advisory Council. The public were invited to attend with the opportunity to be placed on the council agenda. A one-pager of information about the council was developed to share with the public; a banner and bookmarks were developed to provide council contact information to the public; and a section was developed on the Alberta Health Services website for Health Advisory Councils. Information on the Tamarack Health Advisory Council web page included the council's name, health council area demographics, role and membership. The web page also included the date, time, location, agenda and minutes for each council meeting.

Council members used additional engagement methods to draw information and feedback from other demographic groups. Some of the methods included participation on other committees or informal networks in the Tamarack Health Advisory Council area.

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

The following presentations were made to the Tamarack Health Advisory Council and feedback was provided by the council.

1. Trevor Maslyk, Executive Director, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), provided an overview of the *"Discussion Paper on Service and Performance Requirements for Emergency Medical Services Contract Service Providers in Alberta"* this was later followed by an additional presentation on the EMS 5 Year Plan. On both occasions, council was asked to provide feedback.
2. The Primary Care Reform, North Zone, presented on "Building a Primary Care Foundation, Primary Care in a Primary Health Care System". Feedback from council was requested on the information presented.
3. Council worked with Alberta Health and Wellness to engage the citizens for the new Alberta Health Act Consultation with Mr. Fred Horne, MLA Edmonton-Rutherford, Parliamentary Assistant to Health and Wellness and member of the Standing Committee on Health. The consultations were held in one community in the council area, (Hinton, Alberta).
4. Stacy Greening, Director, Community and Rural Health Planning, "Community and Rural Health Planning". Council was invited to communicate any questions or concerns.
5. Robert Lyons, Director North West, Addiction and Mental Health, presented information regarding current addiction and mental health services in the Tamarack Health Advisory Council area.

6. Doug McDermid, Chair attended the “Driving Forces-2030” strategic planning session for the North Zone, in Fort McMurray to plan health services to 2030 (February 7, 2011 Fort McMurray).
7. Brenda Regehr, Executive Director, Primary Care Reform, presented “Primary Care-Understanding What We Heard” which included input acquired from various stakeholders. Feedback was requested from council members.

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

1. Shelly Pusch, Vice President, North Zone provided an overview of the Alberta Health Services structure, the North Zone health programs and services, challenges, opportunities and successes (January, 2010 Edson).
2. Public Health, North Zone provided a presentation on all of the public health programs and services in the North Zone (March, 2010 Edson).
3. Robert Lyons, Director North West, Addiction and Mental Health, Alberta Health Services presented information regarding current addiction and mental health services in the Tamarack Health Advisory Council area.

*“We have increased our awareness of community priorities and strengthened our connection with Alberta Health Services.”*

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### **What We Have Learned**

The first year has been a learning experience for the Tamarack Health Advisory Council. We have increased our awareness of community priorities and strengthened our connection with Alberta Health Services. The council has gained a greater understanding of our role and the processes associated with council operation.



## Looking Forward

### 2011-2012

*“We look forward to engaging more citizens in the vastly diverse communities in our council area.”*

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The Tamarack Health Advisory Council is looking forward to the 2011-2012 year and the opportunity to continue engaging with the communities that we represent.

We look forward to reviewing the accomplishments of the past year in detail and the areas that may require adjustment. We look forward to developing our 2011-2012 Work Plan to guide us towards successful outcomes in the upcoming year.

We look forward to engaging more citizens in the vastly diverse communities in our council area and welcome their information, questions and concerns. It has been effective to have senior leadership from Alberta Health Services attend our meetings to provide information and we look forward to their ongoing commitment.

We look forward to the expanded and strengthened role of the Health Advisory Councils in the coming year. We are pleased that we will be connecting regularly with the Alberta Health Services Board and leadership on strategic planning initiatives, both locally and provincially.

Our annual Work Plan will be available to view on the Alberta Health Services website [www.albertahealthservices.ca/1813.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/1813.asp)

We look forward to engaging with the public in the Tamarack Health Advisory Council area.



## Contact Information

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

Doug McDermid, Chair  
Telephone: 780-786-4692  
Email: [dogrod@hotmail.com](mailto:dogrod@hotmail.com)

Ruth Martin Williams, Vice Chair  
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Community Engagement Department  
Telephone: 1-877-275-8830  
Fax: 403-943-1163  
Email: [community.engagement@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:community.engagement@albertahealthservices.ca)

Council Web Page:  
[www.albertahealthservices.ca/1813.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/1813.asp)

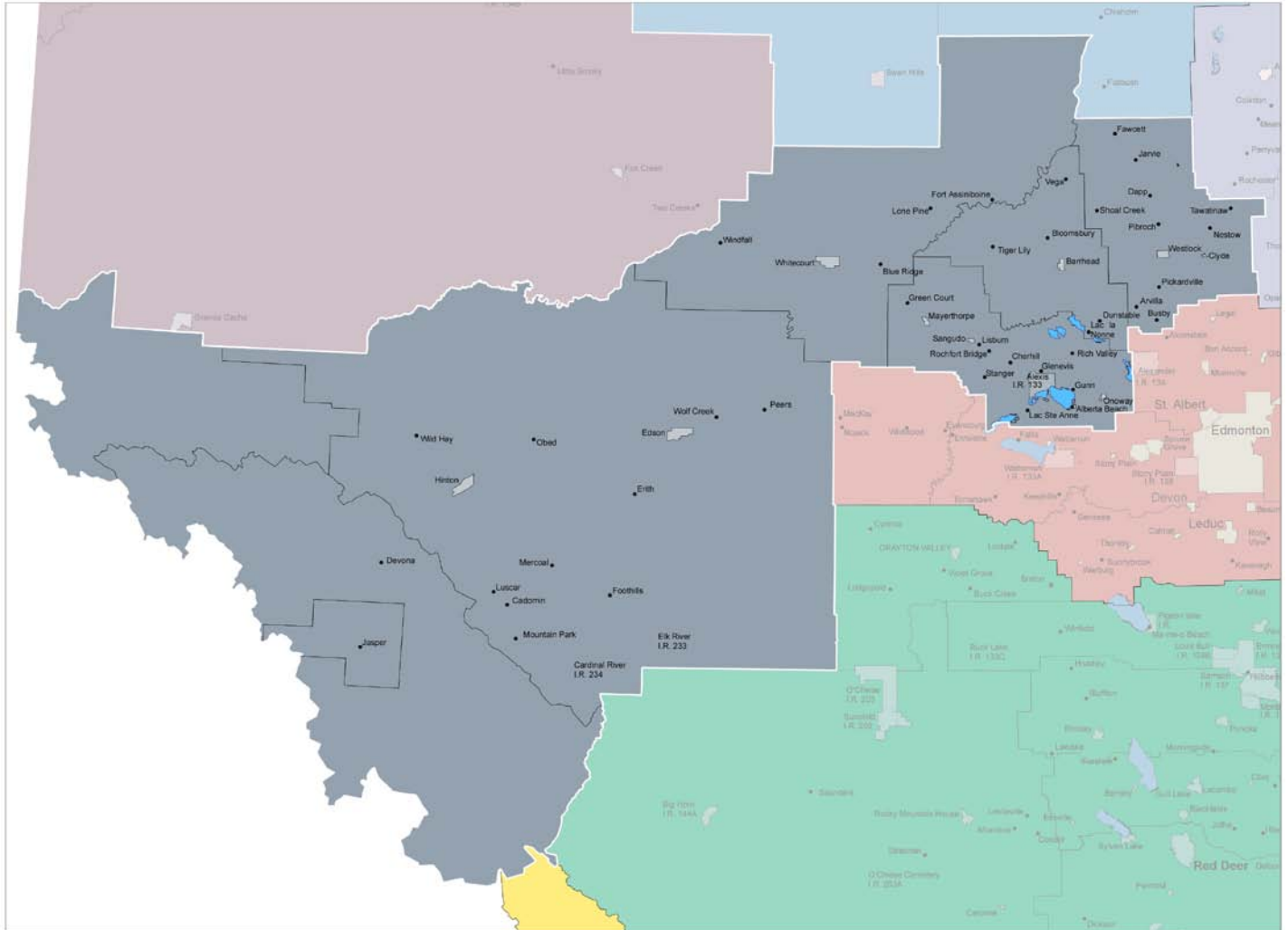
Council Email:  
[tamarack@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:tamarack@albertahealthservices.ca)

 **Appendix 1 – Provincial Map**



# Appendix 2 – Council Map

## Tamarack Health Advisory Council Map



-  City or Town
-  Indian Reserve
-  Métis Settlement

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